

have economical administration in this State.

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

House adjourned at 10.38 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 19th November, 1908.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Report of the Commissioner of Police for year ended 30th June, 1908. 2, Report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners for year ended 30th June, 1908.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION, LAND AT WONGAN.

Hon. J. T. GLOWREY (South): I desire to make a personal explanation with regard to certain transactions between myself and the Lands Department. Various reports have appeared in the Press, more particularly during the recent elections, and a number of candidates for Parliament have advertised the fact throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia, that I had received certain information which I should not have obtained, and in consequence secured land for myself and family on the proposed route of a new railway. Some explanation is due by me to members, to my constituents, and to the people generally. In the first place I should like to say that I have three sons, two daughters, and a wife, each of whom

applied for 1,000 acres of land. This land is fifty miles from the termination of the suggested railway. I do not know whether the line is yet more than suggested. Some of the land is fully 50 miles from the proposed terminus of the Wongan railway, but the balance of the land adjoins the Midland Railway Company's line. I should like to tell members how I came to secure the land. In the first place it was on the information of that well-known and highly respected gentleman, known to most members, Mr. Gooch, of Gingin, who advised me to look out for some land. He knew I wanted to take up land and advised me to seek for it in the locality where I subsequently took it up, and further told me of a gentleman who knew the country thoroughly. I secured the services of that gentleman and took up some land. That land was available for anyone to take up. As far as getting any information from the Government is concerned, I can safely say that to my knowledge not one member of the Government knew I intended even to apply for the land. Furthermore, as far as I am aware, not one Government official had any knowledge that I was going to apply for land until the applications were handed in at the counter. The statements have been denied, but there are some gentlemen who still persist in suggesting motives which are certainly not very honourable. Perhaps I made a mistake when I applied for the land, and that I should have taken certain gentlemen into my confidence. I should perhaps have consulted Mr. Walker, Mr. Bath, or Mr. Troy, or some of the other members of the Labour party and asked their advice. Had I done this, possibly I might not have been guilty of such a serious offence. I was not aware that I was doing anything wrong. As these gentlemen did not think it worth while to consult me when they were applying for large areas I did not think there was any need for me to consult them. I should not have referred to this at all, for it is a matter of very little concern to me, had I not thought some explanation was due to members in view of the fact that the statements have been made

so persistently. A gentleman holding a very responsible position, on a very recent occasion, made a statement, according to Press reports, that I said in a Government department that it was necessary to be "in the know" in order to secure land in the proper places. I give that statement a most emphatic denial. I am surprised indeed that Mr. Bath should make such a statement, considering the position he occupies, and I am sure he has no proof of it. I challenge him or any other member of his party to prove that statement.

QUESTION—ENGINE-DRIVERS' EXAMINATIONS.

Hon. T. F. BRIMAGE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, How many candidates have passed the Engine-drivers' Examinations since the 1st of January, 1906, in (a) 1st Class, (b) 2nd Class, (c) 3rd Class? 2, How many persons have presented themselves for examination during the same period in (a) 1st Class, (b) 2nd Class, (c) 3rd Class?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) 64, (b) 119, (c) 279. 2, (a) 118, (b) 270, (c) 300.

QUESTION—LAND SELECTION, DOODLAKINE.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD (for Hon. G. Throssell) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, When is it expected that the large area of land now being surveyed into sections in the Doodlakine district will be available for selection? 2, In view of the eager demand existing for the land, will the Government consider the advisability of throwing open the area in instalments as completed and so facilitate its earlier settlement? 3, What is the acreage of the land now being surveyed, and what is the approximate area of the sections for selection?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, When arrangements can be completed with the pastoral lessees, who now hold the major part of the land, and are entitled to twelve months' notice of resumption. Portions will be avail-

able in January, 1909, and the balance in June, 1909. 2, Yes. 3, About half a million acres, the areas of the blocks range from five hundred acres to one thousand acres.

QUESTION—LAND SETTLEMENT, TAMMIN.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD (for Hon. G. Throssell) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is any information to hand as to the progress of the 50 settlers placed on the land in the Tammin district? 2, Would it not be well that regular monthly reports of the settlement be made public, and will steps be taken to secure this being done?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes; satisfactory reports have been received. 2, No, as it is not considered that any advantage would result.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (North-East): In addressing myself to the House I intend to be brief, and consequently will only touch on a few matters concerning the industries of the State, particularly the mining. I congratulate the Government on getting back into power, and I trust that, during the coming year, the finances of the State will be put on a sound basis. I cannot help feeling a certain amount of sympathy with one of their members, Mr. Gregory. He is one of the hardest workers of the Ministry, and I, with many mining men, regret that he has been compelled to go back to his constituency and fight again for his seat. I trust that for the good of the country he will be successful.

Hon. J. T. Glouwey: There is no doubt about that.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I was pleased to notice from the remarks of the hon. Mr. Piesse and the hon. Mr. Moss that they feel the Government should do as much as they can for the mining industry. Most of the coastal members are becoming cognisant of the fact that the mining in-

dustry is the one thing that will bring wealth to it; and that quickly. No doubt the farming industry is one of those stable and sound ventures that will always be a solid investment from the country's standpoint, but in Western Australia, from the mining standpoint, this country has not yet had a fair chance. It is now stifled by officialdom. If the mining laws were freer there would be just as big a move in mining as we have had in the past. The taxes on the industry are altogether too high. The rent of £1 per acre charged for unproducing mines is altogether too much. Certainly the present Minister for Mines has brought in what they call the prospecting area, whereby a man can get a lease for 18 months for a registration fee of I think 10s. But 18 months in the mining world is a very short life. It sometimes takes years to prepare a mine to make it a good producer, and I think some other method might be introduced whereby mine owners might be accorded an easement. For instance they might be allowed to make a declaration on the profits they have obtained and have their rents reduced accordingly. In addition to mining rents we have other taxes in the way of boiler fees. We not only have to pay these fees but sometimes have to put the boilers out of steam, and keep them out for a week or ten days at the convenience of the inspectors. Then there are tremendous taxes in regard to exemption. Frequently a fortnight or three weeks elapses before we know whether we are going to get an exemption at all. All these taxes are too high, and as I say, the industry at the present time is being stifled. The expenses of the back country from a Government standpoint are also too high. I do not know why they require so many wardens. One north of Kalgoorlie would be quite sufficient if the registrar were given greater powers for the granting of exemptions instead of having to hear these applications in open court as at present. It is not necessary, and I think the registrar could easily collect sufficient evidence as to the necessity for the exemption. I regret to say that north of Kalgoorlie the mining industry is not looking too bright. I cannot speak

so glowingly of the northern areas as Mr. Kirwan has done of Kalgoorlie. Kalgoorlie's stability is recognised. The mines there will last for an incalculable number of years. They have rich gold at the 2,200 feet level at the Boulder, and there is no reason why that gold should not go down to unworkable depths. The Mining Act of this country is altogether too bulky and too hard to understand for the small man to work under. The time has come when an altogether new Bill should be introduced in respect to the mining industry. The Act we have in vogue has been drafted mainly for the working of our larger mines, and with the exception of these few clauses dealing with prospecting areas the whole of the Act is I think devoted to the guidance and control of large mines. Certainly the prospector has not the advantages he should have, and I think if a prospectors' Bill were introduced it would assist considerably the further development of the mining areas. For instance, we have the case of engine-drivers. At the present time, I do not know whether this House is aware of it, but the laws of this country prohibit engineers from driving engines, even when they do not have a bearing on human life. I am not going to say that if any man certificated by the Board of Trade, for instance, comes into this country and wants to drive an engine he cannot do so. But anybody who has a knowledge of engineering, and who has served an apprenticeship, should, I think be given the right to drive an engine. Prospecting leases are seldom worked below the 300 feet level, and I know of very few shafts east of Kalgoorlie below that level. Still, if it be necessary to drive a small engine on any of these plants only a first class certificated man is allowed to do so. Such a man demands and receives 15s. 9d. per shift of eight hours. If the prospector happens to have one of those ordinary winches used on board steam boats for hauling cargo, and if his ore is only lifted from 150 to 200 feet he is required to employ a first-class driver. I think it is altogether too heavy a tax on the prospector. I am in hopes that with the passing of a prospectors' Bill certain classes of machinery will be allowed to

be driven by a lower class of driver than at present. I also think that the method of obtaining certificates for drivers puts them altogether beyond the reach of ordinary engineers. I asked for a return to be supplied me to-day, and was answered by the Colonial Secretary. It seems to me that something like 50 per cent. of the applications for engine-drivers' certificates are rejected. I happen to know three or four disappointed applicants. They are competent drivers but nevertheless they were incapable of answering mathematical questions put to them. I think, and I have heard some very highly competent engineers say, that the answering of mathematical questions from an engineer's standpoint is absolutely unnecessary; and I am of opinion that if the applicants were told to go and handle an engine in the presence of the examiners and then were questioned as to what that engine could do such an examination would be quite sufficient without asking an applicant to re-educate himself for engine-driving. For once he has passed a certain standard he never again requires that mathematical knowledge for the purpose of driving engines. I regret to notice that our Arbitration Court has not been the success we thought it would be, and I think that for a small country like this the expensive Arbitration Court should be done away with and replaced by the system they have in Queensland, that of the wages board. It furnishes much simpler machinery for the handling of men, for the regulating of the amount of wages for each particular district. The area governed by the Arbitration Court sitting at Leonora takes in the whole of the country up to Wiluna and Eristoun and Burtville, whereas a wages board—

The Colonial Secretary: You can make a district under the Arbitration Act anything you like.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Well, supposing you do. To fix those wages for three years we have a Judge of the Supreme Court and all his retinue going up by special train at a tremendous cost to the State, a cost which has to be borne by the mining industry. I think it might be done altogether much cheaper than at the present time. A wages board would

be a simpler method for dealing with the question.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: How would a wages board be constituted?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: In Queensland by two members of the employers and two members of the employees, presided over by a magistrate.

The Colonial Secretary: That is five. How would that be cheaper than three?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: These people are all local people.

Hon. F. Connor: How are they appointed?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: By the Government. At the present time we have a Judge and his associate, and, as I say, a whole retinue to carry up to Leonora. The Electoral Act has been touched upon by hon. members, and I regret to notice that elections should have been held at the present time. I think we might alter that Act so that when a dissolution of Parliament takes place in September the Government, if still in power, might carry on until March in the following year, so as to fix our elections in the one month instead of when the three years' limit expires. Certainly a lot of money would have been saved this year and Parliament would have been able to start work in June, work until December, and go to the country in March. I do not think the principle of three years Parliament would be violated, because after all the work we are doing now is very small; we will, I am told, pass the Estimates and prorogue until June.

