THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: As I understand there are hon, members who want to get away to catch their trains, and as my speaking late is more attributable to the member for Mt. Margaret than myself, I shall be too pleased if it is the wish of hon. members to continue my remarks on Tuesday. If members are desirous of catching their various trains, I shall be very pleased, with the consent of the Speaker and the House, to continue my remarks when the House meets on Tuesday afternoon. (t will be some considerable time before I can finish, and I think members can appreciate the position inasmuch as there is an obligation, at least on Ministers, to answer the very extended arguments which have been made by members who have criticised the Government. ask for leave to continue my remarks on Tuesday.

THE SPEAKER: This practice is new to the House. It is followed where there is a stated time for closing the business of the House; but as far as the present occasion is concerned, if it is the desire of the House that the wish of the Minister shall be carried into effect, I have no objection. I will put the motion to the House. The question is that leave be granted to the Minister for Lands to resume his speech at the next sitting of the House.

Motion passed and leave granted accord-

ingly.

THE PREMIER: I hope members will come on Tuesday with a desire to close the debate. So far as the Ministry are concerned, we desire to finish the debate, and I think members too would like to see the debate closed on Tuesday.

Mr. Thomas: That is a question for members to decide.

THE PREMIER: Yes; with humble submission to the hon. member I hope members will come on Tuesday with a desire to close the debate that night.

ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 20 minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislatibe Council,

Tuesday, 9th August, 1904.

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

PRAYERS.

MEMBER SWORN.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY, elected for the East Province, took the oath and subscribed the roll.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, "The Land Act, 1898"-Regulations restricting the cutting of timber on State Forests at Greenbushes, Port Hedland, Marradong, Greenmount, Broad Arrow, Nannine. 2, Amendment of boundaries of the State Forests of Balgarri, Greenmount, Mulgarrie, Broad Arrow. 3, "The Cemeteries Act, 1897 and 1899 - Bylaws of the Cemeteries of Midland Junction, Cookernup, Menzies, Kookynie, Mount Morgans, Cue, Day Dawn, Karrakatta, Pinjarra. 4, "The Stock Diseases Act, 1805"—Regulations and Quarantine Stations. 5, "The Parks and Reserves Act, 1895"—By-laws of the Recreation Grounds of Bardoc and Katanning.

QUESTION—RAILWAY BRIDGES (FREMANTLE), SAFETY.

Hon. M. L. Moss asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, The date of the last examination of the foundations of the two railway bridges at Fremantle. 2, Whether the scour of the river is affecting the safety of the structures?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, 8th August, 1904. 2, No.

STRANGERS' GALLERY, STANDING ORDER.

On motion by Hon. M. L. MOSS, resolved:

That Standing Order 34 be amended by striking out the words "and each member may issue one ticket of admission to without the Bar of the House," and inserting in lieu thereof, "and every member may admit three

strangers to the gallery each day by written orders and two ladies to the ladies' gallery."

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by M. L. MOSS, two mouths' leave of absence granted to the Hon. J. D. Connolly (North-East Province), on the ground of urgent private business.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor read, assenting to Supply Bill.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY. FIFTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I must first thank the Colonial Secretary (Hon. W. Kingsmill) for his kindness in having this debate adjourned so that absent members who were unavoidably absent should have an opportunity of speaking. common with In members, I think it would be improper to let this opportunity pass without a few words as to our new Houses of Par-The Government are to be heartily congratulated on constructing and thus far completing these buildings. I am one of those who think that the legislative buildings of a State should be in keeping with its progress; and I cannot understand why any members should grudge the necessary expenditure. To my mind it is money well spent. Visitors to a country like as a rule to inspect the Houses of Parliament, and good legislative buildings are of service not only in this respect, but because cheerful surroundings often bring cheerful thoughts. I am sure our present environment will materially assist us in the work of legislation. If one has to speak on a dry subject in a miserable structure, his environment must necessarily have an unfavourable influence on his mind; and the contrary proposition is equally true. I am glad to be able to part in the first Parliament assembled in this structure. Referring to the general welfare of the country as disclosed in the Governor's Speech, the position seems all that can be desired. Every industry appears prosperous; and though I am not one to give credit to the Government for all the prosperity which the State enjoys, it would be most unfair

