

# Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 3rd July, 1906.

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

## PRAYERS.

### QUESTION—TIMBER INDUSTRY INQUIRY, FEES.

MR. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What fee per sitting was paid (a) to the Chairman of the Board of Inquiry into the Timber Industry, and (b) to each of the other members of the board? 2, What was the total amount of fees paid in connection with the inquiry?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, (a) £2 2s.; (b) £2 2s. 2, £371 14s.

### QUESTION—IRONWORK, HUDSON & RITCHIE.

MR. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What amount has been paid to the firm of Hudson & Ritchie, North Fremantle, from the 1st of January to the present date for ironwork in connection with rolling stock for the Railways Department? 2, What is the total amount paid to this firm for all work done for the Railway Department within those dates?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, From 14th May to 8th June, 1906, vacuum brake forgings £802 18s. 9d.; 13th June, 1906, first progress payment in connection with manufacture of five "A.J." brake vans £1,118 15s. 1d. 2, £1,921 13s. 10d.

### QUESTION—MINING, SUNDAY WORK.

MR. P. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Was permission given the management of the Kalgurli Mine to

work their employees on Sunday, May the 6th? 2, What were the reasons for which such permission was granted? 3, Was the Federated Miners' Union consulted? If so, on what date?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Permission was not accorded the management of the Kalgurli Mine to work on Sunday, May 6th.\* 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

\* Application, however, was made by several mines at Kalgoorlie for a permit to work on Sunday, the 6th May, to enable them to grant a holiday to their employees on the following Wednesday, Eight Hours Day. This permit was conditionally approved subject to its being mutually arranged between employers and employees. The application was made on the 3rd May, and the Secretary of the Miners' Association was advised by wire on the 5th May to the effect that the Minister had no objection provided the employees were willing.]

### QUESTION—RAILWAY SPUR, MOUNT MONGER.

MR. HORAN asked the Premier: In view of the Governor's Speech containing reference to the proposed Norseman Railway, does he consider it advisable to carry out the request made to the Minister for Mines to provide by State aid a spur railway to Mt. Monger?

THE PREMIER replied: The request referred to has been approved of, but that will not affect the construction of a line from Coolgardie to Norseman, which will be considered with other railway propositions.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY MINISTERIAL CAR, HOW USED.

MR. HORAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, On whose authority was the Ministerial car sent from Perth to Kalgoorlie on a recent occasion to convey a Mr. Butler from Kalgoorlie to Perth? 2, What was the cost of such service? 3, In view of the fact that Mr. Butler expressed himself as well pleased with a reserved compartment, does the Minister consider such expenditure justifiable?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, On the authority of the Commissioner of Railways. 2, Approximately 40s. 3, The Department is not aware that Mr. Butler expressed any such opinion. Mr. Butler was a member of, and attended, the Chamber of Commerce Conference in Perth, the visiting members of which were provided by the Government with passes, and generally treated as distinguished visitors. He was

taken seriously ill on the fields with hemorrhage, and for some days his condition was very serious. In view of this, and that it was necessary that the return to the coast should be as little disturbing as possible, an inspection car, being at liberty, was placed at his disposal.

#### QUESTION—MINING MACHINERY INSPECTION, PILBARRA.

MR. HORAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When was the last inspection made by the Inspector of Machinery or his deputy of the boilers and plant situated on the Pilbarra Goldfields? 2, Will he submit to the House any reports by such officers?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The Pilbarra Goldfields Districts have not been proclaimed under the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904; therefore no machinery and boilers have been inspected to date.

#### QUESTION—GOVERNMENT HOUSE, AS A UNIVERSITY.

MR. HORAN asked the Premier: In view of the appointment of Sir Edward Stone as Lieutenant Governor, and the resolution of this House affirming the undesirability of the British Government continuing to appoint Governors for this State, will the Government, consistently with the foregoing, take into consideration the conversion of Government House into a University, after the expiration of the term of the present distinguished occupant of that position?

THE PREMIER replied: It is not desirable to announce any decision on this question, until the occasion arises for the appointment of a successor to the present distinguished occupant.

#### QUESTION—MINES DEVELOPMENT, MURCHISON AND PEAK HILL.

MR. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What proportion of the Loan funds allocated to the development of mining on the Murchison and Peak Hill Goldfields is still unspent? 2, (a) What amount has been expended during the past year of the £12,500 showing to credit of these fields at the beginning of the financial year 1905-1906? (b) Details of such expenditure?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I desire to draw attention to the fact that this reply, which I will not read but will lay on the table of the House, is really a return. In addition to works mentioned in the return, water supplies for Yuin and Meekatharra, and road from Cue to Barrambie, have been authorised, estimated to cost respectively £350, £900, and £300.

#### QUESTION—STATE BATTERIES PURCHASE.

MR. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Have any batteries been purchased since the present Battery Inquiry Board has been holding its inquiry? 2, If so, (a) Were they new or second-hand plants? (b) From whom were they purchased, and on whose recommendation? (c) The price agreed to be paid in each case?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, One battery is under option, and the purchase will probably be completed within the next few days. 2, Second-hand. 3, Silverthorne & Adair, after report by the State Mining Engineer. 4, £1,400. The purchase includes—Gold-mining lease with shaft, poppet-legs, and winding engine. Two water rights, water shaft, and tank with estimated capacity of 1,000,000 gallons, with piping, vertical boiler, and pump.

#### QUESTION—ADVERTISING BY GOVERNMENT, COST.

MR. HOLMAN asked the Premier: 1, Was any farther expense above the £150 for the advertisement incurred by the Government in the distribution of the information contained in the *Perth Daily News* publication of 8th November, 1905? 2, If so, what amount?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, £62 was paid to Street and Company, London, for reproducing the information in the *Agricultural Gazette*.

#### QUESTION—ABATTOIRS AT KALGOORLIE.

MR. WALKER asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to build abattoirs at Kalgoorlie?

THE PREMIER replied: Yes.

# QUESTION — WATER MAINS EXTENSION, LEEDERVILLE AND NORTH PERTH.

MR. VERYARD asked the Minister for Works: 1, Does he intend to extend the water mains to North Leederville and North Perth, as promised by his immediate predecessor? 2, If so, when?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Extensions being carried out at present time; two miles laid in Leederville out of a total scheme of 13 miles; half-mile laid in North Perth out of a total scheme of 11 miles. 2, Major portion will be laid by December, 1906.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Southern Cross municipal by-laws.

By the TREASURER: Fire Brigades, receipts and payments, 1905.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: Goldfields Water Supply Construction Branch, balance sheet.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: Expenditure on Murchison and Peak Hill Goldfields, return.

## BILL—FIRST READING.

Bills of Sale Act 1899 Amendment, introduced by the Attorney General.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### FOURTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous Thursday.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price): I trust that in the few remarks I have to make on this Address, I shall not unnecessarily labour the personal element which has already been so freely introduced in the course of this discussion. But at the same time, it is utterly impossible for anyone who has been subjected to the attacks levelled at me during the last sitting of this House to ignore altogether the matters which were then brought forward. However, I will do my best to keep my remarks free from anything of a recriminatory nature. Since the House last sat I have been turning over in my mind the reason why the members for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) and Mt. Leonora (Mr. Lynch) were so personal in the speeches they delivered last week; and I can come to only one conclusion, that other opportunities for criticism are so few that those members

have to adopt the methods of a pettifogging lawyer with an extremely bad case, and so abuse their opponents. We were told by gentlemen on the other side of the House that part of the Government programme was stolen. I have yet to learn that such important proposals as were made at Bunbury by the Premier—proposals for a tax on the unimproved value of land and for extending land settlement in this State—were evolved by the minds of the members of the Political Labour Party in Western Australia. It seems to me that these proposals were thought of and propounded long before many of those individuals came into political life. These proposals belong to the whole of the community, and no more belong to those sitting on the Opposition side of the House than the air which we breathe. They have no more a monopoly than we have in regard to those great principles which are common to all mankind, and which regulate our conduct.

MR. TAYLOR: Some of these proposals were thought of 25 years ago.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Thought of perhaps 125 years ago. The great accusation is that we have stolen their policy, and the very accusation proves the extremes of poverty to which they are driven when they have to criticise our methods and proposals. Such an admission in itself is an admission that the policy proposed by this Government is a good one, and a forward one, and one which the country approves of and is prepared to take—yes, and one which they (the Opposition) have no right to oppose. It has been shown by the Press criticisms throughout the country that our proposals have the approval of the country, and not only has it been shown in this way, but it has also been shown by the result of the recent elections. It is all very well to say that the election in which I was one of the chief participators was won by bribery of an extreme description. This is nothing more nor less than a travesty of the truth; and I trust that before I sit down I shall show this is the case. I can make many allowances for my friend the member for Leonora. For some ten days he was worrying himself to a shadow, talking so vehemently that many listeners were driven to frenzy;

and then at the end of that time, he found his hopes destroyed, his idol fallen. We can understand that he is filled with chagrin, that he looks at things through coloured spectacles, and that he is jaundiced in the view he takes when he makes unfavourable comments so far as my personal conduct is concerned. But there is a limit to fair criticism; and I submit to the House that when the hon. member suppresses facts and distorts incidents he has passed the limits of fair criticism. I shall have no difficulty in showing he did so the other evening. During the course of the election campaign in which I was engaged I delivered four speeches, which were fairly and fully reported by the Press of this State; and, let hon. members mark, during the whole course of the remarks which the member for Leonora addressed to this House on this particular subject, he did not give one single quotation from my published remarks which in any way tend to show that I was guilty of dangling a bribe in the eyes of the electors.

MR. COLLIER: I will give you some.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall deal with the hon. gentleman directly. He had a good deal to say at Midland Junction last night about a subject with which he was imperfectly acquainted. I had three weeks' bitter experience of the hon. member's friends, not a month ago.

MR. COLLIER: You came out of it pretty well.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, I came out pretty well, as truth and right always must. It would have been advisable for the member for Leonora to have prefaced his remarks by reading a sentence he will find in the *West Australian* of the 18th of May, where my opponent (Mr. Needham) threw down the gauntlet to me in this way. He said:—

He maintained that if he were returned as representative of Fremantle, he could do more for the town—[that is the point]—than Mr. Price as Minister for Works.

Now what was I to do? If I were animated by those lofty ideals which seem to appeal to the member for Leonora, I suppose I should have sat silent and mum, perchance; but in face of such statements, was I not to point

out to the electors that, as reasonable men and thinking women, they were entitled to examine this statement of my opponent and decide among themselves whether they could not be better represented by a Minister or by, as I put it, a member of an extremely weak and feeble Opposition. I submit that I was quite justified, seeing that my opponent had introduced this phase of the matter, in putting this side of the question to the electors; and I doubt, with all the protestations of virtue with which he seems to be overflowing, if my hon. friend would not have taken up very much the same stand as I did. We are told by the hon. gentleman that when he was before his constituents standing for re-election as a Minister of the Crown, he told them, "Put aside all ideas and thoughts that I am a Minister of the Crown; leave that out of your minds altogether." We have heard that sort of thing before; and we know perfectly well that when the yokel, dealing with some unpopular villager, says "Whatever you do, don't put him in the horse-pond," the hint is quite enough. If the hon. member wished to leave that thing out of consideration altogether, all he had to do was to say absolutely nothing about it; but by saying "put it out of your minds" he very effectively advertised the fact. [MR. HOLMAN: What about your photograph on this dodger?] It is a very good dodger; and I am told by my friends that the photograph is an extremely excellent one. I can make great allowances for the member for Leonora, but there is one matter which I fancy he will find it extremely difficult to explain. In Fremantle there is an unregistered book-maker, one of those birds of prey who fatten on the weakness of humanity. This gentleman was one of the strongest supporters of my opponent; his shop was a centre of agitation on my opponent's behalf. This man busied himself—

MR. BOLTON: Name him.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If you want the name, it is Barry.

MR. BOLTON: You are absolutely incorrect, and you know it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: He busied himself in placing people on the rolls. He was an active member of my opponent's committee. Now, will it be believed that the political purist opposite

hunted the Colonial Secretary to make this man an appointee for taking votes—[MR. LYNCH: Hear, hear]—a position where impartiality and where no intimate connection with either party should exist? I ask members, what would have been the position if I had gone to Mr. Connolly and asked that the secretary of the National Political League should be made an appointee for taking votes? Had I done such a thing, very rightly there would have been a howl of indignation at my conduct; but this hon. gentleman, who shudders at my behaviour, was quite ready to make one of the most active partisans on the other side, if he could get the Colonial Secretary to do it, an appointee to take votes.

MEMBER: What about Mr. Higham?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Higham never acted as a member of my committee; nor did any of the other appointees in Fremantle; nor did they take any prominent part in either of my elections. It was left for my friends opposite to drag in an extreme partisan, a committeeman of one of the candidates, and attempt to make him an appointee for taking votes. [MR. TAYLOR: What about Mr. Holmes?] I am not concerned with Mr. Holmes. Mr. Holmes is quite able to defend himself. I am dealing with the election at Fremantle and my own conduct; and it is for my own conduct I have to answer. I, at all events, have never taken such an indecent step as endeavouring to get one of my committeemen made an appointee for taking votes. The position, and I think the House will agree with me, is that an appointee taking votes—his position being much the same as that of a returning officer—should keep himself apart from active politics; and an ex-Minister of the Crown should have had such a sense of what is right and proper that he at all events should not endeavour to make a member of an election committee an appointee for taking votes. I do not want to labour the question. These are briefly the reasons which induced me to take the stand which I did at Fremantle. When I first went into Parliament I had certain ideas before me to enable the town of Fremantle to obtain a graving dock. I got the other members for the district as well as the member for North Fremantle together and assisted

in the work of initiating a scheme which involved extending the powers of the Harbour Trust, enabling them to borrow money and construct works. That scheme was almost adopted by Mr. Rason. The member for North Fremantle knows that is practically correct. When Mr. Rason was considering the matter favourably he gave up office. Later I was approached by Mr. Moore and asked to accept office. I said, "Is it part of your policy to extend the powers of the Fremantle Harbour Trust?" Mr. Moore told me that it was. Was I to be debarred from using my previous labours as a recommendation to my constituents to return me? My opponent served his time in the State Parliament for some 14 months, and when he retired Fremantle was as near the fruition of its desires as when he went in. I claim that I have brought the members for Fremantle into more intimate association with one another than they were before. Under these circumstances, and seeing what position my advocacy with my fellow members brought the matter to, was it unfair to say to the electors, "This is what I have done, and this is the position the matter stands in." Did it not mean this. Seeing that when my opponent represented Fremantle matters had been practically at a standstill, and that, partly owing to my energy and the interest I took, these matters had come to the front, was it not for my constituents at Fremantle to say whether they preferred the attitude of my opponent in the past or my attitude? That is the plain and straightforward question, and I ask members to view it free from party passion and party bias, and to ask themselves whether I was not justified in the stand which I took. In this matter I am perfectly unrepentant, and if the same thing cropped up again to-morrow I should adopt the same attitude which I took at the last election. [Interjection.] I should stand again and get in, and should adopt the same attitude exactly as I on that occasion adopted. I have to apologise to members that, owing to the personal element which has been dragged into this debate, I have been forced to refer to personal matters, much against my inclination. But unfortunately those who are our associates

in parliamentary life govern largely our line of conduct, or I should not have touched this personal matter to-day. For the rest, I shall deal with questions not of a personal moment; matters in which the public of the State are interested. Surely the public are tired of this constant dragging into debates of personal matters. Mud is slung all over the place. In the election I went through, the tactics of my opponent were such that I was denied freedom of speech. My meetings were broken up by the tactics of political agitators who stood at the street corners and worried the town into a frenzy of passion. These men were responsible for breaking up my meetings and denying me the right of free speech. If members understood the tyranny adopted by my opponents at this time, they would say they would have no more of it. [MR. TAYLOR: Do not look at me; I was not there.] The member for Mt. Margaret was not there; and I will give him this credit, that if he had been there he would have fought me in a straightforward and manly manner. He, at all events, would not have worked the lower elements of the population of Fremantle into the frenzy of passion into which they were agitated. [Interjection.] The police, not at the request of myself or my friends, but because of what they saw—[MR. BOLTON: Do not labour that subject.]—it is too degrading to their case and the methods they adopted to be laboured; but I am going to labour it. Owing to the frenzy worked up, the police, not at the request of myself or my friends—[MR. BOLTON: It is not true; Captain Laurie was responsible]—not at my request, nor as far as I know at the request of any of my friends—[OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Oh!]  
the police thought it necessary to send a guard with me to the station, because there was a howling mob of four or five hundred people who were prepared to do personal violence to me. I can only tell members that one of the police escort informed me that he heard one of the mob say he wished he had a revolver. [LABOUR MEMBER: That was to shoot himself.] If anybody should desire to let the dead past bury its dead in connection with the events of that election, it is my friends on the other side of the House. I have somewhat got over the