Hon. G. Randell: How would you provide for an extraordinary dissolution of Parliament?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: That is what I say; in the case of extraordinary dissolutions the Parliament appointed for three years, if the time expired in December, would still carry on till March.

The Colonial Secretary: Even if the Government had been defeated?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I take it the Government has been appointed. I do not quite understand what the hon. member refers to. Nearly every time the debate on the Address-in-Reply comes

round I notice one member or another attacks the water scheme; it seems to me to be a real good old buffer for someone to have a growl at when money is tight. The water scheme, although showing a deficit of about £90,000 per annum, was really constructed for the Railway Department; in fact the originator of that scheme Sir John Forrest himself says that he could not have worked those railways without the water scheme. And I maintain that the profit we get from the Eastern Railway could be easily credited to the water scheme to balance the small deficit; because if we had not that water scheme to-day the cost to the country for water would be somewhere in the vicinity of £80,000 or £90,000. It is actually a fact that the water consumed by the railways cost that much before we got the water scheme. I think the scheme could be very well taken over by the Railway Department. Just imagine that population of 40,000 people living as they are up there on that water scheme, developing the natural resources of that country. The rainfall is very low, somewhere about seven or eight inches, and if they all had to use the fresh water from the dams up there, there is no doubt the cost of water for running that railway would be well towards the amount of the deficit on the water scheme. I am sorry Mr. Piesse and Mr. Hamersley are not here, because many of the country members, especially those two gentlemen overlook that fact. They seem to think the deficit on the water scheme is a matter of soreness with the goldfields people. It is not so. Were it not for the water scheme we would not get the profits we do out of the railways. I hope members will realise that. It is a sore point with some of the goldfields members, especially myself, because nearly every session someone has to have a whack at the unfortunate water scheme. I think the water scheme has been the cause of a good deal of prosperity up there, and a good deal of the revenue of the State is due to it. I have nothing further to remark beyond congratulating my country friends on the tremendous prosperity what seems to be apparent in the farming districts. I trust that prosperity will go on, and I can assure coun-

try members that at any time when Bills for the assistance of the farming industry come before the House, I shall be pleased to support them. Like Mr. Piesse and Mr. Moss I trust that the mining industry will look up well so that the farming districts will get the markets they require for their produce. One matter was touched on by Mr. Piesse, that of fruit. I think the Railway Department might do something in the way of carriage of fruit to the goldfields. Mr. Piesse tells me that a good deal of his fruit rots on the ground. I can assure him that a good many people on the fields would be glad to get hold of even windfalls, for fruit is very expensive. I think the Railway Department is a good deal to blame, for easy carriage could be made for returned empty cases, for instance, and there are other methods that could be adopted, so that the farmer could get his produce to the fields, and it would be a good thing for him as well as for the consumer. In conclusion I trust the Government will look well towards the finances of the State, because it seems to me, especially from the figures we heard last night from Mr. Kirwan, that there is a serious outlook. If we can possibly do so, we want to avoid the Black Thursday of Victoria, when nearly one-half of the civil servants were discharged on account of the dull times. It would be better to look ahead and try and arrange the departments, so as to cope with present requirements. In the machinery department there is no doubt a tremendous amount of extravagance. The correspondence that is dealt with there is too great. It seems to me that the gentleman at the head of that department in his report is really defending his existence. Not only that department, but there are many other departments that could be worked cheaper without any loss to the State. I notice in the report of the Public Service Commissioner that it is intended to place this department under the State Mining Engineer. That is the proper place for it. We do not want a head to every little department of the State. The State Mining Engineer who is an engineer, while Mr. Matthews, I understand, is not, could control that department, and

do it as well as it is being done at the present time.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (North) : The speech which was delivered in moving the motion before the Chair, made by my learned and honourable friend Mr. Moss, was clear, lucid, and concise; but while I express these attributes in reference to his speech, I regret to say that I am totally at variance with the tone which underlies it. No doubt we have to look carefully to the financial stage at which this country is at present, and more particularly on the condition that we will be in after the year 1910. While we have these difficulties which we must acknowledge exist, and while they may continue perhaps for some time, still we must recollect that this large State, occupying as it does one-third of the Australian continent, conveying as it does the pleasing intelligence that within its territory it embraces as much, and twice as much, agricultural land as that which is available in any of the other States; conscious of the fact that our timber resources are not to be equalled in any of the other States, and in the variety of climate which extends from Albany in the South to Wyndham in the North, with industries as varied as that climate, I think it is deplorable in a State like this, with large and boundless prospects of prosperity before it, we should have a gentleman, I may say "croaking" about the manifold misfortunes that are shortly to overtake us.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan : We are going to the bad at the rate of £35,000 a month.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER : If we are going, as the hon. member says, to the bad at the rate of £35,000 a month, and as he stated last night in his speech which I took notice of that Federation has not produced it, that Federation only produced a very short shrinkage in our finances, he forgot in that speech, which the hon. gentleman put with great force, and if he will allow me to say with great ability, he forgot to point out what the State suffered from, is not the miserable shrinkage in revenue, but what the State suffered from, staggered under is what we have had since Federation, being the denial of the large revenues which we

received before through the Customs. That is what has been gradually crippling the country, and to Federation mainly is indebted the bringing about of the present state of affairs. That is what is crippling us. As Mr. Randell pointed out we were anxious before Federation, and what we were expecting to see realised, was that our secondary industries were fairly well established. Before that period arrived unfortunately we had parted with all that protection we then received, and at the present time the State is but the dumping ground of the secondary industries manufactured in the Eastern States. My sympathies are with the Government, and we should do all we can to lighten their labours and stimulate them with sound advice as the right course to pursue. My friend Mr. Moss referred to the Braddon Clause, he designated it the Braddon Blot, and I am always very sorry to hear that phrase used, because, indeed, if there is one clause in that constitution which has been the safeguard, the saviour practically of this young State, it has been that Braddon Clause, without which I do not know what we should have done. I am sorry whenever I hear it designated as the Braddon Blot. Many years after we have passed away, that so-called Braddon Blot will remain to the credit of Sir Edward Braddon the originator of it when assisting to frame the constitution of the Commonwealth. May I say a few words with reference to a subject which has been referred to in this debate, particularly by Mr. Moss. He has formed a very strong opinion, which apparently is unalterable, that one measure on the statute book should never have been passed. He refers to the Arbitration Act. I admit that that Act like many others that are on our statute books has not fulfilled the expectation of its sponsors, but it is only human in that respect. There is no measure that has ever been passed that has completely and adequately filled the expectations of those who took the course of piloting it through the Legislature and seeing it placed on the statute book. There is scarcely one. But in reference to the subject with which that legislation

was to deal, this country and every country that has tackled it has had occasion to deal with it in as gingerly a manner as possible. As I have pointed out upon the floor of the House it attempts an excellent thing, it attempts to settle those disputes that so very frequently occur between the employer and the worker, in a rational way. The former method that was used and is being used even up to the present was by strikes. Having paid some attention to this subject I have long ago come to the conclusion that the method of settling disputes by strikes or lockouts is a barbarous method, and if we have not succeeded in making the Arbitration Act as perfect as it should be made, that is no reason why we should seek to repeal it. It has done some good, a great deal of good. It has settled many disputes, but the gentleman who attacked it, simply looked at it from the view that it did not come up to all expectations. I contend where a measure of that character, although it has not adequately fulfilled all that was expected of it, does some good and endeavours to prevent what otherwise would occur, a large measure of misery to the unfortunate workers on the one hand, and a large measure of annoyance and loss to the employers on the other hand, who ought to take every reasonable measure to try and ameliorate the conditions of society; when we tackle such a question, we ought not to be dismayed by the fact that we have not succeeded as we expected, when the measure was brought forward, when we commenced that legislation. It may be said that wages boards might take the place of the Arbitration Court, they may answer to a certain extent.

The Colonial Secretary: If one will not answer the other will not.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: Wages boards may be suggested as a subsidiary measure to carry out the procedure in some communities, but where we have to deal with large industries involving large amounts of capital and where the workers are in great numbers, I repeat again, that arbitration is the proper procedure and it is only a matter of time before it is made complete. In

time the worker will become educated to obtaining its advantages, as the employer has not to have lock outs. It is for the advantage of both sides that some peaceful method should be prescribed by which strikes may cease. It is true that our finances are not in that condition we would like them to be, but while that is so I would like to remind the Government, and I do not think they need any advice from myself or any other hon. member—probably already the thought has struck them, because I see by what the Premier stated the other day he intends at an early date to take advantage of the money market in London. To-day in London I am informed money is cheaper than it has been for many years. That being so, and as we need money in this State to develop our resources, I think the Government would act wisely in taking advantage of the present state of the market in London and obtain some of these moneys that have been spoken of as being cheap and plentiful. We want the introduction of capital. It is our misfortune that it is not flowing in as fast as we would wish, so that it might be properly invested and utilised. With our broad territory and illimitable resources we want only capital, because directly you bring capital, population will follow, and if it does not, it would be a wise policy to devote a considerable sum of money to bringing out from the old country the right class of people to take up and cultivate our lands. Every man who is brought into this territory means a certain revenue, and although for the time being we lose the money paid for his passage, he becomes an earning factor and helps to bring about that prosperity which we all desire. I am sorry Mr. Piesse is not here, because I would like to say that he was misunderstood by Mr. Clarke who twitted him with advocating the repudiation of our loans. That was a complete misconception of what he said. The hon. member perhaps did not speak as clearly as he might have done, but what he certainly intended was that his advocacy was that in regard to future loans we should dissociate the sinking fund

from them. His reference to the loans already raised—Mr. Piesse is a fair and reasonable man—was not that there should be any repudiation of the conditions under which they were obtained. In furtherance of some of the remarks he made I quite agree with him that every assistance should be given to selectors—those men who pioneer the wilderness for the first few years. They go out and meet many difficulties and very often they have very little money, and what they have they want to make go as far as possible. It would be a wise provision if the Government by legislative measures released them from the payment of rents for the first three years after taking up the land, provided of course that in that time they were improving their properties. All improvements effected are a guarantee to the Government that the rent will be paid. After all the rent is a secondary consideration. The great consideration is to get the land taken up, to get this howling wilderness converted into a smiling and pleasing country where we can see industries thriving. I would like to touch upon a subject which I hope the Colonial Secretary will make a note of. We have suffered here because of the absence of a measure which should have been brought down long before. I refer to a measure to consolidate our statute laws. At the present time our statute law is in a most deplorable condition. Many of our Acts are simply re-enactments of English statutes that are not in our own volumes, and when you want to refer to them you must go to the Supreme Court library. I doubt whether there is a complete copy of the English statutes anywhere else. The result is that you have to pay a large sum or go to the inconvenience of finding out the state of the law when you are referred by local Acts to such and such an Act passed in the reign of so and so. That is not the way to deal with the laws of the country. A man whose interests and whose very liberty depends upon the statute law of the country should have put before him in an accessible manner the statute law of the country, so that he can refer to it straight away. It is

only a question for the Government to ask the Solicitor General to undertake this duty. It would be a laborious task and would take a couple of years.