not to give them a due share of credit in this matter, for I think much of our prosperity is a result of their able management. I will not go so far as to say that they are the authors of that prosperity; but they have been very good managers, and have succeeded in making all their State enterprises such as the Coolgardie Water Scheme and the Fremantle Harbour Works paying concerns, or as nearly so as is now possible. I think it was thoroughly understood that neither the Coolgardie Water Scheme nor the Fremantle Harbour Works could pay from the jump. I take advantage of this opportunity to say that though those works have been completed during the life of the present Government, and are referred to in the Governor's Speech, yet the Government cannot take credit for more than putting a coat of paint on either work. The Government have certainly put these enterprises on good working lines after; but as the schemes were initiated and brought nearly to a conclusion by previous Governments, a good opportunity offered of making graceful reference to previous Governments, and I notice that the Premier in speaking on the same day of the opening of Parliament stated that the privileges to-day depended upon past efforts, and that no progress was real which attempted to sever the roots of the past from the growth of to-day. I think all will agree with the excellent words used. The success of the Coolgardie Water Scheme and the Fremantle Harbour Works was due to the Forrest Government, who initiated those schemes, and carried them out. In regard to the financial position, the credit balance is certainly large, but some very doubtful economy has been practised by the Government to my knowledge. Medical aid has been withdrawn from country residents. We find that hospitals have been closed, and lives have been lost, and are being lost to-day, through the closing of these bospitals. This economy is doubtful. There have been savings of £200 or £300 in certain directions, and the spending of thousands in other directions. Country districts have lost hospital accommodation, and in consequence the lives of persons bave been lost, and the lives were worth more to the State than the £80,000 credit balance. I trust the Government, if they remain in power, will see that scattered districts have medical assistance given them. Those who reside in cities such as Perth have 20 medical men at their call. They do not understand the position of people who live thirty, forty, or fifty and in some cases one hundred miles from medical aid. There is just the same danger to life in the country, possibly more than the people in cities experience, and two cities in this State, only 14 miles apart, have 30 or 40 medical men between them, yet the residents of this State deny medical aid to those in scattered places. The positions of resident magistrates and medical officers should not be combined. If I am spared and have the ability, I shall inquire what restrictions are placed on medical men coming into the State. What influence has the medical board over them?

How. M. L. Moss: Any qualified medical man can come here.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: Resident medical men who have been sent into the country are tempted away from places where they first settle down. Agricultural settlements are asked to subscribe, towards the support of the hospitals, two pounds for every one pound subscribed by the Ìn sparsely populated Government. places, it is impossible to subscribe sufficient money to support a medical Agricultural districts are not like timber mill centres where there is a large number of residents. In the country, residents are forty and fifty miles apart; these settlers are expected to do the same as people living in cities, or in big settle-Medical men sent to a country town should be kept there. I think much of the money that has been saved should have been spent in making the people of the country more comfortable. If the Government remain in power the first thing they should do is to re-open hospitals, and place an efficient staff at The cost of mainthose institutions. taining hospitals in the country, under present conditions imposed, will fall on the shoulders of the people who have come here within the last two or three years. These people are asked to subscribe from the jump two pounds for every one pound given by the Government for hospital accommodation. is a most unfair condition of things. Something should be done in the matter. I have heard much about what the Government have done in regard to the administration of the Land Act, but I wish some one would show me what section of the Land Act they passed that has assisted settlement.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: You do not put men on the land by laws.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: It is the administration of law. I want to know what the Government have done. They have made second-class land first-class land, and third-class land second-class land. and they have increased the price as well. The House never intended that the Lands Department should raise the price of the lands of this country. People are forced to pay this high price, and they should not have been forced to do so. It would not matter so much if people got secondclass land, but they have had to pay second-class price for third-class land. want to know why a resolution which was passed by this House last session was slaughtered with the innocents in another place? Why were not the opinions of another place taken on this very important matter? The Colonial Secretary knows to what I refer. The Government were afraid to bring this matter before the Assembly.