injustice to which I was subjected, and I trust we have heard the last of it, and that in future I shall be able to work in an amicable and friendly way with my friends on the opposite side, for the advancement of the State. I recognise that the bulk of members opposite are as much interested in the welfare of the State as I am; but the interpolation of these matters and the personal insults one at times is subjected to make this course very difficult. [MR. LYNCH: Just explain the distortion of facts.] I was charged with holding before the electors a bribe, and there is nothing in any of my speeches to show that such took place. Furthermore my opponent directly challenged me, in that he said he could do as much as a private member as I could do as a Minister of the Crown. The suppression of that statement was a distortion of facts. The member for Boulder last night spoke very freely and very strongly about the conduct of the Fremantle election. I think before he committed himself on that point, he at all events might have had the courtesy to listen to my side of the case. It is not usual to hang and quarter a man without giving him a chance of defending himself, except by members on the other side of the House. The member for Leonora in his speech referred to the public works which the Government of the State with which he was associated carried out when in office, and he drew a disparaging picture of the works carried out by this party while in power. I would like members opposite to deal with the question, as to what important works they initiated when in office. They found a certain programme in force when they went into power, initiated and started by the previous Government, and they completed, as they had to do as far as they could, these works during the time they were in office—they completed the programme of their predecessors. But it was a very small policy of works which Mr. Rason found when he took office. I think the figures show that during the year 1904-5 (I had the figures very carefully compiled) the departmental works undertaken and the contracts let amounted to the sum of £467,607, and during the years 1905-6 the departmental works undertaken and the contracts let amounted

to £482,738. [MR. DAGLISH: That is in your department only.] That is in my department, in so far as the department over which I have control is concerned. On both occasions certain works were carried over, but the matter for members to address themselves to, and what the country wants to know is, while members opposite held the reins of government, what important works did they initiate? It is easy to come along and carry on the policy of your predecessors, but the question is, what works did members opposite initiate? What works did they start? A careful examination of the works undertaken during the last two years, and those projected, shows that the initiation of most of the recent great public works has been by the party with which I am connected. [MR. TAYLOR: They have been in office practically for 13 years.] There is one item I should like to refer to, because it has been the subject of a great deal of criticism on the part of the public. It is an item in which party element need find no place. I refer to the metropolitan sewerage scheme. The first time the sewerage of the metropolitan area was mooted was in the year 1897. A report was presented in 1899. In 1901 two of the engineers connected with the Works Department initiated experiments as to the bacterial treatment of sewage, and in 1902 Mr. Davis, an expert from New South Wales, visited Western Australia and devised a scheme. In 1904 the Midland Junction system was installed; and in 1905 Mr. Oldham, one of the officers of the Works Department, visited Sydney with full particulars of the scheme that had been elaborated from the ideas and experience of Mr. Bell. To these details Mr. Bell got approval. That scheme was again submitted to Mr. Palmer, consulting engineer of the Government in London, and he concurred in the scheme. Such exhaustive details as Mr. Davis had the advantage of seeing Mr. Palmer did not see, but on the general principles he was quite in accord with the other engineers. The Chief Engineer of this State, Mr. Thompson, has also signified his approval. We find that, despite all this examination, all this careful procedure, there still remain some people in this State who do not believe in the bacterial system of treating sewage.

Strange to say, only last week we had a corroboration of the attitude which the successive Governments have taken up in this matter. We find that in the *Municipal Journal* Mr. Arthur J. Martin, M.I.C.E., an engineer of repute in the old country, writes as follows:—

Bacterial works are in progress or projected for Birmingham, Burnley, Derby, Halifax, Leeds, Leicester, London, Manchester, Oldham, and Sheffield. . . . The large majority of new works comprise septic tanks for preliminary treatment, though here and there a tendency to revert to the Scott-Moncrieff cultivation tank is apparent. The purification is complete for the most part in contact beds of trickling filters, the latter being for the moment the more popular, at all events for works of medium size.

What experience we have had of the septic tank system by the Works Department in this State—and the biggest tank, I think, is at Midland Junction—shows it to be an absolute and unqualified success. This Government is not responsible for the present scheme, but careful investigation and inquiry made with an open mind has led me to believe that every care, every precaution which a man of intelligence could take, was taken before this system was adopted; and I cannot help thinking it is somewhat late in the day, after the thing has been under consideration for several years, for critics to come forward in the abundance in which we have seen them lately. For instance, one gentleman told us not many days ago that the weight of the filter beds would be 12,000 tons. A careful investigation shows the weight will be, as a matter of fact, about 9,800 tons. But that is not altogether the point. The question is: what is the weight per square foot of foundations? We find that even this objection was anticipated by the officers of the Works Department, because the foundations were tested to one ton per square foot, and the weight of the filter beds will only be 6cwt. to the square foot. Someone took exception to the syphon which will convey the effluent of the tanks over to Burswood Island. A syphon similar in construction to that which we propose to put in is already in work and has been at work at Cook's River, Sydney, for many years. It does not convey the effluent across Cook's River, but it conveys crude sewage to the other side, and has done so for

many years. Again, the cost of resumption of Burswood Island has been stated to be some £6,000 or £7,000. This again is a fallacious estimate. There has been certain information in the department which will be used should the case ever come to arbitration, and I can assure members that the statement as to the price which the Government will have to pay for land resumed is absolutely and totally outside the mark. I think the time has come when generally the public should be prepared to treat the engineers of the department with a certain amount of confidence. If we have not confidence in these men we should get rid of them; but to hamper them with constant and persistent criticism in their conduct of a scheme like this is, to say the least, somewhat ungenerous, and not likely to get the best work out of our advisers. It is strange to see the criticisms which were made some few weeks ago, each one of which has I think been exploded. One gentleman told us it was an absurd thing in connection with the sewage outfall to take storm water drainage to the sea. As a matter of fact, that never was contemplated. When the estimates were got out for an outfall into the sea—a scheme which was calculated to cost £387,000—it was always intended that the storm-water drainage should go into the river. A great deal has been said about the cost of the plans and surveys. I have no doubt that those gentlemen who have remarked upon the subject had every desire to be accurate, but they have been on many occasions at least 50 per cent. outside the mark. I see it has been asked that information should be laid on the table of the House, and it will be there for members to see exactly what those surveys and plans cost. It must always be remembered that a scheme of this nature involves a tremendous amount of detail, and that the plans and surveys are necessarily expensive; but they have cost nearer half the amount stated than the whole sum. Now I have to deal with another matter on which I shall be subjected to a great deal of criticism, not so much as to what has occurred since I have been a Minister, but as to my action as a private member. On one side I am told I unduly favoured the Fremantle pipe works, and on the other side it has

been insinuated that I have favoured Clemenger & Monteith since I have been a Minister; and one member has stated that by reason of the late order for pipes being distributed between Clemenger & Monteith and the Fremantle works, Perth will lose something like from 23s. to 25s. per ton of pipes. I think it is desirable that members should see exactly what has happened. In February, 1904, the pipes were costing the Government something like £8 15s. per ton. In September, 1904, they were costing the Government something like £9 a ton. In March, 1905, a contract was let for vertical cast pipes from eight to twelve inches in diameter at £8 12s. 11d. per ton. I find that the present contract price is £8 2s. 2d. per ton, and that the departmental cost of pipes at Fremantle since its inception has been £8 5s. per ton. I scarcely know how that hon. member can justify himself when he states that it means a loss of from 23s. to 25s. per ton.

**MR. DAGLISH:** What has caused the reduction in price?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** That is another matter. I have my own opinion as to what caused the reduction of price, and I think other people will have it also—that being, that competition in manufacture has caused the reduction; and that the Government works, in so far as they have brought competition into this industry, have been of great benefit to the State.

**MR. DAGLISH:** What works?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The Fremantle works. It applies also to all works. [Interjection by **LABOUR MEMBER.**] That is a contract dated the 22nd March, 1906. I cannot say off-hand who got the contract. At all events, the Leader of the Opposition, in referring to this matter, has made a statement which I did trust he would see fit to withdraw, because it is entirely beside the fact and inaccurate. He stated that I had accomplished the act of letting tenders in connection with these pipes. As a matter of fact this matter was settled long before I took office; and I do not think that an ungenerous portion, in so far as Clemenger & Monteith are concerned, was given to that firm. I think the Fremantle works were entitled to be kept on; and the difference in price between the two being so small, and in



view of the fact that one was a Government factory and that if no order had been placed there the plant would have been idle, they were entitled at least to all they got, if not a little bit more. But at all events, Clemenger & Monteith have been established in this State; contracts were called, and they also got their share; but to say that I was the individual who split that order up and settled how it should go was totally beside the mark and absolutely inaccurate. I do not care whether a work is done departmentally or by contract. What I am desirous of doing is to get work done for the State in the cheapest possible manner. I am neither a hide-bound follower of those who want to see everything done by contract, nor of those who want to see the work done departmentally. There is one matter which it is said we have stolen from the programme of our opponents, namely, an unimproved land value tax. Everyone must see that if the loss of revenue we have been subject to in the returns from the Commonwealth, the returns amounting at the time I took them out to something like £172,000 less than in the previous year, is going on, a loss not caused by failing prosperity, but by decrease in taxation—some method at least must be found of replacing it, or else the back country upon which all of us live, both the agricultural community and the mining community, must cease to go ahead and prosper. I think, and am of opinion that members representing the towns of this State share my view, that if we in this State are to prosper, it can only be by giving every possible encouragement to the back country; and so far as I am concerned, in the department I have the honour to administer, it will always be my desire to give consideration to those people who, by reason of the unfavourable conditions which exist out back, have at least in my opinion, the first claim upon this State. If we have to replace this revenue which is lost, we have to consider carefully what is going to effect that object. It seems to me that in some way or other the general public of this State will have to bear increased taxation. The question then comes, which is the best and fairest method of applying it?

MR. H. BROWN: An income tax.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Perth interpolates "An income tax." So far as I am concerned, I strongly object to an income tax. I look upon it as a tax upon the energy of the individual, and, as a confirmed individualist, I would do nothing to cramp and confine the energy of any man. [LABOUR MEMBER: What is the land tax?] The land tax is not a tax upon the energies of the individual. Let me show where the difference comes in. A man, for example, saves up and buys land for a house. He pays a couple of hundred pounds for it, and puts a building on it to the tune of £500 or £600. The amount of the tax, say at a penny in the pound, is something like 16s. 8d. That land has not got its value of £200 from any work of that particular individual. A few years ago it was a piece of land worth probably £20, £30, or £40. Many portions of Perth and Fremantle ten years ago were not worth a tithe of what they are worth to-day. The taxation is not on the industry of the individual who owns that particular piece of land. The increased value has been owing entirely to fortuitous circumstances over which he has had no control. Increased population has caused increase in the value of the land, and the enhanced value is something which has not been the result of his own energy. There will have to be some limitations in regard to the tax. What they are has yet to be decided.

MR. DAGLISH: You would tax the landlord, but you would not tax the user.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If you tax the landlord, you tax the user. The landlord will get it out of somebody. There is no man who, if the expenses of his particular business go up five per cent., will not take five per cent. from his customers. He is something more than human if he will not do that. I never knew a case where one did not in some shape manage to get the amount back. We have now to decide what is the fairest and most reasonable method of getting an increased revenue. I submit that the income tax, for example, is one of the easiest taxes to evade. English experience proves this absolutely. There is no tax so frequently and so easily evaded in England as the income tax. On the other hand, there is not the

slightest difficulty in assessing the value of land for the purpose of taxation. Then again, it is absurd to say that the land tax is difficult to collect. And it has another and a great advantage in my eyes, in that it is a direct tax, one falling directly on the individual, who clearly and easily sees exactly what he pays. We have to admit that if this country is to be developed, we must find new sources of revenue for its development; and one of these sources is a tax on the unimproved value of land; and I trust that members will look in a reasonable and rational manner on this proposal. Whatever form of taxation is imposed will be unpopular.

**CROSS-BENCH MEMBER:** Look at the other side.

**MR. SCADDAN:** Some Ministerial supporters will consider it unpopular.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I am not speaking of members of the House, but of the general public. Whatever system of taxation we devise will be unpopular, and the community as a whole will not like it. But taxpayers can make up their minds that something has to be done; and they and the Government also will have to search for the easiest and fairest method of raising the revenue which we so urgently require. And I submit that all these requirements are found in a tax on the unimproved value of land. I have now finished with those matters which more particularly interest my department, and with those which interest myself personally. I trust that in the course of these few remarks I have not said anything that will rankle in the breasts of my opponents. I think that the time has gone by for party bickering and strife. I venture to say there was nothing in any of my electioneering speeches which could hurt the most sensitive person. I have sometimes felt wronged and injured, and have frankly and freely expressed my views on the subject, but I trust not in immoderate language. The position is: we are returned by the people to legislate in their best interests. If we are to waste time in personal and dare I say frivolous discussion, then it is impossible that their interests will be properly safeguarded. I trust that this is but a preliminary canter to a session of real, good, honest work for the people of this State, and of work

which will conduce to its great and lasting prosperity.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

**MR. P. J. LYNCH** (Mount Leonora): The Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price) refers to me as having gone out of my way to have what he called an unregistered bookmaker and strong partisan of one of the candidates in the field, appointed to take postal votes in respect of the Fremantle election. I wish to say that the Minister for Works saved me the trouble of including this matter in an explanation that I am to make hereafter; because on that very point I certainly intended to find the greatest fault with the present Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. D. Connolly) for not acceding to my wish in that regard. The facts were simply these. There were seven appointees for the district of Fremantle, one of them being Mr. Cadd, who was known to reside permanently in Perth.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** And the secretary for the Trades Hall.

**MR. LYNCH:** And my application to the Colonial Secretary was simply to have Mr. Barry appointed in place of Mr. Cadd, so that if seven appointees were considered sufficient before, a compliance with my request would not result in an increase of the number. And there is no more reason for the Minister for Works to say that I was seeking the appointment of a partisan than for the Colonial Secretary to recognise that nearly all the appointees of Mr. Price were partisans of that Minister. I say the Minister (Mr. Price) has saved me trouble, because I consider that the Colonial Secretary was distinctly biased when he refused to sanction the appointment of Mr. Barry, and to bring the number up to seven as before.

#### RESUMED.

**MR. T. H. BATH** (Brown Hill): Before I begin to deal with the debatable matter which is contained not only in the Governor's Speech but also in the remarks made during the debate, I should like to express my pleasure at being able to hold at least one sentiment in common with the mover of the Address-in-Reply, by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your return amongst us with improved health and with increased energy, to continue to perform those high and honourable duties

to which you have been called. I should also like to congratulate the member for the Swan (Mr. Gull), who moved the Address-in-Reply, on the impressive and candid manner in which he spoke on that occasion. Not only was he candid, but he blundered into some very startling admissions which must, I think, prove very disconcerting to the Ministerial side. Unlike the member for Mt. Leonora (Mr. Lynch) I am not prepared just now to congratulate Ministers on their accession to office, until first of all explanations are offered as to events which took place during the recess, and which I consider call for some explanation from those gentlemen. Are the events which took place during the long recess which Ministers were given in order to carry out their legislative and administrative work of such common occurrence in West Australian politics that Ministers should come down here without one word of explanation, as if these events were in consonance with a high standard of morality and of honourable conduct? Is it so natural a thing, for instance, that hon. members should have to waylay the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) somewhere in the locality of Midland Junction; that they should have to resort to intrigues against one with whom they had worked as a colleague; that hon. members who had sworn to stand together and act together in the crisis which occurred should afterwards desert that colleague and allow him to remain deserted? Are these the actions which justify those Ministers in coming here, and sitting before us in those chairs like Sunday-school scholars—

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** You are a judge.

**MR. TAYLOR:** And you are a criminal, on this occasion.

**MR. BATH:** Like Sunday-school scholars, with angelic smiles of innocence on their countenances? I consider that those gentlemen owe an explanation to this House. I believe that one of the first things the Premier ought to have done on meeting the House on Thursday—there was an opportunity when we adjourned—was to make some explanation of how he attained to his present position, and some attempt to justify the sordid and disreputable details connected with the change of Ministry.

