

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 4th August, 1910.

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

QUESTION—INCOME TAX RETURNS.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Whether the Government are aware that within the last few weeks numbers of people who have receipts for the payment of income tax during recent years have received letters from the Taxation Department stating that income tax returns had not been furnished by them for the years 1907, 1908, and 1909, and adding that they had rendered themselves liable to a heavy penalty? 2, Whether returns were issued to those persons holding receipts in ignorance of the fact that such persons had already paid the tax?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, They were issued in consequence of names and addresses of employees in returns, furnished under Section 52, differing from the particulars stated in the returns furnished by the taxpayers themselves.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day—Conclusion.

Resumed from the previous day.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East): Through the kindness of the Colonial Secretary I have the honour of addressing a few remarks to you, Mr. President. Following in the footsteps of other members, I desire to express my regret at the loss the Empire has sustained by the death of our late King, and I feel sure that I fully express the wishes of the other members that King George V. will have a long and illustrious reign. We also hope sincerely that it will be a peaceful reign. I desire to offer

my congratulations to you, Mr. President, upon your victory at the recent elections and upon the honour again conferred upon you on being re-elected to preside over this House. I also wish to express to the new members a welcome and to say that I am pleased indeed that although all the old members of this House were opposed, with the exception of our old friend Sir Edward Wittenoom, it is pleasing for us all to meet again. I would like to refer to the loss the House has sustained by the absence from our midst of Mr. Randell, Mr. Haynes, and Mr. Oats. It means of course that we have lost some very able advice that will, I suppose, make some of us a little more careful, but I sincerely hope that these gentlemen will be spared in our midst so that we may refer to them from time to time and get their advice for the better Government and welfare of the country though they may not be members of this House. With regard to the Speech, I think we can all congratulate the Government on the optimistic spirit that pervades it right through. I certainly was somewhat astounded to find the amount of business that is going to be put before Parliament this session because I quite expected that after the strenuous and good work that the Premier has been doing in London, he would look forward to a season of rest upon his oars and I think that the country could very well have done without the enormous amount of business that it is proposed to put before us in the present session. There are some very important measures pervading the Speech right through, and these require very careful scrutiny because I personally am not inclined to give my endorsement to them all. We will have to wait and see exactly what the various measures are. One great trouble that we have before us is that the recent Federal Elections have shown us that we shall have to keep a tight hand on the finances. It was particularly unfortunate to lose the Financial Agreement because with the great demands in every direction for increased works and conveniences of one description and another, we undoubtedly wanted

all the revenue it was possible to obtain, and I am quite satisfied that we wanted some very definite revenue fixed in the Constitution as a guarantee of the financial stability of the country when going upon the market for loans for the carrying out of the many works required here. At the same time it is a very unenviable position for the Treasurer of the State to have to carry on and have this shadow over him all the time and which will remain for some years to come a great uncertainty as to what the sources of revenue will be. Of course the finances of the State are in a prosperous condition. Month after month went by and we saw everything was so promising that I sincerely hoped we would have the Treasurer coming down this year with a proposal to remit some taxation. I shall still go on hoping that the Treasurer will be inclined at least to reconsider some of the taxation which is very severe. I at least expected that consideration would be given to the question of the land and income tax and it might be seen, now that the finances are so prosperous, that a remission of the tax or a repeal of the Act should take place. I can see now that a great many people who several years ago had no hesitation in going in for that taxation, because they were to be exempted for five years, are falling into line and becoming somewhat scared when they notice the extraordinary valuations which are being put upon city and country lands. The Taxation Department has an inflated notion of the values of the land of this country. And from many remarks I have heard in the country and in the city, I regret very much my laxity when that Bill was going through Committee, and that I was not able to press the suggestion I then made that in case a person was not satisfied with the value placed on his property, even after an appeal, there should be some provision by which he could demand that the Government should take over his property on a valuation. I have met some men whose unimproved value is greater than the price they are prepared to take for their land plus all the improvements.