Hon. C. Sommers: What was it?

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: It was a resolution by this House, and passed on to another place, that the Government had no right to increase the price of second and third-class land. That resolution was passed by this House, and the Government should have taken charge of that resolution, and submitted it to another The fact that a resolution was passed by the House should be a guarantee that it would be dealt with in another place. Again, we have the extraordinary condition of confiscation. A person applies for certain second-class or thirdclass land, and forwards his deposit to the department. If the applicant refuses to accept the price fixed by the department, the Government forfeit his deposit. That is a law passed by the department, and is in force to-day. Then there is the matter of preventing an applicant's wife selecting land. I do not know what on earth the Government think selectors are. The Government must think they are all sharpers, and that every wishes to get land for his wife and children, and even for his little baby-

Address-in-reply:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:

they?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: They cannot take up land for babies, as you know. New Zealand, with all its restrictions, allows the wife of a settler to take up to 1,000 acres of land in her own name. A man takes up 2,000 acres, 640 acres first-class and the balance second-class land; so he gets a fine estate in New Zealand, where several inducements are held out for people to take up land. first inducement is occupation, with 25 years in which to pay off the cost, at the end of which time the fee simple is obtained. Again, a man can take up land on a 999 years tenure at 4 per cent. That is a good life-time. Minister for Lands has boasted that he put a stop to land being mopped up. the law has permitted a man and his wife to mop up land, why not? If the law does not, then an illegal action has been done. The Lands Department have taken a high proceeding in legislating in this matter. I say here they have no right to insist on such con-Again, the department because ditions. that they could not catch up with the work kept back selection of second and third-class land for several months. never heard of such a thing. Millions of acres were shut up because the Lands Department could not keep pace with the requirements, and yet they talk about what they have done in settling the land. That is what makes me wild. Then we have one of the most extraordinary notices ever appearing in the Government Gazette in connection with homestead It appears that one man living somewhat near Cuballing succeeded in getting no less than six homestead blocks. If he did so he was liable, and should have been punished, because everyone knows that a declaration has to be made to meet the case and prevent this sort of A notice was issued stating that no man could transfer his homestead block to a conditional purchase block simply because of one or two men roguing the department. These men should be The Minister may have, under certain conditions, thought fit to grant these blocks, but a man should be punished if he took up these blocks to