The Premier observed, in the course of the debate on the appointment of an Agent General to succeed the present occupant of that office, that there was sufficient material in his policy speech to justify his expecting me to continue the debate on the Address-in-Reply after the mover and the seconder had dealt with it; or that if there was not sufficient material in that speech, there was enough in the Speech delivered by His Excellency at the opening of this session of Parliament. Well, I do not think one ought to be expected to criticise a verbal fantasia such as the policy speech which the Premier delivered at Bunbury. So much pathos, melodrama, and I suppose legitimate drama, and all those variations of verbal theatricals, constituted not a political speech, but what I have characterised as a verbal fantasia. And so far as the Governor's Speech is concerned, if members will take the trouble to read it through, they will find in it nothing tangible to criticise. It reminds me very much of a dressmaker's dummy, decked out for the purpose of alluring unwary ladies at bargain sales. It seemed to me rather on the lines of that famous bill which Falstaff had in his pocket on one auspicious occasion, and in which was set down a halfpenny worth of bread to 5s. 8d. worth of sack. We are told in an old and well known proverb that language was given to man to conceal his thoughts; and it appears to me that language was specially bestowed on the Premier and his colleagues in order to conceal their intentions for the forthcoming session. But I think I can see the hand of the Attorney General (Hon. N. Keenan) in the construction of that policy speech. I have no doubt but that in his unsophisticated innocence the Premier was desirous of giving the public some information as to Ministers' intentions for this session; and I have no doubt that the Minister for Mines was willing that we should know his legislative intentions during this Parliament, because whatever may be his faults, the Minister for Mines has always possessed at least the merit of letting people know what he is going to do. [**MR. TAYLOR:** But never does.] Yet I imagine that when the Attorney General joined the Cabinet and assisted in the preparation of the policy speech, and when it was proposed to

insert these details, he advised his colleagues to go slow. I can imagine him, in those legal accents of which he is such a master, advising them not to incriminate themselves; not to put in that speech details which might afterwards be used in evidence against them. Evidently, his legal advice was followed; and so we have a speech emasculated of all details of Ministers' legislative proposals. I could forgive the indefiniteness of the speech if Ministers had only paid some regard to truthfulness in that production. I presume that all members of this House have some knowledge of the particular niche which the Governor fills in the political sphere of this State. We all know that even the utterance which he delivers at the opening of Parliament is prepared for him by his responsible advisers, and that he is not supposed on any occasion to interfere in party politics. I think, therefore, that Ministers owe to his Excellency the Governor an obligation to see that in composing the Speech to which he is to give utterance later on, there shall be in it nothing derogatory to his dignity as a gentleman, or which can outrage his gentlemanly instincts. Yet almost at the outset of the Speech we have a statement which members who know anything of the position of affairs in Western Australia must know to be very far from the truth. We are told that—"It is my pleasing duty to again assure you that the prosperity of the State continues apace." If members know anything of the present condition of affairs in this State, the condition which has obtained during the past six or seven months, they know that this statement is very wide of the mark. Evidently the member for Collie, who seconded the Address-in-Reply, had some better knowledge than hon. members on the Treasury bench as to the real condition of affairs. That hon. gentleman referred to the fact that a depression—a very bad depression—was existent in Western Australia at the present time; and of course, in his attempt to shoulder it upon somebody, he did not attempt to shoulder it upon those who, I think, are responsible for it, but he put it upon Federation. As the hon. member for Subiaco interjected the other day, when the Labour Government were in power members used to put it on the Labour

Government, but now they put it on Federation. If Ministers are desirous of knowing what the real condition of affairs is, if they would get away from that atmosphere created by the receipt of £1,000 a year, the Ministerial salary, and would look around among the artisans of the metropolis and goldfields, they would find many hundreds of them, thousands of them I should say, who are unable to find employment; they would find large numbers of miners on the goldfields searching for work and unable to find it; and they would find amongst the residents of the metropolitan and goldfields districts many very regrettable cases of distress. Those are the conditions which are existent now, and which give the lie to the statement that the State is enjoying great prosperity at the present time. I attribute it to the fact that during the past eight or nine months we have had mismanagement and misgovernment of the State's affairs. We have had during the last 11 months a considerable reduction in the expenditure of those gentlemen opposite, or of the Government of which they formed a part, on the great spending departments of this State. On the Public Works Department, the Mines Department, and the Railway Department, those labour-employing departments of the State—[THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite incorrect]—we have had a reduction of nearly £200,000. It is only natural, therefore, to assume that with this reduction in expenditure on the great employing departments there must be distress among those directly concerned in that aspect of employment, a distress which reacts on our private enterprise and causes the present deplorable condition of affairs. Then the hon. gentlemen on the other side take consolation that they could not spend what they did not receive. The objection I urge against them is that they made no attempt whatever to exploit new sources of taxation which would have given them at least the same amount of expenditure in these departments as was spent in the preceding term. Instead of introducing what we have now proposed in this programme, for instance, a tax on unimproved land values, we had feeble proposals, such as increasing the licensing fees for hotels, the imposition of a tax on totalisators,

and an increase in the stamp duties, none of which can be characterised as statesmanlike in the least degree; and the result is that we have had to record in regard to the Government, of which three members on the Government bench were Ministers, an absolute failure where so much was expected. The Government of which they were members came in like a Lord Mayor's procession with a great flourish of trumpets and the brays of the "National Asses" of Perth and Fremantle, and they have gone out like the baited dog with a tin tied to its tail by its best friends. That is the position of Western Australia while we have these gentlemen, members of a reconstructed Cabinet, coming here and facing this House without one word of explanation; probably labouring under the idea that the appointment of the late member for Guildford as Agent General, and the infusion of a little fresh blood in the Cabinet, have fully redeemed them from any participation in that failure. I think it is somewhat unkind on the part of those members to attempt to shoulder the responsibility on the late Premier. No doubt he should bear some portion of that blame, but I hope those hon. gentlemen were not dumb in that Cabinet. I suppose they had as much say or voice as the Premier as to what works should be carried on, or as to what legislation should be carried out, and in the administration of the work of the State. The present Premier, as Minister for Lands in that Cabinet, the Minister for Mines, and the Treasurer cannot shelve their responsibility for the acts of the Rason Administration. They were as much to blame as Mr. Rason was. They are as much responsible for the ignominious failure as Mr. Rason was. They cannot come here and shelve their responsibilities without one word of explanation.

THE PREMIER: Who wants to do so?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Have we tried to do so?

MR. BATH: They tried to do so in travelling about the country in Ministerial cars and in informing the country of what they were going to do; but so far as administrative work is concerned, their record is absolutely barren. I suppose we will have to wait some time until we have the details of it, but at least during that term they have not

given any evidence to the public as to the administrative reforms they promised the House faithfully last session they were going to introduce, or as to the economy they were going to effect. There are some items in connection with administration to which I wish to refer briefly. In the first place I wish to make a few remarks in regard to the administration of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme. I have always been one who has adopted this attitude, that it was an undertaking which at the outset was beset with great difficulty, that it required on the part of those charged with the administration a great deal of patience and a great deal of ability, and that on the other hand there should be the same patience displayed by the consumers, by the general public, until the officers had a grip of the working details and until they had the scheme well in hand. So far as that administration is concerned, in many points I may say it is worthy of commendation; but I take considerable exception to the methods they employ in dealing with the consumers. Instead of it being a great public department seeking to make its administration as liberal and as consonant with the wishes of the consumers as possible, the officers of the department seem to go out of their way to be cavalier in the manner in which they deal with the consumers. If the manager of a private firm dealt with the firm's customers in the same way he would soon lose their custom. The method adopted by the administration is: recognising that in most places they have practically the monopoly of the supply of water, they seem to imagine that it gives them a right to deal with the consumers as they please. I have here a letter from one of those consumers complaining of the way in which he was treated. He states:—

I should like to call your attention to a piece of injustice in the Goldfields Water Supply administration. I, with others, received notice that, unless certain moneys were paid by a certain date, the water would be cut off. I overlooked the matter until it was too late to pay on the particular day, but I sent my cheque down first thing the following morning and procured a receipt. They wanted to charge me 5s. extra for reconnection; but as they had not cut the water off at the time of paying, I naturally refused to part. I sent the receipt down home, and some three hours after I had paid my rates. Although they had

been shown my receipt, they cut my supply off. This happened on the 15th inst. The men said that they would make inquiries and if the receipt was in order they would reconnect me. This has not been done up to the present, and has caused me a lot of inconvenience and loss. It does also a lot of injury to me as a business man, as it looks as if I was unable to pay. Trusting you will look into the matter (etc.)

**THE TREASURER:** What is the name?

**MR. BATH:** It is a letter from one of the consumers under the Water Supply Department. I will show it to the hon. Minister afterwards. I have only to refer to other instances in my electorate to show that the same cavalier methods have been adopted. There were three residents who were practically accused of being thieves. They were accused of stealing water by an adjustment of the meter. One of them went away a month before the time they stated, that is before the meter began to read wrongly, and returned a month after they made the complaint, yet they accused him of adjusting his meter and of stealing the water from the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme. There are two other gentlemen whom I know to be honourable men, who are above such conduct; and although I have written to the department and have asked to be supplied with the information on which the officers base their charges and upon which they base their charge of 12s. 6d. annual rental for a cover which any plumber could make for 5s., the only intimation I have received was that I could call and see the papers. I am anxious to reply to these gentlemen to let them know why action was taken, and why they were practically branded as criminals, yet the information is not vouchsafed.

**THE TREASURER:** Did you not call and see the papers?

**MR. BATH:** No; I did not want the information for myself. I wanted it for those gentlemen who had been so unjustly treated. They were the persons concerned, and I wanted the information written to me by the department so that I could forward it to them. Then we have the treatment of the co-operative working parties of miners, who have taken up shows and by their efforts been able to establish batteries and work their own mines, which were mines that had been abandoned by English companies and were unworked until these miners

took them up. Though they have paid regularly, the manner in which they have been treated has been arbitrary. They have been treated in a most cavalier fashion, and it does not popularise the administration of the water scheme when these methods are resorted to. Consonant with the interests of the department, they should endeavour to treat these people in a courteous manner and meet them on a friendly basis. Seeing that they are desirous of securing a monopoly, the obligation rests upon the officers of the department to see that the monopoly is wisely and generously administered. Then we have the maladministration of the Electoral Department during the recess. During the general elections which took place in October, the time specified up to which names could be inserted on the rolls to vote was 14 days before the issue of the writ. The result was that in many electorates throughout the State large numbers of electors were disfranchised. In Menzies electorate there were 567 disfranchised, although their claims were put in between that time and the date of the election. When the Legislative Council elections were on we found that a different interpretation altogether was placed on the reading of this section, a section which applies as much to the Assembly elections as to the Council elections; and we were told that the proper interpretation was that the claim should be allowed to be received right up to the date of the issue of the writ, and that was done in connection with these elections. Then we have the interpretation of what is meant by the annual value which should be placed on property. In some instances the proper view was taken, which was upheld by all legal decisions, and that is that the annual value is the rental value without any deductions whatever. The ratable value in some instances is altogether different, because it is the annual value with certain percentage reductions and allowances for rates, taxes, and that kind of thing. In the Brown Hill electorate 360 men possessing the qualification were disfranchised, while on the other side of the street, in the Ivanhoe electorate, in another province, men with houses not one whit better, and in some instances not so good, were placed on the

roll and allowed to record their votes. Then coming to the late Fremantle extraordinary election, we find a third interpretation placed on the reading of the clause in regard to the time in which an elector could become qualified, and then it is not up to the day of issue of the writ, but the day before the issue of the writ. I was at Fremantle in charge of a table outside the polling booth. There was a list of 90 voters supplied to us, and when these electors went in to record their votes they were told by the returning officer that they were not entitled to vote; yet these names were received on the evening of the day before the issue of the writ. There are the three different interpretations. Last October the claims must be in a fortnight before the issue of the writ, and thousands of electors were disqualified in consequence. In connection with the Legislative Council elections, claims were received up to the date of the issue of the writ; and in the Fremantle election another interpretation was given, and names could not be received after the day before the issue of the writ. As far as the Electoral Act is concerned, a great deal of blame has been placed on the Act to cover up the sins of persons. In the 1904 election that Electoral Act served very well because those who administered that Act said it was there for giving liberal opportunities for people to enrol themselves, and they took the view that it was better that a few names should be on the roll wrongfully than that a large number of electors should be disqualified. We heard no complaints as to the administration of the Electoral Act at that time, nor any complaints as to disqualifications like those taking place at elections since that date under the same Act. Through the recess we have had a considerable amount of controversy as to the rival worth of the State manufacture of pipes and other articles and the manufacture of those articles by private enterprise. A board of inquiry was appointed to inquire into the respective merits of the rival claims. I would like to say at the outset, as far as the then Minister for Works is concerned—the present Treasurer—that he did not, I think, give a fair deal in the appointments to that board of inquiry. I am strongly of opinion that he wanted a certain report submitted to Parliament,

and that report was submitted in consonance with his wishes. Those who have perused the report will see the board practically confess their failure to arrive at any decision, to arrive at the cost of State manufacture.

THE TREASURER: Is that my fault?

MR. BATH: Yet the Treasurer, who was then Minister for Works, appointed an accountant, and I presume he knew something of his merits, for he was the accountant of a company in which the hon. member was a shareholder, the Collie Proprietary Company.

THE TREASURER: He was not the accountant.

MR. BATH: He was.

THE TREASURER: He was never; you are absolutely misinformed.

MR. BATH: If I am misinformed—

THE TREASURER: You are misinformed if you speak of Mr. Ross.

MR. BATH: Yes.

THE TREASURER: He never had any connection as accountant with the Collie Proprietary Company.

MR. BATH: I accept the Minister's assurance, but the point is this. I assume he appointed the gentleman for his ability as an accountant, and he must have been an able accountant because he was paid £5 5s. a sitting as chairman of the board, while the other members of the board were only paid £2 2s. Yet we have that gentleman, who was appointed for his particular abilities as accountant, in the report stating that he was unable to arrive at the cost of the State manufacture. I say, if he was an accountant who knew his business and was anxious to work out the cost, there was no difficulty in doing so. That confession of failure and lack of details to support the findings of the commission seemed to be fair evidence that the Minister wanted a report which would back up his pet private enterprise.

THE TREASURER: Did he get it?

MR. BATH: The hon. member tried very hard.

THE TREASURER: Did he get it?

MR. BATH: Certainly the report was practically in conformity with the Minister's views, and I believe he tried very hard as Minister to have them carried into effect. Evidently the hon. member plays an important part in the Cabinet, because he was able to get £15,000 for

private enterprise while only £28,000 was given to the State workshops at Fremantle. We know there has been some controversy as to day labour and contract work in regard to public works, and I have only to give two examples, one of the day labour system and one of the contract system, to show the superiority of the day labour system over the contract system. I refer to the Claremont Hospital for Insane, which was constructed by day labour at considerably under the cost it could have been constructed by contract.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** How do you know?

**MR. BATH:** The work was a credit to the day labour system, for the workmanship and finish will compare with any other building in Western Australia. If we want an example of the contract system we have only to go the Law Courts in Perth. One has only to look over the outside to find the cement and stucco-work cracking all over, and the building, although only comparatively recently constructed, has begun to look disreputable in the extreme. With these examples of the respective merits of day labour and the contract system, I want to know why the Minister for Railways did not see fit to have the Fremantle Railway Station constructed by day labour.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS:** I do not believe your statement in regard to the Claremont asylum.

**MR. BATH:** I have very good evidence so far as I am concerned. Although the late Minister and the late Premier have been challenged times and again to controvert our statements or have some inquiry into the respective merits of the two systems carried out, they have never attempted to do so. They have never attempted to disprove any of the arguments raised as to the day labour system. I am also informed in connection with the work which is going on in Perth streets, the storm-water channel, that when the tenders were invited for that work the specification was for pipes in 12ft. lengths, but the successful contractor tendered for 6ft. lengths, which means that he has an advantage of £1,500 over other tenderers.

**THE TREASURER:** The Perth pipes?

**MR. BATH:** In connection with these pipes.

**THE TREASURER:** There are no 6ft. lengths at all.

**MR. BATH:** That is what I am told.

**THE TREASURER:** You do not know what you are talking about.

**MR. BATH:** If it is not true, the hon. member will be able to explain.

**THE TREASURER:** Who would cast 6ft. pipes?

**MR. BATH:** We are informed in the Address-in-Reply, in the preliminary padding, that as far as the mining industry is concerned there is no need for alarm, although there is a slight falling off in the gold yield. After reading that there is an increased amount of dividends paid, I can say, as far as the shareholders are concerned, there is no need for worry or alarm. But if we read these statements in conjunction with certain facts occurring in the Mines Department Report, certainly we find that a large number of miners in the State have every reason to complain and every reason for alarm. In the Mines Report we are informed that—

The average tonnage of ore raised per man employed, above and under ground, has increased by 13·7 tons, but on the average every such man has produced but 108·16 fine ounces of gold, as compared with 112·5 in 1904. Although the tonnage raised per man is remarkably high in the Peak Hill Goldfield, there is but a small number of men employed. Considering the number employed on the East Coolgardie Goldfield (6,256), the number of tons raised per man is high, and speaks much for the class of men employed and the methods in use.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** We did not say as much as that in the Governor's Speech.