Hon. G. Randell: It will cost a couple of thousand pounds.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: Even if it did cost a couple of thousand pounds it would be money well spent. In all the other States they do not attempt to adopt Acts of Parliament in that fashion. They keep the whole thing in their local statutes. But here by simply a few words we have adopted this statute and we are told it is a George III. or somebody else. So I think if it does involve the expenditure of £2,000 the money will be very well and wisely spent. The Government will undoubtedly be pressed to undertake such a task. I would like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Government, and in particular the Colonial Secretary, for doing an act which I think will redound to the credit of the country. I had occasion when in the North-West some little time back to hear from eye-witnesses of fearful cruelties that were being practised on turtles at the Laccapede Islands. For ages these islands have been the breeding grounds of turtles and it is an unfortunate thing for the turtles that at this time when they perpetuate their species it should be also the period when the pearling boats lay up. Many of the Malay crews make it a practice of resorting to these islands, not only living on the turtles but what is most diabolically cruel, disembowelling the turtle, taking out its eggs and letting the poor creature go about in that manner. This is practised to such an extent that I am credibly informed you cannot approach within half a mile of the foreshore, so great is the stench from the decaying turtles. I am glad to see that the Colonial Secretary has taken that matter up and he has to my mind adopted a remedy that will be most effective. Instructions have been given that the police shall be provided with a cutter and that they shall police the islands during the lay-up season. I congratulate the Colonial Secretary upon bringing that state of things about.

There is also another matter that I would like to refer to. The subject is one that we do not care very much to speak about but there is a lot behind it and I think the Government have done a wise thing in undertaking it, that is establishing quarantine where diseased aborigines can be treated. It is impossible to treat them effectively on the mainland. You would have to gaol them (but there is no authority to do that for certain diseases) and the result would be that before they were cured they would go back again to their haunts and spread the disease further. The Government have selected two islands a sufficient distance from the mainland, and there the natives remain until they are cured. It is a very wise thing for the aborigines and a very wise thing generally.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: After they are cured, what happens?

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: They are sent back to their country.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: They go back to the places they came from and get the disease again: that is what happens.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: The aborigines are cured before they are released from the island. I know a good deal about the subject, but I would like to know what suggestion the hon. member would make. Would he lock them up in other parts of the country where they would become a prey to the other natives?

Hon. J. W. Hackett: I was expecting a suggestion from you.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: I was saying that the Government have taken a wise step to prevent the spread of the disease.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: That is all right, but it is only half-way.

The Colonial Secretary: What would you do?

Hon. J. W. Hackett: You will have to find out what to do.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: On the same principle supposing it were white men who were being treated. A white man of course voluntarily subjects himself to medical treatment and is cured. Would you then prevent him visiting the town where he got the disease? Would you keep him in gaol or

would you expatriate him to some other place? Why should the natives be treated any differently from the white men. I would like also to draw attention to another subject which I do not think has been referred to by any hon. member so far, that is the question of immigration. I think every man who wishes this State well must acknowledge the fact that any means by which we can stimulate a healthy flow of immigration into this country should be supported, but in order to do that effectively I can quite see that one of the first conditions to be observed is to obtain the services of the agents or clerks employed in the Agent General's office. In this connection we want to have men who have got a practical knowledge of this country. I should begin in the office of the Agent General and I think if the Government wisely laid down a rule that every five years the members of that staff might be relieved in favour of a subsequent number of people who came fresh from Western Australia it would be an inducement here to many public servants to distinguish themselves so that they might be selected as necessary and efficient officers for that class of duty. Some of the officials in that office have been there for a number of years, and many have never seen Australia. I think that even from the messenger upwards the officers of that office should be picked from the youths of this country and sent Home. People chosen in the old country for the Agent General's office have not that enthusiasm that young men would have from this country, and cannot have the same amount of pride in the country, and cannot put into the immigration work the same amount of energy which could be put in by youths sent Home from the State. If we followed out this policy I have suggested, we might stimulate the bringing about of a healthy flow of immigrants to the State. In fact, in the appointment of the Agent General himself we follow a most invariable practice. There is a most undeviating rule that the term of office of no Agent General has ever been renewed. Why? Because it is recognised that three years is a long enough period

for any man to occupy the position and do what is expected of him. And then we bring into the position a man fresh from the State, a man with new ideas and with more up-to-date knowledge of the State than the man who has been sojourning in London for three years. I would like to make a few remarks on the development of tropical industries, a subject upon which I have touched several times in this House. The Premier has now given me the assurance that after this present session of Parliament he hopes to be in a position to go up to the North with some of the Ministers and view this part of the country with which so many people are not acquainted. There is nothing like personal inspection to educate one as to its possibilities, and I hope that the mission proposed by the Premier will do good to that part of the State and improve the education of many members who have not had the opportunity of seeing the immense resources that are lying neglected in the North. I am a little diffident about making a few observations on another subject that has been incidentally referred to by two or three members of this Chamber. Some members have been good enough to disassociate the members of the Royal Commission from the observations they have made, but I cannot understand how a man can disassociate an observation which has for its object the belittlement of the subject of the undertaking from those who are associated with the undertaking. I, with others, have been appointed to make inquiries on what is known as the Meat Commission. We have been set a big task. In the language of the Commission we received we have to cover this ground—to inquire into and report upon:—

“1. The available supplies of meat on stations and farms in the State of Western Australia.”

That in itself is a very large subject to deal with.

“2. Facilities for transport to market in the metropolitan and goldfields areas, and the other more closely peopled centres of the State. 3. The facilities now available for slaughter-

ing, cold storage, tinning, and other treatment, and for the sale of meat at the principal centres. 4. The means employed in connection with the distribution of meat by the retail tradesmen. 5. The methods employed in the other States of the Commonwealth with the view to the adaptability of these methods to the conditions existing in this State if found satisfactory. 6. The alleged refusal of the wholesale sellers to supply certain retail sellers alleged to have sold under fixed prices. 7. And generally into matters, which being adopted, may reasonably be expected to lead to a reduction in the price of meat to the consumer.”

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Can you give any idea when the report will be available?

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: At an early date.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is there nothing more definite than that?

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: The evidence is about being completed, but I am not going to be drawn by the observations of hon. members into making any comment at this stage of the inquiry on the evidence received. It would be unbecoming of me to do so. It would be a gross breach of the duty which every Royal Commission must observe towards the hand that gives it the seal to do the work. The report must, of course, be presented to His Excellency the Governor in the first instance.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Shall we have the report in a month?

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: I am not going to pledge myself to the hon. member to say any time. But all I will say is that it seems to be an unfailing general characteristic of all democratic assemblies that whenever a man is favoured with occupying a position above his fellows he is immediately singled out and made the scapegoat by those perhaps who think that they are hurt because there are not enough positions to go all round. I was surprised to hear Mr. Kingsmill refer in a very slighting way to the object of this Commission. I expected from him, as an old Parlia-

mentarian, at least that knowledge of courtesy in debate and that courtesy of treatment expected from one member to another, to know that this at least is not the proper time to make any caustic remarks on the report of the Commission. The proper time will be when the report is placed on the Table after presentation to His Excellency. I think it extremely bad taste on the hon. member's part, but I am sorry that he is not in his place at present to hear my remarks. As regards Mr. McLarty's remarks, they do not trouble me much. Mr. McLarty is like many other witnesses who once they have given their evidence consider the thing might as well shut up, there is no need to go any further. They seem to be endowed with the belief that because the Commission attempted to call other evidence differing diametrically from the evidence they have given, the time is wasted and money is being wasted. However, fearless and independent, the members of the Commission, to which I have the honour to belong, will do their duty.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE (North-East):

Following on the precedent of many members who have spoken in this debate to-day, I must also add my congratulations to the Government on having survived the general elections, and on having, according to the Speech, come back to Parliament with a majority that is quite equal to carrying out their policy. At the same time I think it would have been more satisfactory had the voice of the country been more decided on securing for the State a larger majority, thereby enabling us to have more stable Government. To my mind the fate of the Government to a large extent depends on the election to be held to-morrow. Should that election go against the Government, the majority they have in another place will be so small and contracted that I fear the Government will not be able to carry out that progressive policy they have initiated and have been carrying out for the past two years. While on this question I would like to add a tribute to the respect in which I hold the Minister for Mines. I am associating almost every day of my life with some of the leading mining people in Western Australia, and

during the time Mr. Gregory has been Minister for Mines I may safely say I have not heard one responsible mining man in Kalgoorlie or in the districts to the north of Kalgoorlie say one word against his administration of the Mines Department. As a matter of fact, from my own knowledge and experience in travelling through the mining portions of this State, I know that Mr. Gregory is held in the highest esteem by all those who have the interests of the mining industry in Western Australia at heart. Therefore I think it is excusable for me to wish that at the election to be held to-morrow Mr. Gregory will be successful, and that he will be able to support the present Government in carrying out their policy. As Parliament has been called together, perhaps necessarily so, late in the year, and as it has become the custom for both Houses to prorogue before the Christmas holidays, very little time is left for carrying out any extensive policy this session; therefore the Speech has little to say on measures that are to be brought before the House. At this late stage of the debate I do not intend to take up the time of the House to any great extent, but I have a few observations to make that may be pertinent to the material in the Governor's Speech. I listened yesterday with a great deal of interest to a speech made by one of my colleagues from the goldfields on the financial position of the State, and I am sure the thanks of the House are due to that member for the able manner in which he handled the figures at his disposal through the various financial statements. At the same time I may tell Mr. Kirwan that the same ground has been gone over in this Chamber before. I have lively recollections of not very long ago, when the present Leader of the House, then sitting in another part of the Chamber, attacked the Government on the very questions on which Mr. Kirwan was so explicit yesterday. Most of the departments mentioned by Mr. Kirwan as being extravagantly administered were also attacked by the present Leader of the House, and I think he was supported by a good many members sitting at that time.