When we have a department that puts such scandalous values upon land—

The Colonial Secretary: Why do they not appeal?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Probably they will appeal; several of them have given notice of appeal; but it seems to me that it is scandalous indeed for a department to put them in that position. It is simply harassing the country from one end to another. I have seen people who cannot possibly find the cash to pay the taxes, and who have in some instances to go to other people and borrow money to pay them. It is not on account of the taxes altogether, but it is the cost of preparing the returns and the trouble of going in, 20 miles in some instances, to the town and spending a day or two there in order to have the returns made out, during which time their work at home is neglected. They probably find they have to pay £1 or £2 in order to make up the taxation returns, when the tax does not amount to that much. There is also the point alluded to by Mr. Kirwan in the question he put this afternoon. It is a very serious thing indeed. I think the department needs re-organising or being put right out if people are harassed to the extent of having these accounts sent out to them continuously for several years. It is too bad altogether. There is something radically wrong if officers are allowed to do that sort of thing. If officers in any private firm did it I think they would pretty soon be hauled over the coals. I cordially congratulate the country on the magnificent season we have had and the abundant wheat harvest, and at the same time I certainly desire to congratulate the Commissioner of Railways on the successful handling of the whole of the harvest. All the work of carrying the record harvest we had was done without any great inconvenience to anybody, and, I think, throughout the country we had hardly any complaints, but, at the same time, there was one very serious trouble—I do not think the railways are altogether responsible for it, but it is a very hard matter as yet to arrive at what is wrong. There has been a

systematic pilfering of wheat and other produce going on on the railways. As to whether that pilfering takes place at the station where the wheat is unloaded, or at the port of Fremantle, or along the line, so far no decision has been arrived at; but it is a serious state of affairs when we find a firm during the season losing some thing like 150 bags of wheat out of a few consignments, and when private individuals, perhaps, out of a parcel of 400 or 500 bags discover that 20 or 40 bags have been taken off, for which they do not get any return. Of course, we cannot blame anyone for it, but the sooner the matter is rectified the better it will be for those who have to make their living in the production of this wheat. I see it is the intention of the Government to erect at North Fremantle and other ports, grain sheds equipped with the most modern and effective appliances for the rapid despatch of vessels. I do not know how far the Government have gone into this question, but I sincerely hope their intention is to go. shall I say bald-headed, at any rate to go in strongly for the handling of the grain direct without the use of the bag system. I sincerely hope that the elevator system will be introduced. We find that in the Eastern States, particularly in Sydney, a tremendous amount of money has been spent on the electric system. I was informed when in Sydney that the Government had spent £60,000 or £80,000 in equipping an electric system for handling bags, and that none of the farmers in New South Wales are satisfied with it. Year after year for many years now the farmers have been impressing on the New South Wales Government the importance of sacrificing the whole of that expenditure and instituting the elevator system. The same applies in Victoria and South Australia; the farmers are all pressing the various Governments to institute the elevator system. We must recognise that the most important countries trading in wheat, and the successful countries, have this system in vogue.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about the ships, can you get the ships to come here?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I think we will have very little difficulty in getting the ships to come here. They go to other places. If we cannot get them, well, this is a country with socialistic ambitions, and I do not see why we should not build the ships. However, I think it is wrong to say the ships will not come here. On our last harvest the farmers had to pay over £40,000 for bags, and the whole of that £40,000 is absolutely wasted as there is no use for the bags where they are sent. The bags cannot be used again, and in the use of the bags there is a terrible loss of wheat. From all I have been able to understand there is no such loss takes place in the elevator system, or, at any rate, there is nothing like the loss there is through using the bags. Again, the bags are of no value in the countries to which wheat is exported. It is simply keeping up a trade for a number of people in whom we have no interest in the least. I recognise that the Government, if they attempt to go in for the elevator system, will be immediately hitting up against vested interests, but those vested interests are very slight at the present time and not worth considering. The wheat industry is in its infancy, and I think it is only right we should start right, and as the wheat industry is in such a small way now the vested interests are naturally small.