**MR. BATH:** You did not say that in the Governor's Speech, but the remarks in the Governor's Speech referring to the mining industry should be read in conjunction with these facts. The reason that we have had an increase in dividends, although the yield has fallen and the grade of ore is low, is due to this fact: there is a policy of rush, as far as that goldfield is concerned, in vogue in the mines, and due regard is not paid to the safety of the men working there. I will prove that by reference to the record of accidents which have taken place in the mines. In the Mines Report it is stated that:—

It is very gratifying to note that the fatal accidents during 1905 have decreased by eight,



as compared with those during 1904. The number of men injured has increased by 117, as compared with that for the previous year. This increase is attributable to the fact that mine managers are more careful to report accidents which, though comparatively trivial, are sufficient to keep the sufferer off work for more than 14 days.

That is a very lame explanation for the very large increase in the number of accidents. I have an opportunity of knowing, and no one knows better than those who come into contact with the organisations, that there has been a very large increase of accidents in the mines, mainly due to the fact that there is a policy of rush in order to earn the dividends and to lessen the cost of production. Due regard is not paid to the safety of the working miners, who are not given an opportunity themselves of looking after their own safety. We have heard it recorded, and I see it in the Speech, that many of the accidents are due to the men themselves. This is not because the men have been neglectful, but because they know of the policy of rush, and unless they do these things and unless they practically acquiesce, they know they will be discharged and others put in their places.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** You are reading the records for last year.

**MR. BATH:** I am reading these in conjunction with the statement in the Governor's Speech, and I am not placing the blame on the Minister, but showing the reason why the mines are able to treat ore so much cheaper, and why the men are able to mine so much more ore, than in previous years, and why more accidents have occurred than in previous years. [Interjection by the **MINISTER FOR MINES.**] The report of accidents which I have seen and the numbers which the Miners' Associations have had, go to show that accidents are on the increase, not only trivial but serious accidents, and this condition of affairs makes it necessary that a Mines Regulation Bill should be introduced at the earliest possible date. As far as that is concerned, I have no desire to enter into debate as to the provisions which it should contain, because the Minister for Mines assures us that we shall have an opportunity of dealing with that at a later date, and I will reserve my remarks till then, merely contenting myself by saying that the

condition of affairs shows that such a measure, an effective measure, is absolutely necessary in the interests of those employed on our mines. We also have reference made to the increase in land settlement; and while there has been an increase during the last term cited in the Statistical Register, it is just as well to point out that the increase is not at all proportionate to the area alienated. So far as Western Australia is concerned, it does not begin to compare favourably with the Eastern States. Take South Australia, for instance, which I should say is a fair country for comparison. South Australia has not had the advantage we have had of a prosperous gold-mining industry, employing a large population, and giving it that fillip Western Australia has had. And with very much the same area, we find that in South Australia 17 per cent. of the land alienated or in process of alienation is under cultivation, whilst in Western Australia not 3 per cent. is under cultivation. This goes to show that, whilst there may have been a considerable increase in land alienation or the taking up of land, there has not been a corresponding increase in legitimate settlement. This is a state of affairs which I think should call for consideration by those more conversant with the agricultural industry than perhaps I am, and it is a matter which I commend to the attention of the Premier, who, whatever his faults, has always taken a deep interest in the settlement of people on the land. What is necessary is not alienation of the land to such a great extent, or the boasting of the amount of land alienated, but rather to see that those who have been placed in possession of that land are made to put it to some legitimate use, and thus make a better show than we do in comparison with the other portions of Australia. Then we have reference made in His Excellency's Speech to the matter of immigration; and in this I think the Ministers have placed some misstatements in the mouth of the Governor. It is stated here that—

A steady and increasing stream of immigration is flowing into the State, and becoming absorbed mainly in our agricultural population.

What evidence have the hon. gentlemen that the great majority of the surplus of

arrivals over departures in this State, of about two thousand for the first four months of this year, have been absorbed in the agricultural population? Where, for instance, did the 72 Italians and the 73 Austrians go? Not many of them went into agricultural settlement, and as to the others, I am safe in asserting that over 75 per cent. of the excess of arrivals over departures came either to the metropolis or went to the Eastern Gold-fields and the various mining districts of this State. Probably the Premier may mean the stream of assisted immigrants who have been brought to this State by means of this Government through the Agent General in the old country; but even then the statement is not exactly accurate. I have been credibly informed during the past few days that men who have been assisted to this State by the aid of the Government are at present employed at the goods-sheds in Perth, and at a lower wage than that paid to those whom they replaced.

MR. TAYLOR: Some in the Government workshops at Midland Junction.

MR. BATH: In fact, that men have been discharged to put these new arrivals on—

THE PREMIER: Oh, no; that is not correct.

MR. BATH: And at a lower rate than that paid to those who preceded them. I have absolutely authentic information. I know several instances which have been brought to my notice, and if necessary I can bring proof that this is correct. There are other men who were presumed to have been absorbed in the agricultural districts who are working in and around the metropolis, who have been brought here to work at employment other than farming, and who have replaced men that had been in employment. There is nothing to boast of or to be proud of in that kind of immigration; and it will be necessary to exercise more care before any scheme of immigration will be successful. We are informed that efforts should be continued towards securing more of the class that we have secured from the Eastern States. We have men who have revolutionised farming in Western Australia, who have shown many of those, not all, who are on the land how farming should be carried on; and they are men who are a credit

and an acquisition to this State. We can bring more of those here so long as we exercise care in our choice, but we must bear in mind that, whilst introducing these settlers, we should be just as ready to extend those facilities to men who are already in our State and who may be desirous of settling on the land. The member for Swan (Mr. Gull), who moved the Address-in-Reply, presumed to be a somewhat unsophisticated gentleman. I think Ministers made a very unwise choice in selecting him to move the Address-in-Reply.

MR. TAYLOR: They did not select. He asked them.

MR. BATH: In fact, from the manner in which he put the show away, and from his defence of the attitude of Mr. Rason and his attempt to cover up some of the sins of that Administration, it seems to me it would pay Ministers on those benches to club together and provide him with an extra £200 to remain silent, and join say the member for Beverley (Mr. H. Smith) in the silent army on the third bench. In the first place, he was so foolish as to say that members on this (Opposition) side should be quiet during the forthcoming session, because the result of the Legislative Council elections had proved the confidence of the country in the present Government. He certainly could have adduced no more unfortunate evidence to prove his statement. In the first place, it must be known to members that the qualification for the Legislative Council is a property qualification, and that only 20 or 30 per cent. of those eligible to vote for the Assembly elections are qualified to vote for the Council. So far as the Labour party is concerned, its contention always has been that there is no justification whatever for a property qualification. No logical justification has ever been adduced by any political economist, by any politician in Australia or out of it, for such a qualification; and we have only to recollect the fact that whilst the possession of the qualification which exists in this State may in one election give a person the right to vote, the loss of that property or qualification during the intervening term will prevent him from voting on another occasion, although there has been no change in his intelligence or mental capacity to vote in

the interval. And when we recollect that this was the basis on which the vote for the Legislative Council was taken during the recent election, there is nothing which can be laid to the detriment of the Labour party in the result of that verdict. [LABOUR MEMBER: Our vote increased.] On the other hand, I regard the result of this election as strong presumptive evidence of the insincerity of the Government in their present legislative proposals, and especially so in regard to constitutional reform and land values taxation. We find that the gentlemen elected in the recent Legislative Council elections were amongst the strongest supporters of the present Administration. We found them touring with Ministers through the country and obtaining election advertisements by accompanying Ministers on tour. We found them during the recent election in Fremantle accompanying them on the platform, and declaring themselves enthusiastic supporters of that Government and those Ministers. Yet those very same gentlemen on the election platform declared themselves as strong opponents of land values taxation, and of constitutional reform. And they can be heard any night on which the Address-in-Reply is progressing in another place—[MR. BOLTON: It is finished]—express their opinions in opposition to these proposals, at the same time that they are enthusiastic admirers of the gentlemen opposite.

MR. BOLTON: That is the safeguard.

MR. BATH: Then we have the indictment of the member for Perth in regard to the proposals of the Government, and he could have stated the case not one whit more correctly than he did when he said that, if those hon. gentlemen were on this side and the Labour party were occupying those benches, nine-tenths of them would be in opposition to these proposals, and especially land value taxation and Upper House reform.

MR. TAYLOR: That is absolutely correct.

MR. BATH: The Minister for Works has taken exception to a statement made by the member for Leonora (Mr. Lynch) that the platform has been stolen.

MR. TAYLOR: A man does not like to be accused of stealing, if he does it.

MR. BATH: He went on to observe that the Labour party had not initiated either one reform or the other. The Labour party make no claim of exclusive possession of these reforms, or even for the fact of having initiated them; but what members on this side do claim is that the Labour party have popularised these principles, brought them to the front, fought for years and years against the most determined opposition and misrepresentation, on behalf of these reforms, and year in and year out they have fought the battle until to-day those principles are popular amongst the great bulk of the people. Members opposite, who a few months ago were opposing these very proposals, now step in and express themselves as ardent admirers of them. We also have evidence of insincerity on the part of the Government in the speeches which have been delivered by members on that side. What support, for instance, for their land tax proposals did they have from the member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber), the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piessé), and the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown)? And yet those gentlemen have assured us that this is precisely the same Government as that they previously supported and which they were returned to support in October last; that they are advocates of precisely the same platform, that there has been no change whatever, and that there is no reason why they should alter their allegiance to their party. It goes to show they must have some information, they must have some assurance from the Ministers occupying those benches that there is no intention of pushing those proposals to a successful issue; and after hearing or reading the opinions which have been expressed in another place by the ardent admirers of the Government, I say they have only introduced those proposals knowing that when these get to another place they will be rejected by that Chamber.

The PREMIER: You are wrong.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. BATH (continuing): When the House adjourned, I was making reference to the proposals of the Government for the imposition of a tax on the unim-

proved value of land. I questioned their sincerity in regard to these proposals, as I questioned it in connection with constitutional reform. But even admitting their *bona fides* in their land taxation proposals, there is one thing we have every reason to complain of; namely, the lack of definiteness in their statement of their intentions in this respect. For instance, we have had the Attorney General, in the course of a Ministerial speech at Kalgoorlie, stating that he was opposed to exemptions, but that he would make an exception in favour of a very little one, a very slight exemption. On the other hand, we have had the Premier in his policy speech at Bunbury stating that he was in favour of both a time and a monetary exemption. And then, as the climax of all, we have the Honorary Minister in the Upper House (Hon. C. A. Piessé) declaring himself entirely opposed to the taxation of the unimproved value of land, but stating that he is prepared to go so far as to advocate a tax on unimproved lands—an altogether different proposition. Now which are we to accept as the definite pronouncement of the Ministerial policy?

THE PREMIER: You will get the Bill next week.

MR. BATH: Who is really running the show? Who is declaring the policy of the Government, and stating their absolute intentions regarding the imposition of this tax? Then we have the member for Swan (Mr. Gull), when moving the Address-in-Reply, stating that he is entirely opposed to land value taxation as a means of breaking up large estates, but favours it as a means of raising revenue. And yet, in the very Governor's Speech which he was supporting, we find it stated that the tax is to be imposed so that, "while not inflicting hardship on the man of small means, or the settler in his pioneering days, it should also have the effect of considerably increasing the development of our agricultural lands." Now how is that development to be brought about, except by a tax compelling those who hold large areas unworked to make them available for those who are willing and desirous of putting them to legitimate use? Yet the hon. member says he is not in favour of a tax for this purpose, and we see him sitting behind

the Government and giving them his enthusiastic and whole-hearted support. One is amazed at the convenience of the views of hon. members on that side. It does not matter whether the Government are in favour of land values taxation or are opposed to it; whether they believe in constitutional reform or are opposed to it. No matter how Ministers may differ from the views of members on that side, these are still prepared to accept *hobus bolus* the views of Ministers, and to support the present Administration. The position was very fairly summed up by the Minister for Works, in the statement that fresh revenue is required. While we have an increasing demand for money, especially for interest and sinking fund charges, while we have increased demands on our revenue to provide educational facilities, to provide encouragement for the mining and agricultural industries, we are faced with a reduction in revenue. The members representing agricultural constituencies, who think that their constituents are opposed to this method of taxation, have not looked at this aspect of the question, and have not presented any alternative views as to the manner in which the needed revenue can be raised. Those members must face the situation. We cannot square the finances by any economy in administration or any reduction in expenditure. It has been said that our administrative cost in Western Australia is much higher than that of the Eastern States; and last year, when the Budget proposals were brought in, we found the then Colonial Treasurer presenting an elaborate plan showing the comparative cost of administration in Western Australia with that in the Eastern States. But I looked carefully through that tabulated statement, and found that the three departments in which our cost of administration appeared to be much higher than that of the Eastern States were the very departments by means of which we do so much more in the way of providing public services than do the Eastern States: namely, the Departments of Lands and Agriculture, the Department of Mines, and the Medical Department. Taking out these three, we find that our administration, comparatively speaking, costs much less than that of the Eastern States; and if there is to be any reduction in expenditure,

the agricultural members must recognise that it can be made only by dispensing with the method of encouraging agriculture by certain expenditure designed primarily to give an impetus to that very industry. Then if we recognise, as I think all members must recognise, no matter on which side of the House they sit, that additional revenue is necessary to continue honestly our financial administration, we must look around for methods by which this revenue can be raised; and if we say we shall not accept or support a proposal for taxation of unimproved land values, the alternative to that proposal is a property tax. And on whom would a property tax press the more heavily? On the legitimate farmer with big improvements on his holding, or on the man who holds large areas containing small improvements? More hardly on the legitimate farmer doing his best to develop his land, doing his best to make as much as possible out of it; while the other man would go practically unscathed. The mover and the seconder of the Address-in-Reply had some hard things to say about Federation. They said our financial position is due to the fact of our entering Federation, and that to the loss of the sliding scale, or of the interstate duties, we may attribute our present financial stringency. In that there may be a certain amount of truth; but I for one am prepared to say that the abolition of the sliding scale duties is not a bad thing for Western Australia. Those duties pressed most hardly upon the great consuming population in our metropolitan and our gold-fields areas. They pressed so hardly upon those who were already bearing an undue share of taxation—

MR. GULL: Have prices been reduced since the abolition of the sliding scale?