The Colonial Secretary: Things were much worse then.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The need for economy has increased since then.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: I fully anticipate that when the Colonial Secretary is replying to the debate he will be on his defence and will be justifying expenditure in the various departments. One admits to-day that there is more need for more rigid economy than there was two or three years ago. We must compliment the Government on having effected a certain amount of economy. One great department that shows up above the others is the Railway Department, and in looking round for some reason as to why the Railway Department should be able to economise to so large an extent when the other departments have not been able to follow suit, one can only come to the conclusion that it is because the Railway Department, although it has a Ministerial head, is practically under the direction of a Commissioner of Railways, and the Minister cannot interfere with the Commissioner to the same extent that ministers can interfere in most of the other departments of the State. I think that reason will provide a solution why the Railway Department can effect such very large economies while other departments have apparently not been able to follow suit. I learn that various economies are being exercised in other departments by the Government, and I think that if the Government have the assistance of members of both Houses of Parliament by the end of the next two years when the Braddon Clause will have expired, in all probability the Government will have been able to square the ledgers. I give them credit for every good intention in that regard, and believe the members of the Ministry have the interests of Western Australia at heart. They have made mistakes, but few men have not done so, and a man perhaps is not worth his salt if he does not make mistakes occasionally. It has often been said that these debates on the Address-in-Reply are a mere waste of time. At all events the debates in this House this session are not a waste of time. Those who represent interests scattered over the

length and breadth of this vast State of ours come to Perth at this time of the year, meet together and have an opportunity to inform one another of the progress of the various industries. There are men who are experts in agriculture, there are experts in the pastoral industry, experts in the mining industry, and they meet and interchange their knowledge, and such must be of very great benefit to every member who listens to the debates. At all events I feel that the time has not been wasted in the debate on the Address-in-Reply during this last week. I have learnt many things about agriculture which have been of great interest and value to me. It is pleasing to know that the agricultural industry is advancing with such leaps and bounds. We know the industry will not bring immigrants to the State in thousands in a very short space of time; but we know it will draw gradually a class of immigrants badly required here. Again, we have the pastoral industry, which we are told is also in a prosperous condition. There is one industry which has not been mentioned to any extent during this debate, but which is of vast importance; that is the dairying industry. The Government are offering all kinds of facilities to people to go on the land, and they are providing them with sheep for breeding purposes. But they lose sight of the fact that although we are exporters of wool, and exporters of lambs we are large importers of all the products of the dairy. We are importing butter, bacon, cheese and eggs in huge quantities. We have the market for these products at our very doors, and the Government might well pay a little more attention to that industry, even if they have to neglect the importation of sheep to be provided for the farmers for breeding stock.

The Colonial Secretary: We have imported large numbers of dairy cows.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: The Government might do more than that.

The Colonial Secretary: They cannot give a bonus.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: They might have travelling dairies to go through the districts. The farmers should be organised, and creameries should be established

along the line of railways to supply central dairies. If the Colonial Secretary were to apply to the Victorian Government for information he would soon be told what he should do in order successfully to establish the dairying industry here.

The Colonial Secretary: How many hundreds of thousands of pounds have the Victorian Government paid away in bonuses?

Hon. R. D. MCKENZIE: We might encourage the farmers in some other way. We have a market such as Victoria had not when they started. It will take some years for us to overtake the market here. I hope greater attention will be paid by the Government to this question, and every effort made to establish firmly the industry in this State. Representing as I do a Province in which the greatest gold mines of the world are situated, it will be expected that I should say something on the question of the mining industry as it is to-day. The hon. Mr. Kirwan said yesterday that the developments at Kalgoorlie at a depth were very satisfactory. Mining men of repute have told me there is no necessity for us living here to-day to fear for the industry, because it is likely to be as strong as it is now when we have passed away. There is no question about it that the development in and around Kalgoorlie during the last 12 months has been exceptionally good. The lives of the big mines have been proved for at all events the next 10 or 20 years. The resources of some of the mines, taken at a very conservative estimate, are such that they will go on producing at the same rate as to-day for the next 20 years. Also there have been good developments on the surface, and it rested with a man digging a telephone post hole to discover on a 12-acre lease in the midst of the Golden Mile, a very valuable reef. This mine had been supervised by one of the best mining managers West Australia ever had. He had been exploiting the lease for years and spent large sums of money on it, and yet it was for a man sinking a telephone post to discover a rich lead almost on the surface. That goes to show the possibilities still in the district I rep-

resent; it goes to show the truth of what a man who looms much in the mining world of Western Australia, a man who resides in London and is at the head of several boards of large companies, said some little time ago. He said it would pay the Government to spend £100,000 in thoroughly prospecting that belt of country which extends from Hannan's Lake to Broad Arrow, a distance of 20 odd miles. When we hear of such discoveries as that made at Chaffer's lease it makes one think there is a good deal of common sense in what this gentleman said.

The Colonial Secretary: They do not spend much of their own money.

Hon. R. D. MCKENZIE: I do not say the Government should spend the sum mentioned straight away in prospecting that area; but they should spend a substantial amount. It has been the habit of the department to give a paltry £500 to a company for exploiting a lease of perhaps 24 or 36 acres. That sum to a small struggling company is practically useless. What the Government must do if they intend that the mining industry should continue to flourish is to put an amount of money on the Estimates and thoroughly test both the north and south end of the Golden Mile. It will pay them well to do it. The Colonial Secretary has interjected that the mining companies already established will not spend money in prospecting. That is only too true. It has been known to residents for many years, that these large mining companies controlled from London are very selfish institutions. They have their mines on a 21 years' lease from the Government with every prospect of renewal, and they only have to fulfil certain mining conditions while they get the ground for a nominal sum. The money they have spent in machinery and reduction plants has all come out of the ground. They have made huge dividends for their shareholders and yet not one of these wealthy companies has prospected either to the north or to the south of the Golden Mile. We find that some of the managers are rushing away to other countries looking for propositions there. In the case of the Chaffer's lease the manager was in the

north-west of Australia and in Queensland looking for properties in which to invest money, while at the same time a telephone post digger was opening up a rich lead on his practically abandoned lease. The few words I have said on this subject will perhaps cause members to think a little, and to determine them, if they have any influence at all with the Government, to try and induce them to do something towards prospecting that splendid auriferous belt we have at Kalgoorlie. We are too prone to send prospectors to the out-back country. We send them hundreds of miles from a railway and subscribe money to syndicates to do this, and when the prospector locates anything the Government are forced to follow him there with an expensive railway; whereas, alongside the present railways, we have hundreds of thousands of acres of auriferous country not properly prospected. It is regrettable that there is little or no capital made available by the residents of Western Australia for mining purposes. Our position is very different from that of Victoria, for in that State, in mining centres like Bendigo and Ballarat, people are always ready and willing to help along a mining proposition. It is not the case here, and I am sorry to say it is not the case in Kalgoorlie. If the people on the fields will not give the industry the assistance it deserves they cannot blame the people on the coast for buttoning up their pockets. There should be much more money available locally for the grand industry which has done so much for Western Australia; which has brought so much money here; which has brought so many immigrants to our shores. If there is a revival of the mining industry it will continue to bring many thousands of people here. Years ago many of the politicians said that people who came here as the result of the discovery of gold were birds of passage, who only desired to stay here for a short while, make a small competency and then return to the place from whence they came. That statement has been proved fallacious, for we are all here to-day, and some of us perhaps are as good citizens as those who have lived here all their lives. If we can again attract people here through the

medium of the mining industry history will repeat itself, and those mining investors and workers who make money will eventually gravitate to the land and become good agricultural settlers. It was regrettable to hear from Mr. Brimage that the same experience does not apply to the back blocks as applies to the large centre of Kalgoorlie. There is no doubt about it, mining there to-day is in a sad way. There have been no developments worth recounting between Kalgoorlie and Leonora during the last two years, in fact the position has been quite the other way, and a deplorably large number of mines have been closing down. Not because there is no gold there. It simply wants capital to open up most of these districts. There is no doubt, and I have it on the authority of a mining manager in Kalgoorlie, that there are hundreds of thousands of tons of ore in the East Coolgardie Goldfields which when the conditions of mining become cheaper will be worked at a profit. Coastal people must not run away with the idea that the goldfields are a thing of to-day only. They will be here in a hundred years time. The industry is going to work hand in hand and side by side with the agricultural and pastoral industries. Many people of the goldfields are applying spare capital to the taking up of land in the southern districts and in the course of the next ten or twenty years we will have in our rural population many men who have spent years of their lives on the goldfields of Western Australia. I just wish to congratulate the Government on a statement which I saw in a paper the other day and which was reported to have been made by the Premier in another place. He intended, he said, to establish almost immediately a department of industries. It has been wanted in Western Australia for some considerable time. We had here years ago several manufacturing industries which I understand have died a natural death. I refer to the bootmaking and the clothing industries. There are many industries which if fostered by the Government to a certain extent would be profitable to the State. In addition to boots and clothing why not make our agricul-

tural implements? In Victoria you have not to travel far before you pass that great manufacturing hive of industry called Sunshine, near Melbourne. See the enormous number of machines turned out there every year. Quite a considerable number of men come here to Western Australia. We are importing our agricultural machines from various parts of the world. Why should we not make them here? If the Government could start these industries going, even if only in a small way, they would gradually grow and be a material aid to the prosperity of this State. It is very pleasing to me to know that the Premier has taken this matter in hand and that he intends in the near future to do something towards getting these industries going once more. There is just one other question and one which I cannot sit down without mentioning; that is the Coolgardie Water Scheme. I was sorry to hear Mr. Patrick bring this up in his speech yesterday, because surely in all conscience this question has been so thoroughly discussed in this House that it might very well be left alone now. We decided some years ago in this House that the Coolgardie Water Scheme should be put on a sound basis and be made a paying concern. It is a paying concern. It has been decided that the sinking fund should be a national affair and not chargeable to the finances of the scheme in any shape or form. Apart from that the scheme is a commercial success. It is paying interest and all expenses, and is in addition providing a reserve fund towards the repairing or replacing of corroded pipes. So other than to once more advocate that the wishes of Parliament as embodied in the Bill which provided for the management of the scheme being placed under a board, I have very little more to say upon this question. The scheme is being managed at the present time by the secretary. The Minister for Works is nominally at the head of it, but his time is so much taken up with other duties that he is not, I am afraid, in a position to give to this great commercial undertaking all the attention it deserves. It was clearly the

intention of Parliament that it should be managed by a board of three; the Minister to be the chairman, the engineer to be a member of the board, which would be completed by the appointment of a third man. I venture to say that the scheme would be more economically managed and run on altogether better commercial lines if the Government would appoint the third member of the board and have three to control the scheme. You have only to get a man with a thorough knowledge of the wants and requirements of the goldfields, of the mines, and of the people and the pastoral industry on the goldfields; a man with a knowledge of all these and with a good commercial training, and I am sure that not only would the scheme pay working expenses and interest and provide a sinking fund for the corroded pipes, but it would probably contribute something to the Consolidated Revenue. At all events it would mean reducing the price of water to those people who are consuming it. I beg to support the motion before the House.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North): Following on my friends I think it is due that I should give a few of my ideas in reference to public affairs. I am not addressing myself to the gallery so therefore I shall make my remarks very brief. Indeed I would not have spoken at all but to draw the attention of Parliament to a question of vital importance to the northern part of the State and with that object I will read this telegram which I received yesterday from Mr. Whitlock, the Mayor of Carnarvon—