Hon. R. Laurie: What are the vested interests?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Just now, firms trading in jute, and several of the shipping companies. I have no wish to mention names, but I am satisfied it is not a serious matter. There would be opposition, but there would be no undue interference with any vested interests worth considering, and we should certainly start on the scheme. I have no desire to go into any particulars—I saw something in the Press this morning about this very question—but I am satisfied from what I have seen of it, and from what I have read, that all the Eastern States are very anxious about the elevator system, and that the only thing that would stop

the New South Wales Government from doing anything in that direction is that they have spent this enormous sum of money putting in a system which the farmers do not want, though of course, some people must have been in favour of the scheme to support the Government spending £60,000 or £80,000 on a plant against the wishes of the farmers generally. I know, however, that the farmers do not care if all this expenditure is thrown overboard; they say they must have the elevator system.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What would the elevator system cost?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Little more than £15,000, I believe.

The Colonial Secretary: It would cost that for rolling stock alone.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Of course, that is one of the difficulties, but I was only referring to the shipping portion of it.

Hon. R. Laurie: The shipping portion is very simple.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: As for the trucks, it is only a question of the rolling stock that has to be constructed for the handling of the bags under the present system, and if a number of extra trucks have to be built for the extra wheat to be carried, they might just as well be built suitable for the elevator system. I do not think that the rolling stock will affect the matter very much, because when we become an established wheat-producing country the trucks for bulk handling will be in use for the greater part of the year and will not be required for one moment only. I do not think the rolling stock would be such a severe item in the introduction of this system. At any rate, I certainly ask the Government to give this question their very grave consideration. I can assure them that the farming community will not be satisfied unless the elevator system is introduced. There is great need for the suggested Redistribution of Seats Bill. I do not know what the measure contains, but I shall be quite prepared to support any proposition that will bring about a better system of representation for the State. I have come to the conclusion that it would be wise for

us to adopt a system of compulsory voting. I do not know what the new Electoral Bill is going to be, but I think the result of the recent Federal election shows us conclusively that it is necessary that everyone should exercise the franchise. There are many people unrepresented in the Federal House to-day because they did not go to the poll. It seems to me only fair to those who do vote, those who have a direct interest in the country, and it is only right to those who go to a deal of trouble in trying to get the best representation possible, that every man should cast his vote. I do not know what the amendments of the Electoral law are going to be, but I am firmly convinced that we shall never get satisfactory representation until we have compulsory voting.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: How would you impose the penalty?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It would be a hard thing to impose a penalty. I have not gone into that part of the question, but we should have a penalty and compulsory voting.

The Colonial Secretary: You would fine a man for not exercising a privilege?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We have got beyond privilege, it is a duty. He should give some good reason why he did not exercise a vote. A voter should give some valid excuse for not going to the poll or he should be compelled to give his vote. Many people are sorry afterwards that they did not exercise the vote. They were certain that their man was going in, that the election was all right and therefore did not bother to give a helping hand, the result is that the country is represented by members for whom perhaps only half the electors voted. It is not the fault of the member, he represents a majority of those who did vote, but he does not know if he represents the wishes of the country because a great many people did not vote.

The Colonial Secretary: I do not think he would lose much sleep through it.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Educate them up to it, that is a complete answer.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We have spent a lot of money in education and

I think we are getting worse. I am pleased to hear what Mr. McKenzie has said with regard to the good feeling existing between the goldfields and the coast, at the same time one must complain somewhat of the attitude of the goldfields towards the coast. I think Mr. McKenzie has made a mistake, I think the coast has always recognised what an immense amount of good the goldfields have done for the coast; what an immense amount of good the goldfields have done for the whole of Western Australia, in fact had it not been for the goldfields, farming would still be in a very small way. The goldfields have been the means of attracting a good deal of capital to this country and the goldfields have attracted good specimens of humanity.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: The *Bunbury Herald* says that only the flotsam and jetsam from Victoria came here.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: There may be some flotsam and jetsam. You will always find flotsam and jetsam amongst a large number. I always believe there existed a good feeling between the coast and the goldfields but in the early days the feeling between the coast and the goldfields was due to the people who went on the goldfields. Old West Australians welcomed everyone coming to our shores and laid themselves out to encourage people here, and it was very galling to some of the old hands to realise that people did not see all the good there was in Western Australia, and often people left us. When the tide set in people on the goldfields poked fun at the "cockies" and their small way of doing things and said that the "cockies" should go to "Vic." or to some other place to learn farming. These men around camp fires and around mining camps being in the majority, the poor West Australian often had a very bad time of it and it often wound up in a fight. I have spent months on the fields and around mining camps and have often sat up and argued the point with men hour after hour around the camp fires where there was a good log and a good blaze.