MR. BATH: Of course, the argument is advanced that although the sliding scale has been abolished, its abolition has not reduced the prices of the commodities in question. But the failure to reduce those prices cannot be ascribed either to the sliding scale or to its abolition, but to those who were amongst the foremost in our population, at the time we embarked on Federation, in demanding inter-colonial freetrade as a result of Federation, and the abolition of this special impost. And those very persons who

advocated that view of the situation, who asked for the abolition of those duties and for intercolonial freetrade, are those who are now denying to the consuming population of Western Australia the legitimate advantage of that reduction. I say it is regrettable that as a result of indirect taxation the consumers do not perhaps realise the great extent to which they are taxed; and perhaps the reason is that they have not given to the question that attention which would show them that the high cost of living and the absorption of their wages in domestic expenses result from the fact that prices are now the same as when the sliding scale was in full force. What we should do is not to argue for the retention of special impositions—those duties which press so hardly on the consumer—but to see whether we cannot induce a standard of morality in our commercial men which will lead them to give to the people of this State the advantage which is their due from the reduction of the sliding scale duties. As to the attitude of the Labour party in regard to taxation, we are not desirous of adopting that method which has been pursued in the Australasian States ever since they achieved responsible government, the method of trying to adjust the burden of taxation in such a manner that the people do not realise the amount they are actually paying. The contention of the Labour party is that in the rent of land and in the earnings of capital, there are considerable amounts which are monopolised or appropriated by the individual, though they really belong to the community. They are the result of communal enterprise and energy, the result of the building up of this State by those who have flocked here in consequence of the development of the mining industry; and we say that these values, being imparted by the community, should be taken for the community for the purposes of government. We make a start by advocating this principle in respect of the rent of land. The other night the member for North Perth (Mr. Brehber) said it was very hard that because certain persons in this metropolitan community purchased land with a view to securing the unearned increment, there should be any proposal to impose a tax which would take some

of that increment for the purposes of the State. I say that the owners of the land are not responsible for imparting that value to it. We have only to consider the price realised for that corner block between Barrack Street and Hay Street, a piece of land originally purchased I believe for £500, and sold the other day for £60,000, though the buildings upon it, I suppose, were not worth more than £5,000 or £6,000. The difference between the two amounts is the increment of value which was imparted not by the owner of it, but by the influx of population to this community; by the fact that the immigrants were of an enterprising class, and that by their enterprise and their energy they have built up this State to its present condition of prosperity. They have established that value; and the proposed tax on the unimproved value of land is an effort on the part of the community to secure for itself the value which the community has imparted to those areas. To show that the owner of that land has not imparted that value, we need only consider that if he went to the South Sea Islands, to America, to Great Britain—if he went to live on Mars—the value would be imparted to the land just the same; and therefore it is unearned increment, so far as he is concerned. It is increment which rightly belongs to the people and which the people have a perfect and legitimate right to absorb. In regard to the question of land values taxation, the likelihood of this Parliament being able to carry it out, or of any reform being inaugurated, depends on another very vital reform, and that is in the constitution of another place. So far as the principle is concerned, in every State where it has been introduced it has met with most strenuous opposition in the House whose members are elected on a property qualification, or are nominated by the Government of the day. If we are to inaugurate anything like an effective measure of land values taxation in Western Australia, we will need to make some alteration in the constitution of another place. We find that during the course of the recent campaign, as I have pointed out before, those who have declared themselves supporters of the present Government which professes to be in favour of these reforms, are the very

men who opposed these reforms most strenuously. We have no idea as to the nature of the proposed change in the qualification of another place that is to be brought down by the present Administration; but any proposal to reduce the qualification to an annual value of £15 will be entirely insufficient and will be only tampering with very necessary reform. We have heard a few individuals in this State, in common with those in other parts of the Commonwealth, declaring that what they want is secession from Federation. They are never likely to get secession; and so far as some members are concerned, they are like John-the-Baptists crying in the wilderness for something they are never likely to obtain. Instead of people being in favour of secession, I can inform the member for Swan (Mr. Gull) and other members who talk of secession from the Commonwealth, that there is a strong and growing feeling in favour of unification of the States amongst the great body of the population; there is a strong and growing feeling in favour of an amendment of the Commonwealth Constitution to lop off from the State Legislatures a considerable amount of the power they at present hold, and confer that power on the Commonwealth Parliament. In fact, there is a strong feeling in favour of doing away with State Parliaments altogether and transferring their legislative functions to the Commonwealth Parliament. [MEMBER: Where?] In Western Australia and in other States of the Commonwealth. If hon. members take the trouble to go through the country as I have done during the recess, they will find this feeling very prevalent. It is a feeling that is growing in strength and favour every day. I am not in favour of unification. I believe it will be a bad day for Western Australia if we have unification and if we have centralisation of legislative powers in the hands of the Commonwealth Government. I believe, in spite of the democratic nature of the Commonwealth franchise, that the centralisation of power would be disadvantageous to the interests of the individual States. We have seen what centralisation of power has done for America, where it has practically taken away from the people of the States the right to govern, and handed over the control of affairs to

the moneyed magnates of that country. While I believe that unification is undesirable, the duty devolves upon us to prevent such a feeling growing any stronger; and it can be done by democratising the Constitution of Western Australia and by bringing it more in consonance with that of the Commonwealth. If we place our Legislature on a democratic basis we can hope to hear the last of any proposal for unification and the abolition of State Parliaments. I do not advocate these views because I happen to be a member of a State Parliament. So far as that is concerned, I believe that we have centralisation even in State government, and that we could confer greater governing powers on the municipalities throughout the State with advantage to the whole community. The mover and seconder of the Address-in-Reply also made some reference to the loan proposals of the Government. Both gentlemen were apparently of opinion that a loan policy is a splendid thing for this community. The member for Collie (Mr. Ewing) declared that he did not see the disadvantage or injustice of leaving these burdens to posterity. If the hon. member were here I would like to ask him whether he is prepared to burden the future of his own children, and I would probably get the answer that he is not prepared to do any such thing. If he is not prepared to do it so far as his children are concerned, why should he, as a member of this Legislature, propose to do it so far as the State is concerned? It is not so much a question of that; because at present we have the burdens with us. [THE PREMIER: What about our sinking fund?] The member for Swan declared that he thought borrowing was a good thing because he had always noticed that after a temporary cessation of borrowing there was a resultant depression.

MR. GULL: He said nothing of the kind.

MR. BATH: It is recorded in *Hansard* and I was present when the hon. member said it. I may tell the hon. member that I am not permitted to quote from this session's *Hansard*, or I would read him the passage. If the hon. member refreshes his memory he will find it recorded. Beautiful logic it is from any member of this House. The hon. mem-

ber might just as well say that if an individual fills himself with whisky overnight, because he has a bad head in the morning therefore drinking whisky is a good thing for the constitution. The position in Western Australia is fast developing to the same extent, so far as our borrowing proclivities are concerned, as it has developed in the Eastern States of the Commonwealth; and I shall prove this by a reference to the growth of our interest and sinking fund charges. In 1898 the interest and sinking fund charges absorbed 12 per cent. of the revenue of this State. In 1905 the percentage was 21 per cent., and at the end of May, 1906, interest and sinking fund absorbed 24 per cent. of the revenue. If we get the million and a half borrowed as the Premier proposes, it will mean that over a quarter of the revenue of this State must go at the outset to pay interest and sinking fund charges. It proves that all this talk about the reproductive nature of the works on which our loan expenditure is embarked is all moonshine, and that the ordinary revenue is being gradually encroached upon to pay these interest and sinking fund charges. The tendency to disregard the reproductive nature of any works on which we propose to embark loan capital, is growing not only in Western Australia but in the Eastern States; and as we have a stringency in our revenue and lose it from various sources, the tendency is more and more to embark that loan expenditure on doubtful works.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Seventy-five per cent. is a very good return.

MR. BATH: If the hon. member will look into the returns he will find that, so far as our loan expenditure is concerned, it is not returning 75 per cent. or anything like it. The revenue I am speaking of refers to the whole revenue from taxation and other sources, including the amounts received from the public services rendered to the community. Something has been said during the course of the debate in regard to the attitude of the Opposition on the railway proposals submitted last session. It has been adduced that we were opposed to railways in the agricultural districts. There is nothing in the declarations from members to lead any member, who has made a study of

the question, to adduce any such idea. What we, the Opposition, did oppose was the bringing down of these proposals without information in regard to them, without official reports, with just the barest details and the request that this House should swallow them down in the closing hours of last session; and when it is proposed to embark loan capital on these railways, then I say any member who desires to conserve the financial position in this State is justified in saying, "Pause before we commit the House and country to this expenditure." How can it be expected that new lines, spur railways as they are called, are going to pay when the existing trunk lines in our agricultural districts are not paying at the present time? If they do not pay, and if the goldfields line is asked not only to bear its own burden but also to take up the burden of these other lines, is it just and fair to the people of this State to ask that we should embark on new unprofitable railways out of loan expenditure? I say there is justification if by some betterment principle we can assure that interest and sinking fund will be paid on these railway proposals; but it is absurd to ask this House without some such assurance, to readily grant large sums from our loan funds to build these unproductive lines. We are also asked during the course of this debate for a reduction in railway freights and for reductions in other directions; and the whole position is, we have to recognise that if we reduce these freights and make a bigger demand still upon the general revenue for the payment of interest and sinking fund on these works, the burden must fall upon the general taxpayer of the State; and there is a limit which the general taxpayer can bear, especially when we bear in mind that his taxation as it is now constituted is an inverse ratio to his capacity to bear it. Both last session and on the public platforms I have urged, and urge now, that before we embark in these proposals and vote money away, we should have some more explicit information and more reasonable proposition before us that within a reasonable period these railways will be made to pay interest and sinking fund.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Is not the taxation *per se* lower in this State than in any other State of the Commonwealth?

MR. BATH: No. We are assured that the Public Service Commissioner has recently submitted his first proposal in connection with the classification of the clerical division, and that his Excellency's advisers are now giving this important matter their careful consideration. One could ask on an occasion like this that we should have something more than this bald assurance. I think the House can reasonably ask that the Government should give some idea of their intention in regard to the classification made by the Public Service Commissioner appointed in 1904 as to the result of the united demand of Parliament, the public service, and the public of this State that the public service should be placed under some competent hand to be classified, and so that he would see a fair deal was done to everyone employed in the service. We have had that classification placed before us. Ample powers are given in the Public Service Act for appeals from any decisions given by the Public Service Commissioner, and I think it is only a reasonable request that the Premier should supply us with something more definite than the remarks contained in the Governor's Speech. We find no mention either of any proposal for a system of old age pensions in this State. The predecessor of the Premier in office stated that he did not think it was a matter on which the State should embark. It was rather a matter to be left to the Federal Government. So long as we have the existing financial conditions of the Constitution Act providing for the raising of taxation by the Federal Government, so long will it be impossible for the Federal Government to make provision for old age pensions. I believe, as a majority of members in that Parliament who are desirous of instituting the Federal scheme of old age pensions believe, it would be preferable if such a scheme were introduced in the future rather than any piecemeal proposal by individual States. But after all, those who are and should be entitled to receive old age pensions in Western Australia cannot afford to wait until an alteration of the Constitution gives the Federal Government financial means. There is no likelihood of their being able to wait. One has only to traverse the



various portions of the State to find men who have been pioneers of Western Australia, who have by their enterprise and energy helped to raise it to its present stage of prosperity, in a state of want. I think therefore they are entitled to some consideration. I think some scheme should be introduced in Western Australia, and if the time arrives when the Federal Government shall embark on an old age pension scheme, the individual schemes in the respective States should be handed to their control, and an all-embracing Federal scheme introduced. Until that time it is the plain duty of the Legislature charged with looking after the people in Western Australia to embark on a scheme of this kind. I regret it has been omitted from the proposals of the Government.

**THE TREASURER :** Why did not your Government do it?

**MR. BATH :** The Treasurer asks why we did not do it. The member knows that it was submitted in our programme, and the hon. members now sitting on the Government side of the House were very strenuous in opposition to it, also to the land values taxation of the Government. So strenuous were they that they spent a great deal of time railing against our proposals in this direction, and characterising them as revolutionary, and just such proposals as would come from a Labour Government. So afraid were they that these proposals would come into force that they spent three or four weeks discussing a censure motion to stave off the evil day. I come to a matter which has caused a great deal of perturbation in the minds of members of the House, and which was referred to by the member Mt. for Leonora, and also dealt with in the Speech of the Minister for Works to-night. I refer to the circumstances surrounding the Fremantle election. I do not think I shall be accused in any sense of party bias when I say the explanation given by the Minister for Works was not a full and satisfactory explanation of his participation in that affair, and he is entirely wrong when he seeks to impress on the House that it is a personal matter directed against him; that it is really a personality and not a matter of public moment. I say it is essentially a matter of public moment. It is one that has been referred to, or

the procedure has been referred to in debates previously held in Parliaments of this State, and in these present circumstances the case is even more glaring. In the course of the session of 1903 a vacancy occurred in the representation of North Fremantle, and at that time the Government, of which I suppose we can claim the present Administration as direct successors, ran a candidate, and the Labour party ran one in opposition. At that time the then Minister for Works, Mr. Rason, went to Fremantle to assist in the campaign of the Ministerial candidate. He made certain references to the Government proposals, to their approval and intention of constructing a dock at North Fremantle, and these remarks were taken exception to in the course of the debate, on an urgency motion for adjournment. The remarks to which exception were taken were these, as they were recorded in the Press :—

The Minister for Works (Mr. C. H. Rason, M.L.A.), speaking at North Fremantle last night, remarked that the dry-dock for Fremantle was one of the many subjects of ancient history which had been left to the present Government to take up and accomplish. They could depend upon it that the Government were going to make that dock. (Applause.) It was not going to be any toy dock; it would be a most modern dock, capable, he hoped, of accommodating the largest ship afloat. (Applause.) They proposed to get the services of Mr. Thow, an engineer from New South Wales, who was an authority on docks, and who would confer with the Engineer-in-Chief on the subject. Borings were now being carried out in order to ascertain the best site for the dock, and that site would be determined in the first place, on the recommendation of the engineers, and finally by Parliament. The people of North Fremantle could rest assured that, wherever that site was fixed, their interests would not be neglected. No doubt the sooner they got the dock the better, and for his part, and for the part of the Government, they would get it without any farther delay. (Applause.) Speaking of the bridges across the Swan River, the Minister said he had no definite information yet as to where the site of the new bridges would be, but whatever site was determined upon, he saw no necessity to put North Fremantle to any difficulty in connection with the matter.

In the course of the debate which ensued on that motion for adjournment, some trenchant criticisms were uttered not only by members on the Opposition side but by those supporting the Government at that time, and it was pointed out that

it was essentially a matter of interest to the public that these things should be ventilated. It was also pointed out by one member on the Government side at that time that the constitutional law of Great Britain declared that—

It is highly criminal in any Minister or Ministers or other servants under the Crown of Great Britain, directly or indirectly to use the powers of office in the election of representatives to serve in Parliament.

And on the basis of such a criticism as that, the Minister for Works at that date had to suffer a very warm time from members on both sides of the House as then constituted. The Minister for Works states that this is a matter which is brought up merely out of party pique because of the defeat of the Labour candidate in that election, and that there was no justification for any such strictures as were passed by the member for Mt. Leonora on the evening of Thursday last. I do not want to go to the Labour party for an indictment of the Ministry on that occasion. I have only to go to the leading columns of the *West Australian* on this matter. In the leading columns of May 29th the *West Australian* stated—

There is one other question over which every thoughtful and patriotic elector must feel grave misgiving. In no election which has been fought within the knowledge of those whose memory can run over all the contests of responsible government have so many appeals been made to the pecuniary benefits which this candidate or the other might confer upon the town if he were returned to Parliament. Unhappily, neither party is free from blame in this respect. Whoever started it is, no doubt, himself responsible for the counter-action of his opponent; but it is difficult to conceive a lower point than that to which many of the appeals sank—appeals, if not made by the candidates themselves, yet urged on their behalf by their supporters. Every claim that had a chance of putting a few extra shillings into the pockets of the electors of Fremantle was pressed into the service, and it may safely be said that the battle was truly fought out on the sordid ground of who could most influence the Treasurer in favour of the town.

MEMBER: There is something in the *Boomerang* about them both.

MR. BATH: There is nothing of the boomerang about it. I refer the member to this statement:—

Whoever started it is, no doubt, himself responsible for the counter-action of his opponent.

We had the Minister for Works himself,

during the course of the campaign, stating that by his return they would be able to secure the dock.

THE PREMIER: I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The statement is denied, and the hon. member must withdraw it.

MR. BATH: The Premier has denied the statement, and I must perforce accept his denial and withdraw it. I will refer, however, just to prove what I said has a great deal of foundation for it, to the Premier's remarks at Bunbury. In speaking of the proposed vesting of increased powers in the Fremantle Harbour Trust he declared:—

However, the result of the election on Friday will indicate whether the town (Fremantle) indorses the action we intend to take.

THE PREMIER: Read the preceding remarks about the members for the district.

MR. BATH: Cannot that be construed into this, that only by the return of the Minister for Works they might accomplish this thing? Did the Premier know that the opponent of the Minister for Works was also an advocate for the construction of the dock?

THE PREMIER: Was not the member for North Fremantle in favour of the dock too?

MR. BATH: Was it not a fact that on the floor of this House Mr. Needham, at the time the member for Fremantle, on several occasions advocated the construction of this dock? How could any member, whether the Premier or any member of the House, say that by the return of the Minister for Works they would know whether the people of Fremantle approved of it or not?

THE PREMIER: Approved of extending the powers of the Harbour Trust, not the building of a dock.

MR. BATH: Then we have a statement made not over the name of a leader-writer, but in an article appearing in the *West Australian* of Wednesday, May 23rd, by "Onlooker," which states as follows:—

Local interests are paramount and the battle is being waged over the question of which candidate, if returned, will the better serve Fremantle's interests. There are some who go so far as to believe that a crisis has been reached in the history of the party, and that in

the result of the election the future prosperity of Fremantle and its environs is bound up. They aver that the return of the Labour candidate would not only jeopardise the chances of a graving dock being built at Fremantle, but such a feeling of hostility on the part of the present Government would be aroused that the town would receive a set-back from which it would take years to recover.

We have the statement made to the electors by business men. People were going round saying "If you do not return the Minister for Works, we have Buckley's chance of getting the dock." Then to cap all we have this production [holding up a placard], issued on the evening before the day of election, and it was authorised by the secretary of the Minister for Works:—

Fremantle electors, do not be misled. Safeguard your own and the town's interests by voting for James Price.

Then underneath the photo. the words:—

Ask yourselves the question, Which will serve the town best—a Minister of the Crown who has charge of the Works Department, or a private member of a weak Opposition?