"Representative meeting of pastoralists held this afternoon consider threatened rabbit invasion. Definite information received rabbits have been seen Fresh Water Camp and Hamelin Pool. Unless immediate steps taken for their destruction pastoral industry is doomed. Meeting realising that some considerable time must elapse before the Vermin Bill can become operative and that in meantime and failing immediate steps being taken for their destruction rabbits may become too numerous to successfully

cope with decided to despatch well equipped party to destroy small colonies now existing. With this end in view local fund being raised. Meeting requests that you will use your best endeavours to obtain Government subsidy of pound for pound on amount collected locally also that you will endeavour have Vermin Bill pushed expeditiously through Parliament."

Well now that is only a copy of a telegram sent to the hon. member for the district, Mr. Butcher, and members representing the northern Province. It seems to me rather a serious position. I had intended seeing the Minister for Agriculture but I believe he has already decided upon a plan of action and has refused to grant the request for the pound for pound subsidy. However I understand he has taken some practical steps which I am sure we appreciate, inasmuch as he is sending up some trained men, experts and trappers, and they are going to try to cope with this rabbit question which has turned up in or near Carnarvon or, in other words, in the best pastoral district, not only in Western Australia but probably in all Australasia. It is a question well worthy the consideration of the Government and I do hope that all steps that can possibly be taken will be taken. The first step I think is the introduction of the Vermin Destruction Bill. This will in some measure help to contend with this threatened invasion which will be a great calamity to the country.

The Colonial Secretary: Notice has already been given of that Bill.

Hon. F. CONNOR: Yes, I know.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Are these rabbits from the East?

Hon. F. CONNOR: I do not know. These rabbits they say have been there for the last 30 or 40 years, but if they have been there all the time they have now broken bounds and when they once get past the places where they have kept to for the last 50 years, a certain evolution sets in, and they become almost a different animal, being far more destructive than the ordinary rabbit. It is certainly worth the Government's best attention that everything possible should be done to-

wards the stopping of this threatened invasion. A great deal has been said as to the industries of the State, and I give my most unqualified support to any reasonable proposition which may be brought forward by this or any succeeding Government, and which will have for its object the helping of the mining industry by the assisting of the prospectors. I say that money spent—although to some it may seem that it is not justified—that money spent even in the gambling spirit, so long as it be spent in the assistance of legitimate prospecting is money well spent, and I do hope that one of the policies of this Government will be towards the helping of the man who is prepared to go out and try to find mineral wealth in this country. I am sure whatever help is given him will be repaid tenfold in a very short time. We are told we are probably going too far in the helping of our agricultural industry. I am opposed to that idea. I think it is not possible to do too much towards helping the people on the land. The man who goes on the land has probably the worst time of all, because he has to stay there without profit longer even than the man who goes out prospecting. But neither of these two industries, the agricultural and the mining, can get too much support, and although our finances be so tight that it be found necessary to go to the British investor and ask him for more money for the development of these two industries, I say we are doing a good thing for this country even by borrowing what money may be necessary for the development of mining and agriculture. In reference to the mining industry we have heard a great deal of the development of the north of this country, and I would suggest to the Government that after all the talk we have heard as to the building of a railway from Marble Bar to the coast, it is up to them to see that this work should be no longer delayed. Because we know that in this country at present a certain amount of commercial depression exists and it is a serious position for the people in business in this country. There should be some means found of encouraging more employment, more circulation of money, more com-

merce and more trade. And one of the ways in which all this could be done in the quickest time would be by the building of this railway from the coast to Marble Bar. It is an undisputed fact that in that district we have huge valuable mineral deposits; gold, tin, copper, and various other minerals. Of course we know and we are very pleased to hear from reports lately to hand that the mining industry on the goldfields round about Kalgoorlie is on a better basis than it has been for some time and it is now proved that that will be a success for a considerable time to come.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I was trying to impress on members that all it was possible to do in connection with helping the prospector and the miner here would not be too much, no matter how far we went. If there is one thing which can bring this State out of—I will not say the depression—but the setback I will call it, under which we exist, there is one thing which in a very short time can bring the State out of this position, and that would be the opening up of new goldfields, or the development of any goldfield which at present exists. And in that regard I would suggest—I do not think this will meet with the approval of some members who represent mining constituencies—that there should be a better tenure given to the miner or prospector who finds a new goldfield, or develops any new district wherein gold is found. I advocated, 15 years ago in the Parliament of Western Australia, but not in this House, that it would be a good thing under certain conditions that where a man finds a goldfield, a restricted area under certain conditions, he having done certain things, should be given to him as a fee simple, and belong to him. Also to help the mining industry I suggest that free assays should be made for any person bringing in mineral specimens. I believe that system already exists under certain conditions. I believe a man can get a free assay.

Hon. R. D. MCKENZIE: Not at the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I am speaking of Perth. The conditions under which a man can get a free assay are such as almost to prohibit the chance of getting it. Suppose you are a prospector and bring in a mineral sample you can have it assayed free by submitting certain forms to the Mines Department and waiting for a long time for them to decide if the forms are in order. It would be in the interests of the country and the miners generally if it were possible when any person brings a sample which looks as if it contained minerals that it should be assayed right away, free, without red tapeism and without any circumlocution; the assay should be free and given at once. It may cost a lot of money, but it would be money well spent. We have heard a good deal in connection with immigration. I think it is not exactly the policy of a section—a very important section as votes go—in another place in this State. I do not think it is the wish of a large proportion of these people that we should go to extremes to get people to come to this country. I think that until we get a very large increase of population by way of immigration that our position as a State in the Federated States of Australia will remain as it is at present. I hold it is not a very satisfactory one, therefore I think it behoves the Parliament of the country to make every effort possible, and every legitimate expense should be incurred in trying to settle the country, and in obtaining desirable settlers from the old country and Europe. Mr. Piesse referred to the fact that when people settled on the land here and made their financial engagements with the banks of this country, the first year after they have settled and before they have time to develop their land or get any return for their work, there is a call made upon them. I do not know whether Mr. Piesse referred particularly when he said the banks, to the Government banks, that is the Agricultural Bank and the Savings Bank, or whether he referred more particularly to the private institutions calling themselves the private banks in this country. His idea, I think is very good, but what do we

find if we carry it to its logical sequence, which we must do from the remarks he made, and he intended us to believe them. We are entrenching on what is at present one of the bugbears of the country. We are entrenching on the rights of private enterprise, and I say whatever the duty of the Government banks may be, it is not the duty of this House, or of any other place, to interfere with the operations of the private institutions of the country. They themselves, I should say, are the best judges of what should happen, and if we interfere so far as to say they should, as my friend indicated, be compelled not to call up what is due to them on account of what is lent, we are interfering with private enterprise to such an extent that we shall interfere with the progress of the country and the freedom of the people. Private enterprise, to my mind, has been interfere with too much in this country; it has been too much hampered. Private enterprise, or a certain class of the people of the country, have been attacked by the Press, the people, and Parliament, and I have no hesitation in saying unjustly so, and until that position is altered we are in a bad state. I will not dilate on that subject, although it is one on which I could speak feelingly; I will let it pass with the few remarks I have made. I was speaking just now about the extermination of the rabbits. This is a very serious question for this particular State. If the rabbits get into the pastoral districts where our population is so small and our settlement so scattered, I should say that it will be almost an impossibility to eradicate them; and with the climate we have and the rainfall which we have, and all things connected with the country, it would be a home for the rabbits once they were established. Our first duty is to try and stop the rabbits if we can. To-day I received from a very eminent gentleman, Mr. Rodier, some pamphlets showing his way of dealing with the rabbit pest. His idea is to kill all the females and preserve the males.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: If you do that it will be all right.

Hon. F. CONNOR: Where closer settlement exists that might be possible, but where we have huge areas, and have a fence hundreds and hundreds of miles long, it would be impossible. On one side of the fence we have the man who wants the rabbits in the country, because he is a rabbitier, and because he wants to make a living by the rabbits we shall find him throwing the rabbits over the fence. I believe that has occurred. I think Mr. Rodier's idea is feasible and effective where there is closer settlement but it is something we can pass as being impossible in the great districts we have to deal with.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Has it ever been tested?