Hon. J. W. Langsford: Who won the fight?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Usually the man who could talk the most. And the argument the West Australian wound up with as a rule was, "if 'Vic.' was such a jolly good country, why did you come away from it, why don't you go back?" That was the clinching argument, that if the conditions were so much better why not go back, and the feeling became very strong. Feeling was created in many instances around camp fires, and unfortunately it is left to the present day. Newcomers arriving found that there was a feeling against them, it was not real, but it grew out of some of these silly arguments around the camp fires. We recognise also that the goldfields made a good market for us, but we on the land want the goldfields to recognise that not only have the fields been a splendid market to the farmer but that we did the best we could to make things cheap for the people. We have produced much chaff and corn and meat and poultry and various other things, and I can assure members that in a great many instances the goldfields people have got the articles pretty cheaply. In the little district in which I live a great deal of fruit is sent to the goldfields and the poor man who grows the fruit gets no return. The goldfields get it cheaply. I know some poultry occasionally is sent to the goldfields, whether the consumer gets the benefit or not I do not know but the goldfields get a pretty good deal, and the goldfields must not consider they are the only "pebble on the beach" to be considered. It has been a satisfactory mutual arrangement, it has been a splendid thing for the producers, and the producers have been a great help to the goldfields. So far as the coast is concerned it is sincerely hoped the good feeling will continue to exist and be lasting. I congratulate the Government on the success they have made of their forward policy. I am pleased to see they give any amount of promise of increased vigour in the settlement of the country. There were several other matters I should have liked to have spoken on but I am afraid I am only taking up valuable time as there are other hon. members who wish

to speak. I sincerely hope the Government will have a successful session, and that the country will benefit by the good season that is promised to us. I have much pleasure in supporting the Address-in-Reply.

Hon. T. H. WILDING (East): I first of all would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on being returned to your old position. I am sure during the short time I have been in this Chamber I have always felt that you have conducted the business of the House in the best and nicest possible way. I would like to congratulate Mr. Kingsmill also on being re-appointed Chairman of Committees. If anyone is deserving of praise, the Premier is for the manner in which he worked in the old country to try and induce a good and desirable class of emigrant to come to this State. There is no doubt about it, the advantages of Western Australia for the right class of people are many and we find that the Federal Prime Minister as well as many of the leaders of the Labour party are also in favour of an immigration policy, but they only want one class of people to come to the State, that is the farmer or the farm labourer. I would like to ask, why do they only want one class of man to come to the State. It seems to me peculiar that they should say we only want farm labourers. Why do they want farm labourers, because they are labouring men. Why do they want them to come here?

Hon. J. E. Dodd: That is not so, if you get the farmers, farm labourers will follow without assistance.

Hon. T. H. WILDING: It seems to me we want both.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: They will come, you do not want to assist them.

Hon. T. H. WILDING: At the present time we are importing into the State something like three million pounds worth annually of manufactured articles, and we must bring a desirable class of people to assist the industries. I am not opposed to paying a good price for good labour. I want to see plenty of good labour coming into the country, and I want to see good prices paid for it. It is the only way to bring about the

development so necessary in our State. It seems to me that we cannot neglect all these other industries that help to make the country. When we realise that manufactured goods to so great a value are coming into the State it seems absurd that an influential party like the Labour party should tell us that we do not require new arrivals who may perchance come into competition with those already here. One would think that the members of that party—and there are many clever men among them—would more fully realise the position. I would like to see the members of that party helping to introduce legislation that would build up the State, and not be forever satisfied with things as they are to-day. A couple of days ago we were told by the Hon. Mr. Dodd that in Kalgoorlie or Coolgardie, I forget which, there was room for another 1,200 workers. If that be so, why not bring in people to fill the places? We want people most of all. I had hoped to see in the Governor's Speech that the Government were going to introduce some legislation to prevent the continuance of the present state of affairs in connection with strikes. It is altogether one-sided and unjust. If the Arbitration Court finds against the employer he has to abide by the award; whereas if the award goes against the employee he ignores it, and, if he think fit, goes out on strike. This sort of thing should not be allowed to exist, and I had hoped that the Government would introduce legislation to prevent its continuance. In New Zealand strikers are fined.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Strikes are unlawful here also.