make a profit out of them. Then why should we legislate so as to refuse to let a man pay 10s. for what he can absolutely bold for nothing? There is no sense in The conditions are harsher than the regulations warrant, and this is creating I do not know who is discontent. responsible. The Minister, in an inter-Wagin, at said he was not responsible; but I think the department are responsible. I asked a question the other day of the gentleman who had the honour to move the Address-in-reply, regarding the big estates. I asked him where they were, and he said that they were in the Speech. I find that the hon. member, Mr. Briggs, made a speech the other day stating that something like 7,000,000 acres of land were locked up, blocks of not less than 5,000 acres each. I do not know where the statement comes The latest statistical returns show that only 3,500,000 acres have been alienated from the Crown. Yet the statements are going through the country. and people are lead to believe that enormous areas are locked up by various owners throughout the State. I want to know where these big estates are. is one estate in the York district, but the owners are doing good work with it. It comprises 30,000 acres, and if the land was divided amongst the members of the family owning it, each share would not be as much as a person would be entitled to take up under the laws of the State. This is one of the estates they are going for. There are other big estates, I admit; but they are not worth while having. They are on the coast, down south. There is a big estate owned by the Midland Railway, and that is what we want to get The owners of the land are not doing the right thing with it, and something should be done with that large area. believe in facing the thing boldly, and in purchasing the land outright so as to We have an be done with these people. instance in the Great Southern Railway, which was bought for a million of money. Now to-day two millions sterling would be required to purchase it. We, as an agricultural people, have done our level best to fulfil the conditions of improvement; but we do not wish to be looked upon with suspicion by the Lands Depart-According to the latest figures there are 3,517,734 acres of land absolutely alienated, and those living in the State must know that an immense quantity of that land is held under the old conditions which required that certain improvements were to be performed. The fee simple has been obtained for most of this land, and a reasonable acreage must be allowed for it. Then, again, we have the Midland Railway Company with 2,760,010 acres over which the Government have control, and wisely so. I commend the Government for insisting on that land only being sold under conditions of improvement.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: Were those the conditions under which they got the concession?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The Government hold this land as mortgagees. of 634,000,000 acres we have to-day absolutely alienated and in process of alienation, 9,856,592 acres; and of these 6,378,886 acres are under conditions of improvement. So we must admit that we have not done badly. It seems that something like £6,000,000 has yet to be spent on this land to make it reproductive. Even supposing this money is not spent, there are certain conditions of improvement which must be carried Members can see the folly of sending forth the cry that we have so much country locked up in large estates. cry has appeared in the Governor's Speech and elsewhere more times than I remember. We are promised fresh land legislation and I believe it is to be based upon the laws of New Zealand. I have one of the books issued to intending selectors of that country, and the conditions under which a man can take up land in New Zealand are far more liberal than those of Western Australia, excepting the homestead blocks provision, which is a doubtful provision. In New Zealand a lad of 17 can take up land. I did not know this when I was speaking previously on this matter. For years past a lad of 17 has been able to take up land and yet reside with his parents for four years, which will make him 21 before he is obliged to go on to the land. This lad is made responsible to the State in the same way that a man of 21 years is made responsible in this State. The colony of New Zealand is cut up into 10 districts, and a commissioner is appointed in each district. There are boards of from three to five persons in each district to assist the commissioner. They are the bodies through whom the business connected with the lands of the district is transacted. I trust that something of this kind will be in the land legislation which is referred to in the Speech. Take the land in the timber country of this State, it requires altogether different treatment from the land, say, along the Great Southern Railway line. Then take the land in the country farther east which requires special treatment. necessary in New Zealand to have 10 different districts, then it must certainly be necessary to have different treatment for the different parts of this country. What is good for one is not good for In New Zealand the price is fixed at £1 per acre on which the selector has to pay 5 per cent. One acre of first-class land is equal to five acres of land in this country. The settler is entitled to take up a pastoral lease that will keep 20,000 sheep or 4,000 head of cattle. whereas if a man in this country had that number of stock he would be looked upon as holding a large area of land which should be cut up. The right selection is Jetermined bγ and that system should be adopted ln regard to the of rent there is a 10 per cent. reduction in New Zealand if it is paid a month before the due date. That is a big consideration. Then there is a provision for surrender in New Zealand; there is no instance there of land being forfeited and put up to auction. The land laws contain a surrender provision, and if a man decides to give up his land the first thing the Government do is to pay for the outside fences, which our Lands Department think of no value. If a man finds he is not fitted for working on the land he is allowed to surrender his holding; but here, if a man is placed in a similar position, the fruits of his labour are put up to auction and the Government take the benefit. In New Zealand a woman is allowed to take up land, and a young woman too. Fertilising the soil is counted as an improvement in New Zealand. is not right in this country that a man should be taxed as soon as his application is approved of; and one of the first provisions in the new Bill should be to enable a selector to free himself from

Fifth day.

such taxes for two years. I hope the Government will not sail under false colours here, but will introduce some liberal concessions to selectors. I do not want to take away any credit which is due to the Government, and there are many things they have initiated and carried out which should redound to their credit.

Нои. WESLEY MALEY (South-East): It is not my intention to deal at any length with the motion before the House, but I would like to join with my colleague in thanking the leader of the House for his courtesy in adjourning the debate so that we might have an opportunity of listening to his remarks on the Address-in-reply. Unfortunately, it appears that during our detention in the lake district of Wagin, under very trying circumstances, speeches have been made, and we are at a very serious loss in not knowing what has taken place in the Chamber. For my part, I have not had time to read up Hansard yet, having been up till midnight last night; but I understand nothing of a revolutionary character has taken place in this Chamber, and I hope it will be a long day hence when anything of a revolutionary character will be brought before this House. I can say I am pleased with the step in advance which has been made in having a more commodious Chamber in which to conduct the business of the State. fear, however, that the venture was entered upon somewhat hastily. that with the demand there is throughout this State for reproductive works, the large sum of money involved in this initial work of building suitable Houses of Parliament might have been better employed. But whilst thinking that, I do not wish for a moment to depreciate the efforts of the Government who have I believe the made this movement. movement is in the right direction; but I would like to see all these works undertaken and carried out to a completion by I am averse to the beginning of the alteration which always takes place when you call in an architect. I believe that criticisms have not been entirely satisfactory with regard to this Chamber. The acoustic properties have been condemned, and the architectural design has not been commended. I have no doubt the building will be an