Hon. F. CONNOR: I have not known it to be effective, but if it is effective anywhere it is where there is close settlement. The finances of the country have been discussed to a great extent here, and I was delighted to see new blood coming in and showing the Government of the country, as was done by Mr. Kirwan, how it is possible that the finances should be regulated. I think the thanks of hon. members are due to the hon. Mr. Kirwan for the lucid and able manner in which he placed the position before this House. I agree with most of what he said, excepting where he indicated that it was not because of our connection with the other States under Federal control that we were in the position we are in to-day. I beg to differ from him there. I hold that our position, which is no enviable one to-day, is due, not so much to our internal administration, as to the fact that we have lost control of the principal part of the purse: that is our revenue which is represented by our Customs. If we had continued out of Federation for another 10 or 15 years and we had some small protection against the other States we could have developed our country, carried out our public works policy which we cannot do at the present time, and which we would like to do, and we would have been in a much better position than we are in to-day. I did not intend to say so much; but I suppose, now that time is not so valuable I may be excused for

going on a little further. We have heard a good deal in connection with the Coolgardie Water Scheme. Whether it is paying or not, the fact remains that it is there and it has cost over £2,000,000, and the question at present is whether it is to be continued. I would suggest to the Government that if they look at it from an ordinary standpoint it will not stay there unless there are some drastic measures taken towards its upkeep. At the present time, so far as I can understand, a great number of those pipes which conduct the water to the goldfields are in a very bad state, and as time goes on, within a few years we will find that comparatively few pipes will carry the water to the goldfields. I would suggest to the Government that the only solution is a duplication of that line of pipes. Then the question comes, how should we duplicate them? Should we put in the same class of pipes? That would, I think, be a bad policy. I would suggest, and I am giving the opinion now, not of an expert, but of a practical man who has some knowledge of this kind of work, that if a start were made with the duplication of that pipe line it would be no use putting in the same class of pipes. It would be wiser to put in cast-iron pipes. And these pipes should be put in, not to last five, or ten or fifteen years, but to last practically for all time. Of course we know that in the present condition of the finances it would be utterly impossible for us to undertake the duplication of that line under conditions such as exist to-day. But I think it would be worthy of the consideration of the Government to formulate some scheme whereby a certain amount of that work could be done each year. This alteration applies more particularly to the goldfields; but it also applies to the "cocky" along the line. To this man we have said that, as long as he can grow feed for his stock, we will supply him with water. What would happen to him if five or six miles of piping close to Perth were to break up? His stock would undoubtedly die, because he would not be able to supply them with water, and he would have no immediate outlet for them. It is worthy the consideration

of the Government that some scheme should be brought forward whereby if anything should happen to these pipes, say close to the City, that there should be some means whereby it would be possible at any rate for some years to come, to substitute other pipes so as to maintain a supply. It seems to me that is a position which has not been looked at by the Government. It is a serious position, because after all, while we appreciate the good the goldfields are doing we must take into consideration also the men who are settled on the land between the metropolis and the goldfields, and who have been induced to settle there because a water supply was guaranteed to them by the Government of this country. It behoves the Government to see that some scheme is initiated, not in the near future, but immediately, so that a calamity such as may happen if the pipes were to break down, might be prevented. Mr. Kingsmill brought before this House in a forcible manner the operation of the Electoral Act. I can speak feelingly on the Electoral Act.

The Colonial Secretary: Not this one.

Hon. F. CONNOR: Not this one perhaps, but still there is room for improvement even in this one. I hold it is not right that it should be possible for anyone to record a vote which should not be recorded. Under the present Act that is possible, and that is being done every day when elections are held. I can quote an instance myself where in an election which took place in the north about four years ago, the postal votes included the vote of a certain doctor in this country who had been a resident magistrate in the district where the votes were recorded. That gentleman who had administered the Act, and who had been a returning officer, had been out of the country for 12 months and yet his vote and that of his wife were recorded. This thing may occur at any time. Mr. Kingsmill made a proposition which, I believe, is contained in the Federal Act, whereby if you want to record a postal vote you must go before someone who is qualified, and prove your right to vote, then go before someone else who has the right to receive the vote. I think that should be

done in our State or the system of postal voting should be abolished. There is no question about it that the principle is being abused. What do we see? We see three or four elections all disputed on the postal voting question. There must be some alteration. To-morrow we shall have the election at Menzies, practically for the same reason. Where there is a sore like this it must be dealt with, and I say that the postal vote is a sore, and it wants to be altered or cut off altogether. We have been told it will be necessary to curtail our expenditure, and that with regard to some of the present public works which are now before the Parliament of the country, that we should hold our hand. As for myself I have always been a very ardent supporter of Fremantle. I have no interests there, but I have lived there for a long time and I hold that if we were in the financial position which would justify us carrying it out, there is no work I know of at present in this State which should receive more urgent attention than the construction of the dock. But I am also in the position that I must give my opinion as to that particular work, and that is, that the Government should hold their hand in regard to its construction and not say, "We will not build the dock," but say, "We will delay it for a time." I am sorry to hear some of my goldfields friends remark "Hear, hear." There is another proposition which has been before the public very largely, and that is the further supply of potent water to the metropolitan area. That will entail, if any new scheme is brought about, a very large expenditure. Although I am in favour of it, I think that until we are in a financial position to do so we should not carry it out. This scheme and the Fremantle dock I think should be relegated to the near future. Under the present conditions we have not got the money to spend. We should therefore do two things. We should borrow on a favourable market as much money as we can get on anything like reasonable conditions, and we also want to try and foster private enterprise in this country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): If there is no

other hon. member who wishes to speak I should like to make a few brief remarks. I must thank hon. members for the very good reception they have given to the Speech. I also have to thank hon. members for the kindly references they have made to the members of the Government, and in some instances to myself; and also for the pleasure they have expressed that the Government have returned to power with a good working majority. It has been said by some that the Address-in-Reply is a waste of time. I think I have been guilty of expressing the same opinion more particularly in regard to another place, but I certainly cannot hold that opinion in regard to this House on this occasion, or in fact on any other occasion. As Leader of the House I would like to congratulate members on the character of the debate that has taken place. It has been very interesting and of a very educational character, and I certainly think it has not been time wasted in any sense of the word. Remarks have been made in regard to the calling together of Parliament. It has been said that Parliament should have been called together for the transaction of business earlier than it was. I cannot agree with that. Though I have always held that Parliament should be called together as early as possible, this year we were faced with rather exceptional circumstances. On account of the term of the Legislative Assembly expiring so late in the year the elections were held very late in the year, but Parliament was called together as soon after the elections as possible. Most of the elections were held on the 11th September, but there were some outside districts of the State, more particularly Kimberley, where it was not possible to have them held so soon. It was said by some members that the Kimberley election was unnecessarily delayed. That is not correct. It was not delayed a day longer than necessary. Kimberley is an enormous stretch of country where there are no railways or telegraphs, and the matter of getting the ballot boxes and the necessary forms to some of the outlying booths was no small

matter, while sufficient time had to be allowed to enable postal votes to come in from the distant parts, which takes a considerable time because there are no regular mail services. In an electorate of that kind there are small groups of electors where there can be no polling booths, therefore a big percentage of the votes in the Kimberley election had necessarily to be polled by the postal vote system. There is one matter in which I am particularly interested, and that is the early closing question. It is said that the Government have bungled this somewhat, or that I as Minister controlling the Act have bungled it. But such is not the case. Briefly the position is this. The Early Closing Act provides that the time for closing shops shall be left to the choice of the shopkeeper. Under Section 4 of the Act it is provided that there shall be a half-holiday on Wednesday or on Saturday and the choice is left to the shopkeeper. Before the latter end of last year that was the position of affairs. In other words the shopkeepers carried on their business under Section 4 of the Act; some elected to close on Saturday and some elected to close on Wednesday. Section 5 of the Act provides that where a majority of shopkeepers in any given district petition the Government, the Governor-in-Council may proclaim a fixed half-holiday for that district. Mark, Section 5 deals with the district; Section 4 deals with individuals. Towards the latter end of 1907 a petition was presented from certain metropolitan districts. I want hon. members to remember that the metropolitan area is divided into 17 or 19 statutory early closing districts. These districts are laid down in the Early Closing Act and we cannot alter them or make them all one district without an amendment of the Act. In July of 1907 a deputation waited on the Premier and asked that the Saturday half-holiday should apply to the metropolitan area, though it was from Perth more particularly I think the deputation came. Mr. Langsford has said that the Premier in reply to that deputation said that he would not grant any petition unless it applied to the whole metropolitan area. Such was not the

case; and if hon. members will turn up the *West Australian* of the 7th June, 1907, they will see that the Premier's reply was not as the hon. member stated. Just to put the matter right, because it has been mentioned frequently that the Government have said that they would not make any alteration unless it applied to the whole metropolitan area, I will quote that part of the Premier's reply to the deputation. He said:—

"The argument appealed to him as he had had personal experience in volunteering and rifle shooting as to the difficulty of getting a good muster on any one day, because some attended on the Wednesday afternoon and some on the Saturday afternoon. The Saturday half-holiday had worked well in Hobart, Brisbane, and Adelaide, and there seemed to be a general desire to have it here, and he would be glad to take the necessary steps as soon as the employers took the steps required by the Act. The initial steps were to provide a memorial in the special terms provided by the Act, and when that was done he would be prepared to deal with the matter without delay. He understood however that the change was to apply only to the metropolitan area, namely the districts from Fremantle to Midland Junction inclusive."

There is nothing in that reply of the Premier's that would lead one to believe that the Premier stated that no change would apply unless it applied to the metropolitan area. What happened was this: the papers came to me as Minister controlling the Act, and I found that the petition covered, and had a majority in, almost every district in the metropolitan area. I think there were Claremont, Bayswater, and some places that had not the necessary majority or had not been canvassed. I then suggested that the petitioners might be written to and that it might be possible to include the whole of the districts in the metropolitan area in the petition. The petition was not refused; it was merely a suggestion on my part; and that suggestion was readily complied with, as apparently everyone was then in favour of the Saturday half-holiday. The necessary majority for these

districts having been obtained, the wish was acceded to and the proclamation was issued for the change to come into force on the 1st January, 1908. That state of affairs went on for a few months, but it was not very long before the shopkeepers became dissatisfied. At the time they instituted the Saturday half-holiday apparently everyone was unanimous, but in a few months the shopkeepers found that a mistake had been made and they petitioned for a change. The first petition for a change was sent in about May of this year and embraced certain districts in the metropolitan area, Fremantle, East Fremantle, North Fremantle, Subiaco, and Perth. The petitions were closely scrutinised and were found to fall just a little short of a majority in each case. There were one or two short of half the total number of shopkeepers in each district. Consequently I advised the petitioners that there was nothing for it but to refuse the petitions, because the statutory position is that no alteration can be made unless there is a majority. Once the holiday is fixed for a district, if a majority of the shopkeepers in that particular district do not sign it, it is necessary to refuse the petition. However, the Perth shopkeepers were not satisfied, and again took round a petition for their own particular district, and though it was said it was from only one district that district contains more than half the total shops in the whole metropolitan area. There were the signatures of 635 shopkeepers of non-scheduled shops out of a total of 1,206. When that petition came in it was closely examined, and I found that it contained a substantial majority of shopkeepers in the Perth district. I then obtained the advice of the Crown Law Department and the Attorney General on the matter, and that advice was that first of all it was clearly the intention of the Act that the matter should be left in the hands of the shopkeepers. That was the course always taken in the past. The Act clearly lays it down that the majority of shopkeepers shall decide in regard to the district. Therefore it was clearly the intention of Parliament, no matter what our own personal feelings