So far as the legitimate wants of the constituencies in this State are concerned, a member of the weakest Opposition that ever sat in this House should be in precisely the same position as regards the expenditure of public money as a member of the large party which sits behind the Premier. The Minister for Works is there to deal out even-handed justice to the constituencies of this State according to their just deserts, and not to show that by voting for a Minister of the Crown who has charge of the Public Works Department they can help a town best. [Interjections from Government side.] Members say "misinterpretation," but I defy any member to misinterpret a statement of that kind. With all the legal sophistry of the Attorney General, with all the theological learning, shall I say, of the member for West Perth (Mr. Illingworth), and with all the metaphysical skill of the Government Whip (Mr. Gordon), no one can place any other meaning on the statement in that circular than that it was an attempt to bribe the electors of Fremantle. The statement by the Minister for Works in regard to the assertion by the member for Mount Leonora (Mr. Lynch) brings me to a question which he failed to ventilate, and which I am going to deal

with now, that being the appointment of persons to take postal votes in the different electorates. He stated that it was not to his knowledge that any of those gentlemen authorised to take votes assisted him on the day of election. I was there on voting day, and I saw those gentlemen wearing Mr. Price's colours, and bringing up to the polling booth electors who donned his colours; and, when we saw that they had the right to take those votes, was it not perfectly just and right for the member for Mount Leonora or any other supporter to see that the other side were at least given equal representation and equal fair play? There was nothing in the charge; and I say the blame rests more with those who make these appointments and render it necessary for members to seek the Minister in order that an appointment on the other side should be made. So far as my personal opinion is concerned, I think it is undesirable that any other than Government officials should be appointed to take postal votes, and I assert that many of the abuses which have crept in under this system would not have occurred had that system been adopted; but when we have the present system, and people on the other side have been appointed, I think it is only fair that the opposition side should have a show also.

MR. HARDWICK: Can you give us the names of persons appointed?

MR. BOLTON: Yes; Learmonth and Higham. There are two for you. One took a dead man's vote.

MR. BATH: We have also heard the member for North Perth inform members why he could not be found sitting on this side of the House. I think that even in the wildest nightmare any member of the Opposition has ever had, not one has ever dreamed of such a calamity as the hon. member for North Perth sitting on this side of the House; and when that member talks about the maintenance of his independence and individuality he is beginning to get on dangerous ground. So far as members on this side are concerned, they have at least democratic methods in their selection of candidates; but I am informed, and credibly so, that the hon. member was selected by Mr. James Gardiner. Where does his individuality or inde-

pendence come in? [MEMBER: Through the ballot.] There was no ballot. It was merely a question of arbitration. The hon. member submitted his claims to be a candidate, with that of several other gentlemen, to the arbitrator, Mr. James Gardiner.

MR. LYNCH: The Premier is arbitrator now-a-days.

MR. BATH: I was going to say that if his individuality and independence are the only coverings the hon. member has to keep away the cold, he will have to go to a warmer climate than Perth. Then he also referred to the fact that he could not support the policy adopted on this side of the House; that he could not, for instance, countenance the caucus methods of this party. That is very dangerous ground for any member sitting on the Ministerial side to get on. We have some insight into the methods of the caucus in the interview given by the Government Whip in connection with the change of Ministry. It was stated then that Mr. Gordon was interviewed by the *West Australian*, and he stated:—

As Whip of the party I may be allowed to know what actually did take place at that meeting. Mr. Rason asked for an expression of opinion as to the vacant Agent Generalship. He said that if the party desired, he would stay on as Premier, or, if they thought it better that he should take the vacant Agent Generalship, he would do that. He placed himself entirely in the hands of the meeting, and the unanimous decision was that he should take the vacant Agent Generalship.

That was one illustration of the caucus methods which obtain on the Ministerial side. Then we have the question of the appointment of the Premier also left to the decision of the Ministerial caucus. We knew how the present Premier and his ex-colleague the member for Roebourne (Dr. Hicks) pursued the Minister for Mines up at Midland Junction; we know how the Colonial Treasurer, with the portfolio in his pocket, waited disconsolate on the platform for the return of the Minister, who, however, did not happen to return; and we know that the Ministerial Whip and various other gentlemen—I believe the member for North Perth was mentioned and the member for Swan (Mr. Gull)—were all waiting expectantly for the news that the Colonial Treasurer had accepted the Governor's commission, that he had formed his

Ministry, and was ready for them to be sworn in as members. Then he found there had been a little intriguing against him, and that, although he had the commission in his pocket, he did not exactly have the Premiership in his hand; and so he came to the Ministerial caucus, put the commission on the table, and said, "There, gentlemen; do with it as you will. If you take me, I will be glad to act as Premier; if you take anyone else, I will be glad to co-operate with him in a secondary capacity;" and so we have a Premier selected by Ministerial caucus to take up the important duties of that position, and to accept His Excellency's commission. When the member for North Perth talks about caucus, let him look at his own side of the House before he begins to cast stones.

MR. BOLTON: He is leaving that side.

MR. BATH: There is another matter upon which I think we should have some enlightening, namely who is leader of the Government of Western Australia at the present time?

THE PREMIER: Who leads the Opposition?

MR. BATH: Is there a leader of the Government, or have we a repetition of the condition of affairs which obtained in Rome when Julius Cæsar passed away. Have we a triumvirate, three leaders instead of one—three instead of one to act as leader in this House? So far it is difficult to ascertain that, and the fact that we have such uncertainty in His Excellency's Speech as to the proposals of the Government is evidence that the Ministerial party have not as yet decided who is to be leader of the party, and who, therefore, is to be leader of the House. The Premier seems to be in a very parlous position. He is something like Shylock's servant, who was greatly exercised between claims of conscience and an individual not mentioned in polite society. Conscience desired him to continue in the service of Shylock, who was a very hard master, and the Devil urged him on the other hand to run away.—

THE PREMIER: Who is that, you?

MR. HEITMANN: Wilson.

MR. BATH: I am not going to carry the simile to a conclusion, because although the profession to which the Attorney General belongs is very often termed the devil's brigade, I certainly do

not wish to pursue the simile to that extent; but up to the present date, and in view of the fact that the Premier has to rely largely on legal advice, the gentleman on the right seems to have his ear most of the time, and his co-ruler on the left seems to be altogether out in the cold, altogether disconsolate, and not wearing a very happy expression. I want to advise the Premier, because I have a considerable amount of sympathy for him. He is an innocent enough and unsophisticated enough politician, and I want to assure him or advise him that the Attorney General will weave some subtle webs of his legal sophistry around him, and will put his native intelligence in the cobwebs of legal formula. So far as the Address-in-Reply or so far as the business of this session has gone, the Premier has not stood up and voiced his own opinions. He has not stood forward as Leader of the House, but we have had the Attorney General at his right hand tugging his coat as if he were a schoolboy not well versed in his lesson. I believe the Premier has sufficient brains and sufficient intelligence to lead this House without that Minister's legal advice or without his coat-tails being pulled by that gentleman. I would like to see him not only leader in name but leader in actuality, to see him independent of the legal sophistries of the Attorney General or any other member in this House; taking his place as leader and Premier, and leading the House in the true sense of the word. As far as the Address-in-Reply is concerned, I have had to complain of the lack of definiteness in the proposals of the Government. I hope that before this debate is finished we will have from gentlemen sitting on that side of the House something more definite with regard to the proposals, something tangible which we can criticise and take hold of, and that before the session is well advanced we shall have the business in hand and know exactly what they mean by land taxation, whether it is to be with exemptions or not; also whether the constitutional reform is to be a sufficient one, or the miserable proposal which has been outlined by some members; in fact, that we shall know whether this policy is to be a democratic one which democratic members of the House can be expected to support.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore):** Possibly it might have been wiser for me to take the opportunity of making a few notes to enable me to reply to the speech which has just been delivered by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath). But before referring to the many criticisms and suggestions thrown out during the course of the debate, I should like to thank those members who have been kind enough to make generous references to my succession to the Premiership, though I did not expect the Leader of the Opposition to do so, because his mind is built somewhat in proportion to his body. I should like also to thank those gentlemen who have personally extended their congratulations to me in connection with my appointment. I realise that owing to my limited experience in Parliament I may probably have to crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, on occasions when I may inadvertently depart from the established usages of parliamentary procedure, and to rely to some extent on the generosity of hon. members on such occasions. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to the fact that no announcement has been made regarding the changes which took place in the Ministry during the late recess. I have been in Parliament during the last two years, and I have seen two or three changes of Ministry: but on no occasion has there been any announcement made. When the Labour party were in office—I do not know how they managed it, whether or not they intrigued—the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), being Premier, jettisoned the members for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) and Cue (Mr. Holman) out of the Cabinet, to make room for the members for Brown Hill (Mr. Bath) and Mount Leonora (Mr. Lynch). When that was done, and afterwards, there was absolutely no announcement of any kind made to this House concerning the change; so, following the precedent then set by their leader, I did not think it necessary to make an announcement, more especially as the hon. member must have spent a good many hours in looking up the details in connection with the new Ministry.

**MR. TAYLOR:** The Premiership had not been changed on the occasion to which you refer.

**THE PREMIER:** In reply to what the hon. member (Mr. Bath) has said as to the present Ministry taking up the responsibilities of the old, I can say for myself and for those who were associated with Mr. Rason in the preceding Cabinet, that they are prepared to take every responsibility for any acts done by them in the administration of their departments. At the same time, I do not think it is reasonable that the Ministry as a whole should be prepared to take either full credit or blame for any act of the late Administration. I can only say that if the acts of the late Government are subjected to impartial criticism, it will found that the record of work done during their term of office will compare favourably with any other record we have had since the institution of responsible government. The Ministry was sworn in on the 28th August last year; and although Ministers had been asked by the Opposition to take up the reins of Government, they were nevertheless subjected to opposition in their own electorates, and had to fight Ministerial elections; and soon after the meeting of the House a dissolution came about, and then they had to fight a general election, prepare their Estimates, get their work ready for Parliament, and conduct a session of Parliament—all in four months. There is not the least doubt any reasonable man must concede that during this period a good deal of hard work was entailed. I agree with the member for Mt. Leonora that the time occupied in debates of this kind is not wasted. As a deliberative Assembly it is our duty to debate everything; and I for one am willing and glad to hear any criticism of any act of administration for which I am responsible. But I contend that we should always have a keen regard to the wide difference between a deliberative Assembly and a debating society. The Leader of the Opposition refers to the fact that Ministers have been prolific in their promises of reformation in administrative work, but that the only work done by Ministers has been done in Ministerial cars. Now whatever charges may be brought against me or any other Minister, the accusation that our administrative work has been neglected cannot be sustained. For the fact that Ministers have taken every opportunity of

visiting the various districts of the State, I think they should be commended rather than criticised. If that be considered a sin, then I am a very great sinner.

**MR. LYNCH:** Will you keep on sinning?

**THE PREMIER:** Yes. I will continue to sin. I think that hon. members who have accompanied me on those expeditions have come back with their opinions considerably changed in regard to Ministerial picnics. If riding on a saddle for a week or two with your rug in front of you, and camping out in the open, can be construed into a Ministerial picnic, then I am well satisfied that the Leader of the Opposition will never go very far from a railway line.

**MR. BATH:** You must know you cannot effect economy in administration while you are doing that.

**THE PREMIER:** You must know what you are talking about in regard to these proposals when they are brought before the House. When proposals are brought in dealing with the various districts, it is absolutely essential that the Minister concerned should have visited those districts, in order that he may speak from experience. And I contend that whatever may be my shortcomings, my experience of the country generally and of railway engineering in particular should be of some value, whether I am here or on the other side of the House. When in Opposition, the members who now form this Government were complimented by the leader of the late Government on the work they had done to assist him in his parliamentary duties. He referred in generous terms to the work we had done. For five months while I was in Opposition I assisted the Labour party, without fee or reward of any kind, as chairman of the Timber Inquiry Board; so I think members will realise that Ministers are prepared to work for their country, whether they are on this or the other side of the House. It is stated that during last session it was the desire of the late Government, as of the present Government, to undertake the construction of certain developmental railways in various parts of the State, with the object of giving facilities to the producer. I at least, as the Minister responsible for the Lands Department, consider that I should have been wanting in attention to the duties

of my office had I neglected to take every means of satisfying myself as to the reasonableness of any proposition put forward. As to travelling in the Ministerial car, I may say, for the information of the hon. member, I found on many occasions that I was able to do considerably more work in the Ministerial car than in my office, owing to the fact that in the car I was out of hail of the telephone and of the persistent interviewer. A man has there an opportunity of working which does not fall to him during office hours. In dealing with the administration of my own department, I am quite prepared to submit to a comparison with any period in its history. The hon. member has referred to what has been done on previous occasions; but his record of work in the Lands Department is nothing to be very proud of. In the administration of that department he knows that I received several legacies. One was in connection with the Hamel Settlement, which had given two Governments considerable trouble, and had occupied the attention of a select committee of this House. I do not propose to state in full detail what has been done about that settlement, but may say that the Government has arranged for the settlers to give up their contracts, has now placed all the settlers on the same terms as other conditional purchasers, and is dealing with the land on the same lines as repurchased estates; so that every settler who endeavours to secure an advance in respect of his land makes an application direct to the Agricultural Bank, and this obviates the necessity for making to Ministers personal applications for money. I think that this is an improvement, and feel sure that the procedure adopted will be beneficial not only to the men who are living on the settlement, but to the department generally. Survey before selection has formed a prominent part of the work undertaken during the recess; and in no time in the history of the department has there been such a large area of land surveyed before selection and available for settlement. We have had up to date considerably over 200,000 acres subdivided, some of which has been thrown open, whilst the remainder will be available as soon as the plans are completed.

Notwithstanding the work involved by this, I have been able to effect a saving of £19,064 on my estimated expenditure during the year, while the revenue of the Lands Department during the same period of eleven months is £5,444 in excess of the estimated receipts, being £16,543 till the 25th June more than the receipts for last year.

MR. BATH: From what source is that revenue?

THE PREMIER: It is revenue from additional survey fees and increased settlement, making a difference to the Lands Department of £35,000. The closest inspection of improvements has been made during the period under review, and every effort put forth to prevent speculative selection. But the whole trouble in regard to the improvement conditions is that such a trivial amount of work is necessary in order to comply with those conditions. And notwithstanding the fact that the hon. member's party was in power during two sessions of Parliament, no attempt was made to make more stringent the terms of conditional purchase selection.

MR. HOLMAN: We were not in power for one session.

THE PREMIER: You were in power for 14 months.

MR. BOLTON: Not during any full session.

THE PREMIER: Well, you did not make an attempt. We had a month after a parliamentary recess, and yet managed to bring in an amendment of the Land Act providing for payment of half the cost of survey, and did much to prevent speculative settlement.

MR. BATH: You might mention the Bill which I drafted for that purpose.

MR. GORDON: That is in the waste-paper basket.

THE PREMIER: I say that Bill which I introduced is an evidence that we are desirous of securing none but genuine settlers, while at the same time it has had the effect of bringing in something like £4,000 of additional revenue.

MR. TAYLOR: That is largely from the sale of lands.

THE PREMIER: I say, the mere fact of the amending measure providing for payment of half cost of survey brought in additional revenue amounting to something like £4,000 from that source alone.

In the Department of Agriculture the method of administering experimental farms has been considerably altered, and an attempt made to put them on a commercial basis. A valuation of the properties has been made, and plans prepared showing the plots laid out and the grasses grown on them; while general returns are forwarded every week showing the stock on the farms and other information of value to Ministers. The Honorary Minister, Mr. J. Mitchell, has taken a great interest in this department, on which he brings to bear a thorough commercial knowledge of the whole business of agriculture.