expensive one before it is completed. I understand from what I have heard that Parliament is now experiencing crisis, that in another place there is a big bid for power, and that this power will be wielded by a class rather than by the free representatives of the people. In passing such remarks I would like to say that not for one moment do I think this is the result of payment of We all must admit that payment of members has widened the choice of selection of candidates for Parliament. and no one would object to the widest possible choice being given to electors to secure representatives to Parliament. may be that the system, good in itself, is being abused. It may be that a certain class has taken advantage of machinery which has been placed in the hands of the people, and is abusing the opportunities which have been given. have always contended that so far as this Chamber is concerned it is very necessary as a check to hasty legislation, and for the purpose of amending any legislation which is not satisfactory to those who remain in permanent residence in the State: so I always have been and always will be in favour of a retention of the franchise at £25 per annum. This is not the first time I have made that statement in the House, and I affirm it again, that the people of this State are not prepared for any reduction. If farther evidence were wanted with regard to agricultural districts, we have it in the recent election for the East Province. Nothing can be more emphatic than the way the East Province pronounces on the question of the franchise, and I think the stability of the State depends very largely if not entirely on the firmness of the members of this Chamber in opposing any attempt at reducing the present franchise. A good deal has been said by my hon, colleague with regard to the land regulations, classification, and a number of other subjects of very great moment to the settlers. My colleague is one imbued very fully with the value of the lands of this State. is large-hearted and whole-souled in what he has taken in hand himself and in his advocacy of the settlers' interests. I am satisfied that the words which fell from his lips will be listened to with respect in this Chamber, and will be read with interest and satisfaction outside this

Chamber. I have said before and I have to repeat it, that it is unwise, if not something worse, for any Government to tamper with the legislation which is passed by both Houses of Parliament, and the regulations which proceed from that legislation. The principle of varying the price of land, and not adhering strictly to the price fixed by statute and regulation, is one which does not commend itself to my mind, and will not commend itself to any right-minded individual. Is it a wonder that persons will take advantage of the loop-holes which are given in Acts of Parliament to make the best deal they can with the State, and in some instances, as has been pointed out, to secure a large number of homestead blocks, the largest number possible, and take every advantage on their side, when the Government are taking every advantage in their transactions? I say the Government have set the example. They may do it with the very best intentions, but if they set such an example it is only reasonable that the settler in dealing with the Government will drive the hardest bargain. He is bound by the power which rests with the Government; he is bound by the law, by regulations, and also by the dealings in the Lands Office, and being bound so much, is he to be blamed for making best deal be can for himself? have sufficient land in this State and to spare for the farming community of Our young men in Western Australia. Australia and the young men the Eastern States can find ample scope for their intelligence and industry on the waste lands of Western Australia, and then there will be plenty to spare. There is no need at the present time for the Government to burst up estates. is no peed for the Government to impose ridiculous restrictions on the settlement of the land. No reason whatever can be adduced for preventing the drift of population westwards. Nothing short of criminality can be given as a name to any act of any Government which will prevent the trend of agricultural settlement westwards at the present time.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear,

near.