may be, whether we favour Saturday or Wednesday, to leave it in the hands of the shopkeepers alone. We were thus advised by the Crown Law authorities and by the Attorney General that there was really no choice. Having obtained a majority in the district the shopkeepers could as a matter of right claim it, and would probably succeed in a petition of right had the request contained in their petition been refused. Consequently, being satisfied there was a substantial majority in Perth, I recommended to the Government that the Saturday half-holiday proclamation be repealed for the Perth district, and that the change should come into force from the 1st December. Briefly those are the facts of the case. It is altogether wrong to argue from the standpoint that Saturday is better than Wednesday or Wednesday better than Saturday. My position as Minister is to administer the Acts as I find them. I am prepared to say it would have been much easier, as some suggest, to shirk the responsibility and bring it to Parliament and say, "Shall we have the Act amended, or shall we have the Saturday half-holiday?" But the Government did not take that course. We were prepared to take the responsibility, be it popular or unpopular. The Act clearly laid it down that the matter should be in the hands of the shopkeepers; and when we ascertained that, we were prepared to take the responsibility ordering that the proclamation should issue and that the change should take place from the 1st December next. That brings us back to this, that the choice is now in the hands of each shopkeeper to close on the Wednesday or on the Saturday, which was the position previously. We certainly propose, and a Bill has been given notice of in another place, to make some slight amendment in the Act that will bring it into line with the Acts in the other States, namely, to leave it to the ratepayers instead of the shopkeepers, which I unhesitatingly say from my experience of the working of the Act—and I have had a good deal of experience of it in the last 12 months—will be much more satisfactory, because the definition of a shop is extremely wide. It says, "any place that sells goods by retail," and it is very difficult to say what is

a shop and what is not a shop. For instance a man who retails firewood is just as much a shopkeeper as Foy's or Brennan's or some of those other big firms employing hundreds of employees. So it will be much more satisfactory to leave it in the hands of the rate-payers. No doubt there is something in the remarks of hon. members when they give their reasons for not being in favour of the Act at all. Probably if there were no Early Closing Act now there would never be one. At the time it was enacted the position as far as the shop assistants were concerned was very bad indeed. They had to work long hours, and the reason the Act was brought in was to regulate their hours. Since then, however, we have had introduced a Conciliation and Arbitration Act to fix the hours of employees, and probably, if there had been no Early Closing Act, the employees would have come under this particular measure, and would have had their hours fixed for them the same as in other walks of life, while the shopowners, if they liked, could have worked when they pleased, the same as a mine owner, a builder, etc. With regard to the Electoral Act, there is no doubt that the measure is a distinct improvement on any previous one. Certainly in my recollection there has never been a time when the rolls were as clean as they are now. In that respect they excel by far any prepared under previous Acts. I know that some contend there is a fault in one direction, and that is in connection with the upsetting of an election, when a number of votes have been polled by people who should not have been enrolled as electors. Some argue that if a man's name is on the roll his vote should not be challenged subsequently. I am not prepared altogether to agree with that, for a scrutiny and great care cannot be exercised in every case before the name appears on the roll, and it is only right that every vote should be subject to review by the Court of Disputed Returns, such as it is to-day. There would certainly not be a pure roll if electors knew they could get on the roll anyhow. There must be plenty of avenues placed at the disposal of people to enable

them to get on the roll, for it is so difficult to get many to register their votes, and if there were no review subsequently there would be many peculiar instances of wrongful admission of votes. I agree that it would be very improper for the Court to have the right to trace a ballot paper, be it a postal vote or otherwise, and to find out how the elector had voted. As to the postal votes, probably there is a good deal in what members have said, and it is questionable whether, at any rate in the Assembly electorates, postal votes should not be abolished. I am not prepared to agree with that, but I think that greater restrictions, with regard to the Assembly votes, might be placed on the postal voters. There has been criticism with regard to the finances of the State. I do not think that criticism has been in any way unfair, for in fact it has been quite friendly, and neither the Government nor I object to criticism at any time. We are all here for the one purpose of doing the best we can for the country. At the same time I think I can, without much trouble, put up a defence on behalf of the Government to the criticisms offered in the present instance. The Government have not been lax in studying economy in every department. I know some members have said that certain departments are costing too much and compare the cost with similar departments in the Commonwealth and in the other States. Probably I took a similar view when a private member, when I was satisfied to compare one return with another, thinking that therefrom I could obtain full information; but I have learned since being in office that these returns are not all compiled on the same basis and therefore it often happens that one argues from wrong premises altogether.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What are the good of the returns then?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am referring to the comparisons made between this State and another. Mr. Kirwan mentioned that we had received only £27,000 less from the Commonwealth last year than we had the year before. He should remember that £27,000 in hard times is a good deal of money,

and that it is £10,000 more than we received from the land and income tax during the last financial year.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That is a very small portion of a sum of between £700,000 and £800,000.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is so, but the hon. member should remember this, that last year we balanced the ledger to within a couple of thousand pounds. That is better than has been done for many years past. There had been very big deficits previously to that year. We would have had a small surplus had we not lost this sum of £27,000 through the treatment we received from the Federal Government at the last moment. Some members say that no economies have been effected, and Mr. Kirwan particularly mentioned the Lands Department. His choice is not altogether a happy one, for that department shows that considerable economies were effected. Take the report of the Under-Secretary for Lands, which I laid on the Table the day before yesterday, and it will be found there that in the Lands Department very great economies were effected. According to that report in the year 1904 the revenue of the department was £183,000, and the expenditure £138,000, leaving a surplus of £45,000. The proportion of expenditure to revenue was 75 per cent., which really meant the cost of administering the department as compared with the total receipts. What did we find last year? The revenue had gone up to £262,000 and the expenditure had dropped to £110,000. This large decrease of £28,000 in the expenditure was effected notwithstanding the fact that the revenue had gone up to so great an extent. In a department like the Lands increased business cannot be done without increased expenditure. That is to say that when a great deal of land is taken up there have to be more officers, more surveys, more land guides, etcetera. The present cost, however, notwithstanding the increase in work and the cost of doing that work, was reduced by £28,000.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: In the first four months of this financial year there was

an increase of £6,000 in the revenue and an increase of £4,000 in the expenditure.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are special circumstances with regard to a department like the Lands, for the rents only come in twice a year, and almost the entire revenue is received in two instalments. I am not certain which are the months.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: September and March.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: This does not explain the increased expenditure.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The revenue for the four months would be small. In the department there are always certain months in which the expenditure is particularly heavy, and in certain months there is practically no revenue; consequently it is not right to take the figures for four months and make the comparisons from them. The report of the Under Secretary for Lands clearly indicates that many economies have been effected. If it were necessary to do so it would be possible to run the department at less cost, and for a time to get an increased revenue, but that would be a very short-sighted policy. The increased revenue would be obtained only for a limited time as land settlement would stop. It would be very foolish to do that, as every additional settler means a greatly increased revenue in years to come. In other departments there have also been great economies, and I will refer as an instance to the Police Department. I have come in for a good deal of blame for spending a somewhat large sum of money in certain directions. I am, however, in the unfortunate position of being in charge of a department the expenditure of which in certain instances I am unable to control. The worse the times are the larger the expenditure necessary in certain directions, such as charity. Mr. Randell will agree with me when I state that in bad times the expenditure on charities is always much larger than in good times. When people are not doing well they come on the country to a greater extent for funds for charities. One can keep a close eye on this department, but it is impossible to reduce expenditure. People must have

hospitals and charity, and while one can keep an eye on the disbursements it is practically impossible to control them. As to the Police Department, the cost last year was £4,000 less than in the previous seven or eight years, notwithstanding the fact that the number of men in the force was no less.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan : What I said was that in all the departments put together, except the Railway Department, there was an increase of expenditure during the past 12 months as compared with the previous year. That is taking the sum total of all the departments except the Railway Department.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : It must not be forgotten that with increased population and revenue there must necessarily be, to a certain extent, increased expenditure. Even with the reduction in expenditure in the Police Department, the earnings of the department were £3,000 greater than in the previous year. That really means that there has been an improvement in the finances of the department to the extent of nearly £7,000 as compared with the previous year.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan : There was a substantial reduction in the sum total of the revenue.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie : Where does the revenue of the Police Department come from ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : From people who hire policemen, from gold escorts, from the stealing of gold, etcetera.

Hon. G. Randell : If there happens to be a fall in the revenue it is not seen at once.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : No. As the hon. member has correctly observed, when there is a fall in revenue we cannot indicate it at once. It takes some little time for these economies to be seen, but I venture to say that at the end of the year they will be clearly discernable. It is quite impossible to see them straight away. I have before me a report of the Inspector General of Insane. Unfortunately in that department the expenditure has increased very much. We have no control over it. If the people require

a hospital for the insane we must provide it. Still the administration is satisfactory. The average cost has come down year by year. It has been reduced from 15s. 3d. to 12s. 3d. All you can do in these departments is to watch the administration and see that they are economically administered with justice to the people who have to use them. There is another department which Mr. Kirwan has mentioned and a department which he certainly knows a great deal about : that is the Printing Department. In picking up these returns you are not always seized of the facts, because in the Government it is not like in a private business. You do not put the money into the bank and take it out again. No matter what sum goes in it does not affect the paying out. That is the case with the Government Printing Office. There have been some substantial reductions made in the printing office during the last three or four years. In the year 1904-5 the expenditure amounted to £36,362, whereas last year it was only £28,683. There is a reduction of nearly £8,000 per annum. During last year also there was included in that expenditure of £28,000 a sum of £4,570, representing work done for the Commonwealth outside the State altogether.

Hon. G. Randell : Did you get paid for it ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Yes.