**MR. BOLTON:** It is to be hoped that he will straighten out the departmental finances.

**THE PREMIER:** The Honorary Minister has had a good experience in financial questions as well, and I have every confidence he will do that. The tick question in Kimberley is another matter that received attention during recess. For some time past there has been considerably difficulty in connection with the transportation of cattle from the tick-infested area of East Kimberley. After giving the question considerable attention, I decided that the only method of dealing with it was to readjust the boundary of the tick area. As hon. members may be aware, Kimberley is divided into Eastern and Western districts. East Kimberley is tick-infested, while West Kimberley is known as clean country; but portion of East Kimberley is also clean country. In order to bring cattle to Fremantle, it has been necessary for the cattle from the clean country in East Kimberley to travel through the tick-infested country of the northern portion of East Kimberley. Consequently, these cattle, which were clean when they left the home station, became infested with tick, and there was a very severe loss to the exporter, while many of the cattle which contracted tick while travelling over this portion returned to the home station, and there was a possibility of their ticking up the clean country. The Chief Inspector of Stock, Mr. Weir, has gone North, and he proposes to so amend the boundaries of this region that no difficulty will be experienced in this respect; while Mr. Canning has recently gone

North with the object of seeing whether it is possible to provide a stock route from the Sturt Creek Station to the Eastern Goldfields. [**MR. LYNCH:** Another idea you stole from the Opposition.] One of the most important measures that will be brought forward during this session will be an amendment to the Land Act. It was originally intended that an amending and consolidating measure should be brought down, but as it was most important that certain proposals in the measure should be dealt with as early as possible, it was decided, after consideration, to bring down an amending measure, and this Bill I hope to be able to lay on the table next week. Our present land laws are undoubtedly the most liberal in the world; but since their inauguration, conditions have altered very considerably, and improvement conditions which may have been considered stringent in the past are comparatively trivial now, in view of the fact that most of this country is now within a reasonable distance of a railway line. When Sir John Forrest first introduced these regulations and subsequently the Land Act, they were as good as could be devised, but the time has now arrived when considerations other than the mere alienation of land should be considered; that is to say, not only should more stringent improvement conditions be insisted on in regard to conditional purchase lands, but the area which has been selected by one person, either individually or in conjunction with others, should be substantially reduced from that allowed under the present Act. I have on more than one occasion alluded to the fact that there is something like 11½ million acres of land alienated, and only something like 400,000 acres brought under crop. Despite this fact, it is well known that development is going on by leaps and bounds; and to ensure that persons shall not take up land merely for the purpose of holding for a rise, I have introduced progressive improvements in the Bill which I propose to ask the House to approve. The effect of putting this principle into operation will be to bring the land under crop much sooner than is done under existing conditions. The enforcement of progressive improvements on conditional purchase blocks will cause a considerable amount of money



to be expended in prescribed improvements every two years from the date of approval to the tenth year, when an amount equal to the full purchase money will have been expended in improvements. The question of limitation of area will also receive attention. It is evident that some alteration is necessary, as, under the existing law, it is very hard to determine just how much land one person in conjunction with others may select. Provision will be made for classification of land in some instances; and in the case of this land and the areas which I have had surveyed before selection, the price will be fixed according to its value in the same way as repurchased estates are dealt with. The speech of the member for Leonora (Mr. Lynch) was a very vigorous utterance, despite the fact that his remarks were to a certain extent robbed of their due proportion by the very strong party sentiment that permeated them. With reference to what the hon. member said in regard to our stealing the planks of the Labour party, I would like to remind the hon. member that the two principal measures he referred to, the tax on unimproved land values and the reduction of the franchise of the Upper House, were measures advocated by Mr. James prior to the advent of the Labour party to power.

MR. LYNCH: They were not advocated by Mr. Rason last October.

THE PREMIER: If you read Mr. Rason's speech at Midland Junction you will find that at that time he advocated a tax on unimproved land values, and also a reduction in the franchise of the Upper House. In my first speech in this House I advocated a tax on unimproved land values, with liberal exemption to genuine settlers; and I have seen no reason to alter my opinion in that respect. The Bill that will be brought down to the House on this occasion will provide for exemptions in that regard. I do not propose to go into the details of that Bill. We hope to have the second reading moved next week. I have already stated in the policy speech that it is our intention to make certain exemptions, and the fullest possible information will be given by the Minister introducing the measure. I do not claim that the policy we have put forward is

original, but I do say that I have endeavoured to outline a programme which, if given effect to, will result in general improvements throughout the State, and not to any particular industry or class. The member for Leonora referred to the fact that during last year the Government then in power had not contracted for so many works as the previous *regime*. For the information of the hon. member, I would like to inform him that during 1904-5 the number of contracts let was 255, involving an amount of £97,685; while in 1905-6 we let 268 contracts, involving an amount of £222,496. Also, during the period this Government has been in office, just under two months, 67 contracts have been let, totalling £105,998 18s.

MR. BATH: Is that from revenue?

THE PREMIER: No; general contracts.

MR. BOLTON: How much apart from the sewerage?

THE PREMIER: I will give you the details. Perth Refrigerating Works, £2,550; Narrogin State Farm Buildings, £3,173; Kalgoorlie School of Mines Museum, £2,404; Metropolitan Sewerage Treatment Works, £20,968; Bunbury Court House, £2,402; Perth New Cookery and Laundry School, £2,060; Sewer Pipes for the Metropolitan Sewerage Scheme, £21,981; Goomalling-Dowerin Railway, £6,466; Katanning-Kojonup Railway, £17,197; and Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway, £10,776. That is exclusive of the amount which will be expended in the purchase of 70 miles of railway material.

MR. LYNCH: You are lumping loan expenditure with revenue.

MR. BATH: That was not our contention. We were dealing with the expenditure from revenue for the two terms.

THE PREMIER: One of the arguments put forward by the member for Leonora to prove what a prosperous time the working man had during the *regime* of the Labour Government was that the average per head to the credit of depositors in the Savings Banks had fallen off by £1 14s. 3d. during the last 11 months as compared with the corresponding period in the previous year. This is doubtless explained by the fact that there have been 490 new depositors. I think that is rather an unfortunate

argument from the hon. member's standpoint. I would like to refer him to the fact that the position is now improved, this being evidenced by the fact that the deposits for the month of June to the 28th exceeded the withdrawals by no less a sum than £30,822. This happy state of affairs can hardly be credited to the Labour party by even such an enthusiastic supporter as the member for Leonora. The amount due to depositors in May, 1904, was £2,012,346, and the average amount to credit was £36 9s. 5d. In May, 1905, the amount due to depositors was £2,124,907, while the average amount to credit on each account was £35 17s. 9d. In May, 1906, the amount due to depositors was £2,228,345, and the average amount to credit was £35 6s. 1d., or 11s. less. The hon. member stated that the difference was £1 14s. 3d. These figures show a steady increase in the total amount of depositors and a steady but slight decrease in the average amount due to each depositor. Another matter the hon. member referred to was the fact that no income tax proposals had been foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech. Our stand in regard to income tax proposals is that they should, as far as possible, be kept in reserve as taxation. Should necessity arise, however, the Government will not hesitate to institute such a tax. The hon. member referred in very strong terms to the action taken by the Government during the course of the Fremantle election. The leader of the Opposition also referred to it. The Minister for Works to-day, during the course of his reply, dealt exhaustively with this question, so I do not propose to go into any details in connection with it, except that I do not think that any statement I made during the course of that election can be construed into a bribe in any shape or form. If the hon. member is satisfied that there is any truth in his statements, he should have moved a vote of no-confidence, so that if those members on whom the life of this Ministry practically depends were satisfied the charges made were true, they would have an opportunity of saying whether the Government is deserving of their confidence or not. It is a case of win, tie, or wrangle. The tactics adopted by the members of the Ministry are to be

commended rather than those adopted on occasions at Fremantle by members who were supporting Mr. Needham's candidature, when not only were the actions of the Government criticised, but an attempt was made to blacken the reputation of every member of the Ministry. There is not the least doubt about that. Statements were made by some members ranting at street corners like demented demagogues. The course pursued on that occasion by Ministers would be taken again to-morrow, for we only did all we could from the public platform to secure the return of a colleague.

MR. BATH: Have you never spoken at a street corner?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. BATH: What is derogatory in that?

THE PREMIER: Nothing derogatory.

MR. WALKER: Why these veiled allusions. Tell us what was said.

THE PREMIER: I do not know exactly what was said.

MR. WALKER: That is the kind of calumny from that side of the House.

THE PREMIER: I cannot say anything I heard myself.

MR. WALKER: Nor anyone else.

THE PREMIER: I am glad to hear the statement that it is not true.

MR. WALKER: The Ministerial side has been constantly libelling this side over the Fremantle election. Members have been libellous right through.

THE PREMIER: If members think that way and have occasion to speak that way, there is no occasion to express personal respect for the persons libelled. I am glad to have the assurance that members have been misinformed as to the statements made at Fremantle. I contend it is impossible to have two codes of morality. If a man is not worthy of the confidence of the people in a public capacity, neither is he worthy of the respect of honest men in his private capacity.

MR. TAYLOR: I have held those views for years.

THE PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition is aspiring to be a fire-eater and endeavouring to emulate the tactics of some members near him, who are only too willing on every possible occasion to give us evidence of their fighting qualities. It does not become the gentleman;

he is not built that way. He has been giving me cheap advice to-night, and in return I may tell him it would be far better to confine himself to calm and deliberate criticism, than endeavour to seek a reputation for fire-eating and reckless fighting.

MR. BATH: That is what I try to be, calm and deliberate, but the enormities were so great.

THE PREMIER: I understand that I am undergoing my baptism of fire. After the snipe-shooting of the member for Mount Magnet, the big guns are being brought to bear in the leader of the party himself and his aide-de-camp or adjutant, the member for Leonora. The member referred to the fact that he did not know who was Leader of the House. I think it would be interesting for members on this side to know who is Leader of the Opposition, for as a rule after the Address-in-Reply has been proposed and seconded, the Leader of the Opposition generally follows with his remarks. This practice has not been followed unless the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) has assumed the rôle of Leader of the Opposition.

MR. HUDSON: There is no such rule of procedure.

MR. BATH: The member for West Perth was put up by his Leader, Mr. Leake, on several occasions after the Address-in-Reply had been moved and seconded. We wanted some explanation of the funny proceedings during the recess.

THE PREMIER: In regard to the measure which we intend to bring forward it is our intention to liberalise the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act to a considerable extent by reducing the maximum. The original measure enabled persons to borrow up to £1,000; we propose to reduce the maximum to £500. It is my opinion that if a farmer desires to borrow more than £500 for the improvement of his land, he is in a position to apply to other financial institutions than the State Bank for aid. The primary object of the Agricultural Bank Act was to assist the small man in the first years of his occupation of the land, and we consider it wiser to extend the operation in favour of the small man with a maximum of £500, rather than that it should be restricted as it is in the case where a larger amount is advanced. It is proposed that the

Bank shall be managed by a board of three persons, to whom the manager will make his recommendations. Authority will be given to advance to the full value of the improvements up to from £200 to £300, while the remaining £200 will be advanced up to 50 per cent. of the value of the improvements; 5 per cent. interest to be paid on the amount advanced for the first five years, while the principal and interest are to be paid off by equal payments extending over 25 years. As at present, the money is to be obtained from the Savings Bank, to be recouped from time to time by ordinary loan funds or debentures. As members know, it is the intention of the Government to make some radical alterations in regard to the tenure of land on the goldfields. I refer to residential leases.

MR. SCADDAN: We heard something about that by private wires from the Minister for Mines during the elections.

THE PREMIER: Shortly after going into office a deputation from the Kalgoorlie Roads Board waited upon me to urge the Government to grant the right of purchase to residential leaseholders. It was pointed out that ever since the regulation was introduced there had been general dissatisfaction owing to the difficulty holders had to secure financial assistance to build decent homes.

MR. SCADDAN: Who has expressed that opinion?

THE PREMIER: The Kalgoorlie Roads Board. The result is, instead of a good substantial type of house being constructed there, the erections in many cases are hessian shanties.

MR. BATH: That is a libel on the people of Trafalgar, where they have decent buildings.

MR. SCADDAN: At Boulder as well.

THE PREMIER: As a comparison in this regard, no better example can be taken than the case of Subiaco, which to a large extent is a working man's suburb.

MR. DAGLISH: More members of Parliament live there than anywhere else.

THE PREMIER: It is absolutely impossible to find a better class of cottage than in Subiaco.

MR. BATH: Seventy-five per cent. are paying rent.

THE PREMIER: What is the reason? These people having freeholds have had

an opportunity of obtaining financial assistance, while on the goldfields that assistance is denied to persons. In cases where money has been advanced it has been at exorbitant interest. A case was brought under my notice recently where a proposal was made to advance a man £600 on a residential lease at 20 per cent. Is that not sufficient argument to prove that this form of tenure cannot be conducive to settlement in these localities?

MR. SCADDAN: There are no vacant blocks except where freeholds exist.

THE PREMIER: I may say my decision was not arrived at until after the gravest possible consideration and until after consulting the Under Secretary for Lands and the Government official on the fields. These gentlemen have been connected with this question in their official capacity, and I feel sure members will realise that their opinion in this respect is valuable. The former officer in his report stated:—

I may say that residential leases have at least had a fair trial, having first come into force in 1898; and although the regulations controlling them have been amended from time to time, and in the last instance, during Mr. Daglish's Government, were very considerably liberalised and a 999 years' lease provided for, I fear that it must be said that they have not been a success, that is if success is measured by absence of complaints from selectors and others interested in them.

MR. BATH: Who is that?

THE PREMIER: Mr. Clifton. The report continues:—

From past experience, and particularly with regard to the latest most liberal residential lease regulations, it appears that we must give up the idea that people will ever be contented on residential leases. Mr. Tupper in his admirable minute on pp. 16 to 18 arrives at much the same conclusion. When such a strong advocate for the lease system as Mr. Tupper has always been practically admits its failure, and he has had opportunities of seeing it in practice to an extent which perhaps no other official of the department has, it makes one feel that there is something wrong about it. . . . I must say that I cannot see that much if any harm would come of allowing the fee simple or residential lots to be acquired; and had my recommendations in this respect made in 1898 with regard to the Boulder blocks been followed, it would have saved a vast amount of controversy and heart-burning.

Mr. Tupper, the Government land agent at Kalgoorlie, says:—

It was thought a lease of this nature (999 years) would give universal satisfaction, but I

regret to say quite the contrary seems to be the case. Judging from what I have heard and seen on the goldfields, I am quite convinced that the residents there will never be satisfied until they have the right to purchase the fee simple of the holdings after a certain time.

MR. SCADDAN: That very officer prevented it.

THE PREMIER: Continuing, Mr. Tupper says:—

Holders of residential leases under previous regulations (21 years' lease) can change their title to the new lease (999 years) on payment of a fee of 20s., but very few have up to the present availed themselves of this privilege, as they have repeatedly stated to me that they could see no advantage to be gained by so doing. One great disadvantage that a holder of a residential lease has to put up with is the fact that banks and such like institutions will not accept that class of title as security, and the consequence is that if the lessee wishes to raise a few pounds for the purpose of erecting a house or other improvements, he is obliged to go to a certain class of money lenders, who charge him any rate of interest from 25 per cent. to 75 per cent. Most of the workers are unable to erect dwellings without financial assistance, and the money lenders are the only people who will advance the sum required, and for which they always charge an exorbitant rate of interest. . . . Those persons who were the strongest advocates for leasehold titles a few years ago are now, with very few exceptions, the strongest advocates for freehold.

MR. COLLIER: That is untrue.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

THE PREMIER: The report goes on:—

I personally was a strong believer in the leasehold system, but I must confess the experiment has not been the success I expected. It is all very good in theory, but it will not work out well in practice, and so long as the present system continues there will always be, I think, the same dissatisfaction.

MR. HORAN: After Mr. Tupper wrote that report, he resigned from the department, did he not?

THE PREMIER: I do not think he has resigned yet. No Minister would be justified in ignoring the opinions of two responsible officers who have been so closely associated with the question from the beginning. [Interjection by Mr. SCADDAN.] Those reports were made six months ago.

MR. SCADDAN: You stated more than six months ago that you decided to do so.

MR. BATH: You said so in reply to the member for East Fremantle more than six months ago.

MR. BOLTON : You said so about eight months ago.

THE PREMIER : It is proved that many people in the neighbourhood of that district will not be satisfied with anything less than the freehold. Nothing better could be quoted than the opinion of the local body controlling the centre where very many of these leases were set apart—the municipal council of Kalgoolie. Subsequently to the delivery of the policy speech I received the following letter from that body :—

By direction of this council, I have the honour to urge that legislation be brought into effect to allow those holders of residential areas, as so desire, to secure the fee simple of their holdings; and that in future town lands for residential purposes be dealt with under the workmens blocks principle of the Land Act 1898; with a maximum time of twelve months after the granting of such leases within which application may be made for the purchase of the lots right out.