Hox. W. MALEY: I am glad to hear the Colonial Secretary say "hear, hear." He is a member of the Government who have not always been consistent in supporting the theory that I have propounded that the agriculturists should be encouraged from the other side. I am glad to bear that he agrees with me that no obstruction should be put in their way. I think it is a sin when sheep can be bought in South Australia at 1s. 6d. or 2s. or 2s. 6d. per head that every inducement is not given for the settlement of our land in large areas, the pasture lands and the agricultural lands. It is just a question whether to stock sheep to-day at 17s. to £1 per head is not better than growing wheat; providing mutton for the people, which they are paying 9d. per pound for. It is a question whether it is not better to employ the ground for running sheep than to grow wheat at 3s. per bushel. A good deal depends upon the management of the railway system, and I say that in regard to land 20 miles from a railway, one would do infinitely better to turn the land to sheep than to include in agriculture, and if the Government will pursue the policy of cutting up lands, it is necessary for them to show the advantage that will be obtained. In every State something should be shown as to the advantages which are obtained by the cutting up of these estates. I was much surprised that no reference was made in the Governor's Speech to a great work which is proposed to be undertaken by the Government, but which it does not seem quite clear to me will be undertaken by the present Government; that is, the Collie to Narrogin railway. I should like to have seen a reference made to that railway in the Governor's Speech simply to show the bona fides of the Government, showing their intention to construct that railway. There is, however, no hope given in the Speech that the railway is to be taken in hand. Was it or was it not the intention of the present Government to build it? Is it, or is it not, the intention of the present Government to construct that line at the earliest possible moment? Settlers have been induced to go on the land and large numbers have gone there on the promise that the rail-way will be built. Will they be given some reason to believe that the railway will be built at the earliest possible moment? People may have to take a man hundreds of miles with a broken leg

or some other injury, and you cannot expect under such disadvantages as occur to the pioneers that there will be any continued rush of settlement on our agricultural lands. Let the Government keep faith with the people, let them continue to inspire the people in settling them on the land, and continue the inspiration until the consummation of the With the railway no doubt will follow a resident medical officer and other conveniences. Then, again, we have the Minister for Lands declaring in favour of the Katanning-Kojonup railway which is not mentioned in the Speech, but that line is very necessary for the welfare of the State; to say nothing of the Albany railway, which I believe the Ministry hoped to get through, but have not succeeded in getting through yet. We still hope that the Minister will go through that country and that the railway will soon follow his visit, I have one or two words to say now with respect to railway administration. session an Act was passed empowering the Commissioner of Railways to control all roads which railways crossed. That affected the William Street crossing, and a number of crossings in the country districts. In this House I condemned the clause giving that power, and the Com-missioner of Railways has since taken down the William Street footbridge before finishing the new bridge. The men employed in taking down that wooden bridge would have been far better employed in ballasting the railways to prevent washaways. I say that the only crossing at a place called Woodanilling was fenced across with barbed wire by the Commissioner; that it was impossible for settlers to go any other way than across the railway; and that by night two residents of the district rode into that barbed wire, though, thanks to good fortune, a serious accident was averted. As it was, both they and their horses were cut about. The Commissioner absolutely fenced with barbed wire the only crossing in the town leading from the public hall to the hospital. The settlers who rode into the fence cut the wire down, and so averted danger to others; and the Commissioner has since opened a roadway not so convenient, but at the same time safe. dangerous to give any Commissioner power to interfere with the right of the people to proceed along the King's highroad. Speaking of the prosperity of the State, I am satisfied that people in the city who do not travel in country districts have no conception of what has been taking place in the matter of agricultural settlement along the Great Southern Railway; and, with proper ments and with better administration of the Lands Department, I believe that such settlement will continue to increase with agricultural development, and will still go ahead by leaps and bounds; and that the only difficulty will be, not to produce wheat, but to find a market for it. That will be our next trouble; and I am pleased that an enterprising firm is now sending to England a trial shipment of wheat. That fact inspires me with great hope and confidence. Knowing the country, and its agricultural and mineral resources, I am satisfied that despite the political crisis, and no matter who may get into power, Western Australia has a bright future before it. We may have a bad time for a year or two, owing to political turmoil; but I am satisfied that in the end the country will emerge practically unscathed, and that its prosperity will perhaps be unprecedented in Australia. Certainly the Cinderella, Western Australia, will not be least in the Commonwealth group.

On motion by Hon. E. McLarty, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10 minutes to 6 o'clock, until the next day.