Hon. G. Randell : Then the Commonwealth is honest sometimes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : But that does not affect the expenditure item. Besides that £4,570 we paid £717 for light and power which was not previously paid for out of the votes, and the printer also expended £1,200 out of revenue for machinery. At the same time it must be remembered that we did 50 per cent. more work. So when you look at all these circumstances it will be seen that there is a very substantial reduction in respect to the Printing Office, and I can assure hon. members that that is going to continue. Further economy is to be made, and there is not the least doubt that there is still scope for it. In regard to the closing of hospitals, I am quite alive to the necessity of doing all we possibly

can to supply the people of the State with hospitals, and I do not think it can be said of the Government that they have been wanting in their duty in this respect. I say there has been more done for the people of this State in the way of providing hospitals than has been the case in any other State. But at the time the hon. member occupied the position there was no help for it. People came here in such numbers that the Government had to take the matter up for themselves and establish hospitals. But now the position is somewhat altered. I am trying to put the hospitals on a different basis. The country hospitals are costing the Government too much altogether. They are receiving a subsidy, and the Government up to the present time has had little or no control over them. If the people wish to maintain hospitals at every centre nine, ten or twelve miles apart, they will have to maintain them for at their own expense than in the past.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: In the North they are sometimes hundreds of miles apart.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are not so badly off in the North, either. In the other States you do not see so many hospitals close together. I am desirous that these hospitals on the gold-fields should not be closed. But, take Malcolm, where the patients cost over £2 a day, as against 8s. in Kalgoorlie. Now the Government are not justified in allowing that to continue. Still the Government know full well how hazardous is the mining industry, and consequently they are loth to diminish the hospital accommodation, where it can be shown to be at all necessary. I am increasing the salary of the doctor and giving a lump sum to ensure the maintenance of a nurse, which will be sufficient to keep that hospital open. It will be open then for casualty cases and there will be a doctor in the district for maternity cases or casualties; and if they want more than that we are justified in asking them to contribute a little themselves. The Government must do something to prevent this expense going up by leaps and bounds as it has been doing. The vote is over £80,000 now and

will probably be £90,000 on the new Estimates, and I think we are not unreasonable in acting in the way we are doing. I am quite alive to the necessity of giving people proper hospital accommodation and proper medical attendance, but people who can afford to pay will in the future have to pay.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: You do not keep nurses in the hospitals north of Geraldton.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is one in Broome. In regard to another matter, the closing of the Old Men's Home in Geraldton, I was accused of showing a want of feeling in that respect. That I deny. The position briefly was this. We have in the State an Old Men's Home at Claremont, which is a new institution built expressly for the purpose. We have in Fremantle a similar institution. Years ago there was a big hospital, too big in fact, built in Geraldton because it was thought that all the Murchison patients would come down there. It was not utilised. The Old Men's Depot here was an old, patched-up building, and we thought we would utilise the building up there as an old men's depot. Later on we built an up-to-date establishment at Claremont. The position was this. At Geraldton the inmates were costing about 20 per cent. more than at Fremantle. At Geraldton they cost £28 a year, at Fremantle £18, and at Claremont £22. In regard to the Claremont figure it must be remembered that the relatively high cost was owing to the fact that all the sick men were there and were practically in hospital all the time, attended to by two or three nurses and a couple of wardsmen. However we had room for them in Claremont and the move showed a clear saving of about £500 per year. The question was whether we should continue to incur that expense or remove those men to Claremont. Clearly it meant very considerable saving. The point the hon. Mr. Kingsmill mentioned was that these men all belonged to the district and would not be happy anywhere else. I have made inquiries into that and I have found that very few of them belong to the district, and that all are well content

where they are. The institution at Geraldton was not a suitable place for them. It was right in the town and we would have had to spend a considerable amount of money in fencing the grounds and in otherwise improving the place. Then again the conduct of the men up there was not altogether satisfactory. They would wander down into the town and get drunk. So instead of increasing the capital expenditure and the annual expenditure we decided to shift them down to Claremont.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: I do not suppose they would go back to Geraldton of their own choice.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, I do not think they would. Some criticism has been made on account of the Government reducing their public works vote. One hon. member said he was rather pleased to see that the public works expenditure had been reduced. But then he became quite distressed on finding that an amount had been taken out of the loan vote and spent on public buildings. I admit it is not desirable to spend loan money on public buildings if you can possibly avoid it, but the position was that we had some £150,000 less works revenue than in former years which we could spend on buildings. Such a building as the Claremont Hospital for the Insane was urgently required, so we decided that those buildings should be proceeded with out of loan moneys. If you look at it from a business point of view it was a good proposition. It was something similar to the Old Men's Home at Geraldton. By constructing that building for the specific purpose of a hospital for the insane we were enabled to reduce the working cost by £1,000 per annum.

Hon. G. Randell: Have all the patients been removed from Fremantle?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are about 100 still left. They will be removed when the next ward is finished. The £4,000 represents a good part of the interest on the loan money spent on the building, and it must be remembered that if we build a substantial structure likely to last a hundred years there is some justification for spending loan

money upon it, because on each loan we provide a sinking fund that will wipe off the loan entirely in less than fifty years, by which time the building will be as good as it is to-day. It is not the same as spending loan money on buildings that will wear out in a few years, and we confine the expenditure of loan money to buildings of a substantial nature. Of course, I agree that it would be better not to spend loan money on erecting buildings, and I hope that it will be possible to stop the expenditure and that we will not have to do it in the future; but we have not gone in for expenditure of this description to the same extent as they have in other States. In Tasmania 9 per cent. of the loan indebtedness is on unproductive works of this nature; in New South Wales the percentage is $5\frac{1}{2}$, in Queensland 4, in Victoria $3\frac{1}{2}$, and in South Australia 3 per cent., whereas in Western Australia it is just a trifle over 1 per cent.

Hon. G. Randell: Because we have always opposed it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: And rightly so; but here it is a case of necessity, though I trust there will be no need to go on with it any longer.

Hon. R. F. Sholl: They have no sinking fund in the other States, and the sooner that is done away with here the better.

Hon. G. Randell: The financial position is not so acute as it was in 1897 and 1898.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, and the State soon recovered then. There was certain criticism by Mr. Moss on the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. I agree with Mr. Pennefather, and disagree with Mr. Moss in regard to that Act. Although the Act has not worked out exactly as was intended, and though it has not been as successful as we hoped, still I do not see any justification for repealing it.

Hon. G. Randell: The principle is right.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, and I am satisfied that though it may be broken in certain instances it has done a great amount of good, and we must remember that there is always in existence

the machinery ready for any parties to have their cases heard. Unquestionably in most cases of arbitration the award is not satisfactory to all parties, but if the parties cannot accept the award it is no justification for repealing the Act. I have a clear recollection of introducing an amendment to that Act, and I was criticised because it was said to be extremely harsh on the unions. I would like the critics of my measure to see the measure passed by the New South Wales Parliament, and that now before the Parliament of the democratic country of New Zealand, if it has not already passed there. My critics should see the penalties and restrictions against strikes in those Acts. In comparison our measure was very mild. After all it is the only way to do it. There should be a sufficient penalty that can be enforced on both sides. At any rate, the Act was passed for the workers, and they should be the first to abide by it. Mention has been made of the aborigines, and this country has suffered a great deal of criticism because of our treatment of the aborigines. In a good many cases the criticism has not been deserved, because the natives here have been much better treated, notwithstanding all that has been said, than they have been treated in any of the other Australian States; they are well cared for and the expenditure on the aborigines is increasing year by year. We have established lock hospitals on Bernier and Dorre Islands, off Carnarvon. On the former island, we have 100 females, who arrived there the other day, and the other island will be prepared for the reception of about 250 males, to be placed there during the next six months. I know that it is not a nice subject to talk about, or to think about, but still the position of these unfortunate natives was such that expenditure was necessary, though it is going to be an expensive matter, £2,000 for the maintenance of each of these hospitals. I trust that by the treatment they received these unfortunates will be entirely cured and that they will not fall victims again.

Hon. R. W. Pennefather : What will you do with them when they are cured?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : It is estimated that it will take two years before they are finally cured, and in the meantime we will take that matter into consideration.

Hon. R. F. Sholl : You will probably send them back to be again contaminated.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Some people think that we have not been as vigorous in our immigration policy as we should have been, but I would remind members that we must be careful as to the class of people we introduce. There is no room for the artisan, the miner, or the ordinary workman; there is no manufacturing going on and the mining industry has quite enough men to supply its wants. So we are compelled to fall back on introducing farmers or farm labourers. Last year we brought out from Great Britain 1,200, and from the Eastern States and through the Melbourne agency we brought over 250, irrespective of the wives and families of these 250 men. Without fear of contradiction, I say we are establishing far and away a better class of immigrants than some of the other States, because we are careful as to whom we bring out. The men are carefully selected at Home. We are assisting *bona fide* farm labourers. It is said that there are some farm labourers unemployed in the State, but that is probably because they are not what the farmers consider suitable, because directly a *bona fide* farm labourer comes here he soon secures work. The same remarks apply to domestic servants. We are getting out a class of farmers with small capital who are settling on the land. When these immigrants arrive they are well treated. If they are assisted immigrants they are taken to a home and kept there for a week until they have time to get employment or to look round and take up land. I do not know that there is much more for me to say, except to remark, as Mr. Randell mentioned a little while ago, that though the finances of the State are not as rosy as we would like, at the same time they are not as bad as they looked in 1897 and 1898, and that the deficit is not what it was in that year. I do not say there is

no justification for not exercising the strictest economy : it is being exercised ; but I say that the resources of the country are as good to-day, in fact better than they were 10 years ago.

Hon. J. Kirwan : But at that time we were not face to face with the Brad-don Clause difficulty.

Hon. G. Randell : At that time 13,000 or 14,000 people left the State.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Never mind about Federation ; we have millions of acres of agricultural land, more than we dreamt of in those days.

Hon. R. F. Sholl : And you are buying more.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Yes ; and cutting them up into small holdings. The mines are in an infinitely better position to-day than they were in those days. We used to say on the goldfields, "These are beautiful mines;" but we had no right to say that, because the mines then were not proved. Since those days our agricultural country has improved, and the mines have been proved to a great depth, and are just as likely to last our life time, if not longer. It is satisfactory to see the development of our mines, and although it has only taken place in a few deep mines, that is because there are only a few deep mines in the State. But it proves that the lodes go down, and if they go down in one place there is no reason why they should not go down all over the place. Mr. McKenzie mentioned that on the Golden Mile rich gold had been found where thousands of men had walked every day. That may mean another mine, which is something, or it may mean more, but it proves the vast possibilities of the country. If that gold could lie in such a spot undiscovered all this time, what a number of mines may be found in that vast area known to be auriferous almost without break from Norseman to Peak Hill? When we think of the resources of the State I do not think we have anything to fear. It must also be remembered that the agricultural railways we construct are responsible for expenditure of interest and sinking fund, but we will not get the benefit of revenue from those lines until the land is

in a producing state and the people are living along the lines. Then, not only will the lines be paying, but we will be deriving other revenue from those producers. That will undoubtedly come to pass. Therefore, looking at things from all points of view, I think we have nothing to fear in this State, but that everything is satisfactory.

Question put and passed ; the Address adopted and ordered to be presented to the Governor.

House adjourned at 8.57 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 19th November, 1908.

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

KURRAWANG WOOD STRIKE, TERMINATION.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) : I would like to inform the House that I have received a telegram from Mr. Brophy, Sub-Inspector of Police, which reads, "The Premier desires me to inform you that the Kurrawang wood strike is now practically ended. Truck loading and cutting and carting are in full swing."