What the council ask was what I had promised. I may say, however, that it is not the intention to limit the period within which the purchase-money has to be paid to 12 months, as suggested. This might press heavily on the financially weak, and we have extended the time. The strongest argument that can be used against the principle of granting the right of purchase is that in a few years the great majority of these blocks may come into the possession of those who have the wherewithal to purchase from their more needy fellows. It may happen in a few cases, but I do not think the whole of the majority should be penalised for exceptional cases. I foresaw this possibility, and with a view to preventing it as far as possible included a provision that no man who has once held a working-man's block will be able to secure another from the Crown. I think that provision will go to a very large extent to prevent anyone from securing more than one of these purchases. I would like to say that it is not compulsory for them to give the property up, but they are given an opportunity of coming under the principle I have suggested with regard to workmen's blocks. The Government are desirous as far as possible to assist in the development of the North-West, and provision is being made on the next year's Estimates for putting down a number of artesian bores

in different localities. Already one bore has been put down at Broome with a good flow of water, and plant has been shifted to Derby to enable one to be put down at the 66-Mile on the Fitzroy-road. Arrangement has been made for an officer of the Lands Department to proceed to Derby with a view to inspecting certain areas of land which it is thought may be made available for tropical culture. It is necessary that this inspection shall be made, and that the land shall be surveyed, so that notice of resumption can be given to the leaseholder. Under the Act it is necessary to give 12 months' notice of resumption in such cases. In regard to the question of immigration; there has been undoubtedly a big attempt made to induce settlement, not only in our own State, but in New Zealand, Queensland, and New South Wales. From the old country I quite recently had a letter from a gentleman well known in Western Australia, in which he stated that not only were emigration agents travelling Scotland and Ireland in the interests of the Canadian Government, but also certain agents were there who were sent out by the American Government, and they had adopted a system practically of acting as land agents. They had a list of all the farms which were available in certain districts in America, and the agents of the American Government were doing all they possibly could to encourage emigration to their particular States. New Zealand at the present time is bringing out a thousand labourers and a thousand domestic female servants from the old country, and is offering to find work for them on arrival; whilst New South Wales in pamphlets and advertising matter states that work will be guaranteed to any persons emigrating to New South Wales. I do not propose to deal at any farther length with the matters which the Government intend to bring forward this session. There are several other Bills which have been already referred to, not only in the policy speech but also in the Speech of His Excellency. Among the Bills to be submitted will be one amending the Constitution, providing for a reduction of the franchise for the Legislative Council from £25 to £15. This, as I have already stated, was the policy of the late Government, and was

announced by Mr. Rason in his policy speech at Midland Junction. The Government propose to ask the House to give effect to that proposal, while at the same time making provision for a reduction of £200 in Ministerial salaries. The Fremantle Harbour Trust Amendment Bill will be referred to by other members during the course of this debate. As has already been stated, it is proposed to give the trust increased powers to enable it to construct docks and for work in connection with the harbours, whilst at the same time giving it power to raise money by debentures. Bills dealing with municipalities, public health, and mines regulations are old dishes, and are measures which are well worthy of the consideration of the House. Copies of the Municipal Bill will be forwarded to the various municipalities throughout the State, so that they may have an opportunity of making known through their representations any suggested amendments which they think necessary. In conclusion, I would like to say that, as already announced, it is the intention of the Government to go on the London market to raise a loan. That loan will be spent on reproductive works. The principal works which we intend to bring forward this session are in connection with agricultural and mining developmental railways.

MR. BATH: What is your meaning of "reproductive"?

THE PREMIER: I do not say that the railways will be reproductive immediately. A reproductive railway is a railway which will assist in the settlement of a State, and thereby enable many men who would otherwise not be able to go on the land to take up country, and not only take it up, but develop it to the utmost of its capacity. Amongst the various lines to which I have already referred is an extension of the line from Greenhills eastward. I have had an opportunity of traversing the route of this line, and the line is one which I feel sure will commend itself to the House. It is our desire as far as possible to give the House an idea of what our views are in connection with our programme of railway construction. I consider it is much more advisable to do this, so that members of the House may have an opportunity of making

whatever inquiries they may have to make in connection with these proposals. Last session exception was taken to the fact that certain Railway Bills were brought down very hurriedly, and that members had not had an opportunity of visiting those localities and satisfying themselves as to the urgency or otherwise of the proposed railways. We have outlined the proposals which we intend to bring down. Included in them are four railways which we propose to build in the interests of the mining industry.

MR. DAGLISH: Will you extend the Jandakot line to Armadale?

THE PREMIER: It is the intention of the Government to extend that railway to connect with the South-Western Railway.

MR. DAGLISH: At Armadale?

THE PREMIER: That will be stated in the Bill. As to the railways which we propose to bring under the consideration of the House, it is our intention to allow Parliament to have an opportunity of saying which are the most urgent. Next to the line from Greenhills we have the proposal to extend the line from Narrogin towards the Wickepin Agricultural Area. We propose to have an extension of the line from Bridgetown in a southerly direction to Wilgarrup, and to have a line from Donnybrook up the valley of the Preston. This line will open up a considerable area of fruit-growing country, and at the same time will give an opportunity for the establishment of small timber mills. There is a considerable amount of land held there by conditional purchase holders, which at the present time is not available for cultivation, carrying a considerable quantity of good timber, and I am sure that the owners of this land will be only too glad to have an opportunity of disposing of the timber growing on their property at a reasonable royalty. Another proposal is to construct a line in the direction of the Lower Blackwood. This also will open up a considerable area of timber country. The proposal which we have in regard to the construction of the mining railways I will leave to the Minister for Mines to deal with, because he is more intimately acquainted with the particular districts they will serve than I am. Members will be given every opportunity of making themselves acquainted with these pro-

posals, and every possible information will be brought down to the House before the Bills are being considered.

**MR. BATH:** Are you not going to say anything about Perth, North Perth, and Katanning?

**THE PREMIER:** With regard to the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown), he has been characterised as a candid friend of the Government, but I think it is much better to have a candid friend than a supporter who does not know exactly where he is. The member for Perth was elected—possibly he has forgotten the fact—as a supporter of the James and Rason Governments; and the two planks in the platform to which he objects, namely the tax on unimproved land values and the reduction of the franchise for the Legislative Council, were both included in the policy of those two gentlemen.

**MR. H. BROWN:** I was asked the question in the Town Hall, and said I would not vote for either.

**THE PREMIER:** That was the policy of the two Governments. As far as the hon. member is concerned, he has defined his position pretty clearly. He tells us he objects to these two proposals, and that he will vote against them. We realise that the municipal experience he has had will be of the greatest possible value to the House when considering the Municipal Bill, and I am glad to hear he is willing to utilise that experience for the benefit of the House. In regard to the land tax proposals, the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) has referred to the fact that he intended to vote against these proposals. However, he need have no fear for those whom he is interested in, I mean the small farmers who have recently settled on the soil. We propose to make such liberal conditions that they will not harass the small farmers in their pioneering efforts at development.

**MR. A. J. WILSON:** You can depend upon the Opposition to convert him to that view.

**THE PREMIER:** I am very glad to hear it. In conclusion, I realise that in taking up the position of Leader of the Government I have undertaken a very onerous task, and a grave responsibility for a man with my very limited parliamentary experience. I can only say that,

whether I am Leader of the Government or in Opposition, I will endeavour to the best of my ability to do my duty to the State.

**MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne):** I shall not, like some of the preceding speakers, commence by congratulating everybody in the House and many outside the House. I will content myself simply with offering my congratulations to the Premier on having at this early stage in his parliamentary career attained the high political distinction he now holds. Let us hope sincerely that later on we shall have to congratulate the country on having found at last one who will prove capable of dragging it out of its present financial entanglement. Let us hope that will come about in the near future. In connection with this appointment, I have one cause for regret in the Premier's little knowledge, or absolute want of knowledge, of the northern portion of this State. I am not one of those who dread that the North will be absolutely neglected because the members of the Ministry have not a knowledge of that great country, so long as the Ministry are prepared to be guided by the representatives of that part of the State, and avail themselves of the knowledge which those representatives have acquired, though not expecting that Ministers will necessarily do everything which those representatives may suggest. If members who have lived for any time from 10 to 20 years in that part of the country have not a sufficient knowledge of the local conditions to enable them to give information as to the requirements of that country, I am sure that the Government cannot hope to gain that knowledge through any other channel. It is an enormous and valuable country; and it is impossible for anyone to gain that knowledge of it which its present representatives have acquired, unless he is prepared to spend in it a considerable portion of his life. Only when Governors' Speeches were being read in Parliament have we heard of the intention of the Government to assist and develop the North. Promise after promise is made on those occasions; but I regret to state that the promises are invariably broken, only to be remembered again at the time of the preparation of the next Governor's Speech. I wish to know whether this

state of things is to continue always. Are we always to allow these valuable resources known to exist in that part of the country to remain undeveloped, seeing that Government after Government has made the same promises, and I can safely say that not on one occasion has any attempt been made to carry them out? Yet no part of this State that I know of would respond so quickly to development as would the North; and up to the present the North has been most shamefully neglected. Look at the resources we have there—gold, silver, and tin in minerals, and on our coast-line a valuable pearling industry, and enormous scope for the development of the fishing industry itself. Then we have been promised at different times a railway to open up some of our mineral country in the North; and I am sorry to say that this has been left out of the Governor's Speech for the present session. I should like to know whether the Government intend to do anything towards the construction of that railway, either by direct Government assistance, by private enterprise, or by any other means. Undoubtedly the railway is badly wanted there; and our vast resources cannot be developed except by railway construction. I hope that in this Government there does not exist that strong element of hostility to the North which has been so characteristic of Governments in the past. I firmly believe that the gentleman now leading the Government will be prepared to listen to those who represent the northern areas, and to do his best to develop those rich pastoral and mineral lands. I should like to draw attention to the enormous progress which the pastoral district which I represent has made since the James Government began to put down artesian bores—I am proud to say, at my instigation. The first bore was put down four years ago; and since that time millions of acres of pastoral land have been taken up and settled as quickly as stock could be obtained to put on them. I can safely say that there is scarcely an inch of suitable country in that district that has not already been taken up, throughout the Gascoyne and the Minilya, in every direction within the limits of what is at the present time considered to be the artesian basin. We have already eight

or ten bores completed or in course of construction or arranged for; and the four, five, or six bores completed are producing say from 1,500,000 gallons down to 450,000 gallons per day. Those acquainted with pastoral pursuits can easily imagine how immensely valuable it is to a country which has always been regarded as waterless, to find that artesian water can be obtained to this extent; and we have repeatedly asked the Government to send out geologists with a view to trace and to define as far as possible the limits of this artesian basin, so as to give landholders an opportunity of knowing whether or not they can risk a large expenditure with the hope of success. It is recognised that it is the duty of the Government to take the initiative, as it were, in this direction. It is hardly fair to expect the pastoralist to take up a large area on lease, and immediately to put his hand in his pocket to the tune of £5,000 or £6,000 in order to put down a bore to test what is actually a Government estate. These areas are only leaseholds; and it is hardly fair to expect a private person to put down the first artesian bores. Surely the Government should take that work in hand. Once having proved the existence of artesian water, then the Government can leave it to the lessee to proceed to develop his leases. I am glad to say that was done with the assistance of the progressive member for Menzies (Hon. H. Gregory), who was Minister for Mines in the James Government as in this Government. He considered my proposals fair and reasonable; and I can but say that the development and progress which that district has made up to the present are due entirely to that hon. member. I hope that the Government will see the wisdom of his policy, and will continue it. We have promises of bores in certain parts of the country farther North; but I think it would be wise if the Government sent out a geologist to ascertain whether there was a prospect of obtaining artesian water, before launching out into a large expenditure. There is another project that I should much like to see the Government undertake, and one that I regret has not found a place in the Governor's Speech. I refer to the establishment of freezing works throughout the northern



pastoral districts of this State. It must be recognised that the whole of our meat supply for the metropolitan and the gold-fields areas must come from the pastoral regions of the North; and the waste and the pecuniary loss in bringing stock from these areas to Fremantle are so great that if I were to state the amount I am perfectly certain that members who do not know the facts would think I was exaggerating. But the loss amounts to thousands of pounds per annum, and is a direct loss to the producer, to the State, and to the consumer. With the establishment of freezing works the whole difficulty would be overcome. The cattle would be killed on the spot, would be brought down to Fremantle chilled, and would be put on the market in really good condition. Moreover, freezing works would obviate the necessity for the ruthlessly cruel treatment now suffered by the stock. The unfortunate animals, after being herded for eight or ten days on board ship, are again herded into a stock-yard at Robb's Jetty, where they remain starving until they are slaughtered. When that fortunate time, from the bullock's point of view, arrives, they are in many cases not fit for human consumption. And now I come to that very vexed question, the land tax. My view is this. I first ask myself whether a land tax is necessary; and if necessary, for what purpose. If it is for revenue purposes, then we are coming down to bed-rock; if, as some members think and as some other people have thought, the object is the bursting up of big estates, it will not have that effect—rather the opposite. At the present time we have not been shown conclusively that the tax is absolutely necessary from a revenue point of view. Before we come down to that position—before we look for farther taxation—we must first find out whether it is absolutely impossible to reduce our expenses, or to bring them within the scope of our revenue. Has this been done? I do not think it has. I would suggest that we cut down our grants to municipalities. The member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber) will not like that. We can cease to give these huge grants to various societies throughout the State. We can cut down or entirely abolish the grants to the Caves Board, which have figured

very largely in our Estimates for the last few years. The member for Sussex (Hon. F. Wilson) will not like that, I admit. We must also cease to give grants for public parks throughout the State. We must cease to give our grants to the Zoological Gardens, for the purpose of building useless snake-houses. And I should advocate the abolition of the Observatory—another useless article in Western Australia. There are lots of these things we might cut down in order to reduce our expenses. To a great extent they are useless to the State; and when that is done, if we find that we cannot keep within the limits of our revenue, let us bring down a land tax, and I will be found one of the first to support it. Another thing, the Government might just as well take another pull at those huge dividends we see figuring in the Governor's Speech. I see there is no less a sum than £2,167,639 paid in dividends in the last 12 months. The greater proportion of these dividends is drawn by absentees, by people who contribute little to the revenue of the State. Let us take another pull at these dividends, and see if we cannot get a little more towards the revenue out of these people. After we have done all these things, if we find that we require revenue let us institute a land tax; but do not forget that when a land tax is introduced it will have a very serious effect upon our future land settlement. We are asking settlers to come here and take up agricultural land and settle on it; and unless we allow very liberal exemptions, we cannot expect to do otherwise than strangle the agricultural industry and cripple the unfortunate settlers who come here; and it will have more the effect of increasing large estates than reducing them. Before we resort to a land tax by which the struggling farmer will be affected, let us go to somebody who can afford to pay a tax better. Let us start on an income tax, and we will strike the man who contributes nothing towards the development of the country and who is doing nothing but drawing an income as a middleman.

MR. BATH: And by an income tax you will also be getting at the man who is doing something.

MR. BUTCHER: Yes; I am advocating an income tax. I want to see it

really before a land tax; or put them both together; I am perfectly willing to assist in passing both of them. Unfortunately perhaps, I shall have to contribute towards it. I do not mind, so long as I can see reasonable hopes of protecting the struggling settler to a great extent, and of allowing him to overcome the first few years of pioneering without a land tax; but no land tax shall go through this House without my opposition if it is not going to carry with it very liberal exemptions to the struggling settlers. Now I am going to have a tilt at Federation. While I admit that I am a federalist at heart—I have been throughout my life—I cannot say that we can look on Federation, as far as it affects West Australia, as a blessing. Rather the opposite. No only can we say that we have derived no benefit from it, but we can honestly say it has been a distinct disadvantage. We have suffered very heavy loss in the past, and we are likely to suffer very considerably in the future. I consider that we undoubtedly paid very largely for our whistle, and our whistle, in fact, only exists in name. The whole question of Federation is a huge sentimental joke from the commencement, and we have to pay for it. We have lost considerably in our revenue, and we can ill-afford to; and in the future we shall probably lose a great deal more. The only hope we have now is, as far as I can see, to carefully see that we send to represent us in the Federal Parliament men of the very best class who are capable of guarding jealously our interests and fighting strenuously for our rights. Let us look forward to the time, and hope it will soon arrive, when we will receive some of those glorious benefits which we have been promised in the past. I only hope it will come before very soon and that we will prosper under Federation. I have nothing more to speak upon but to accord the Address-in-Reply my heartiest support.

On motion by Mr. BOLTON, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:51 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 4th July, 1906.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### QUESTION—PERSONAL REFLECTIONS, MR. DAGLISH.

MR. DAGLISH: I beg to ask the Premier, without notice, if he will afford me an opportunity to-morrow to make motions which appear in Orders 28 and 29 on the Notice Paper for to-day. Those papers are moved for in consequence of certain reflections of a personal nature cast upon me, and my desire is to get the very earliest opportunity to answer questions and have the contents of the files in question made public.

THE PREMIER replied: As these deal with a personal matter, I will give the hon. member an opportunity to move the motions to-morrow.

#### QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST PROPERTY, AND COST.

MR. BATH asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the complaint of the Fremantle Harbour Commissioners in their annual report, that the schedule showing value of property vested in the Commissioners has not been supplied by the Government? 2, If so, has he acceded to their wishes? 3, If not, why not?

THE PREMIER replied: 1, 2, and 3, The matter is now under the consideration of the Colonial Secretary. In February, 1904, a statement was supplied to the Harbour Trust showing the figures allocated by the Department against the Trust, but since that date the Department and the Trust have been discussing whether certain of the figures should be included, and eventually a basis has been arrived at, with the exception of a ques-