Hon. T. H. WILDING: Very well, I want to say that the Government should take some means to punish strikers. Look at the position to-day. We have strikes all round us, yet nothing has been done to punish the strikers.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Is the fault all on the side of the worker in these troubles to which you refer?

Hon. T. H. WILDING: I think it is the fault, not so much of the workers, as of those who are behind them.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: What about the employer? Does no fault lie with him?

Hon. T. H. WILDING: I want the employee to abide by the award of the Arbitration Court, whichever way it may go. If existing legislation is not all it should be in connection with that Court, let us amend it; but when an award is made by that Court the parties should abide by it, and not go out on strike and put other people to expense.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Supposing you interpret an award wrongly—what is going to be done then?

The Colonial Secretary: Apply for an interpretation.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Suppose the Court cannot give it?

Hon. T. H. WILDING: Then let them appeal to the fair mindedness of the people, who are always ready to see that justice is done. It seems to me that some punishment should be dealt out to these strikers, either by fines or by taking from them the franchise. Not only those on strike, but all those who are assisting them should be punished. Take the franchise from them for a term of 10 or 12 years, and the trouble will soon cease. My object is to endeavour in every possible way to foster the establishment of new industries. When we find we are importing into our State so much manufactured material that should be produced here, and that this condition of affairs is owing chiefly to industrial troubles, we cannot fail to regret that those troubles should be permitted to continue. We have capital here sufficient to start these industries were it not for the feeling existing that once a man puts his money into any industry he is ruled by labour and gets no justice. I think the Minister for Lands is to be congratulated on the manner in which he is placing before the people the lands available for selection. We find that the land has been well surveyed and classified, and that the price of each parcel of land is set forth on the map, together with the advances which the Agricultural Bank is prepared to make against the blocks. I do not think we could have anything more up-to-date than this, and I am sure the

Minister deserves every credit for the way in which he has brought the department up to its present state of efficiency. To-day, if a man requires land all he has to do is to go into the department, look at a map, and seal his purchase without going out to inspect the land, feeling convinced that it is as it appears on the map. In respect to our wheat belts, it seems to me that we should not allow people to go on the land with the idea that they can farm successfully on less than 1,000 acres. That should be the least area for growing cereals. Personally, I would give farmers as much as they can use to the best advantage. There is no reason why a father should not select land for his son of 16 years of age; the boy is growing up and he is a West Australian, and should have the opportunity of obtaining land now, under present conditions.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: It can be done.

Hon. T. H. WILDING: No, not for a boy of 16 years of age; he has to wait until he is two years older. We find that during last year there have been some 2,600,000 acres of land surveyed; that is undoubtedly a record, and goes to show the good work the department is doing. The previous record was only 1,700,000 acres, which, as members will see, discloses a wonderful increase. The area under crop last year aggregated 682,000 acres, while this year it will be approximately 900,000 acres. This goes to show the great increase being made in the development of agriculture, and especially of cereal growing. We find the people are going on the land and producing wheat in an increasing quantity, and I know of my own knowledge that those people are laying themselves out in real earnest to bring about a development of their holdings. From the prospects, I should say there is no doubt that the increase in cultivation will be two-fold before very long. The Government are also to be congratulated upon the extension of the system of agricultural railways. As a matter of fact I would like to see this work proceeding even faster than it is at the present time. There is no reason why the Government should not borrow

up to five million pounds, if necessary, in order to build these lines faster so as to give the people who have taken up land an opportunity of bringing their produce to market. As we all know, it is of no use putting people on the land 30 or 40 miles away from a railway, and expecting them to achieve success. At the same time none can deny that the Government are to be congratulated on the manner in which they have pushed on with the construction of these agricultural railways. I want to say that the Agricultural Bank is doing exceptionally good work. Of course, much of the credit is due to those gentlemen who are managing it, and who have something like a million and a quarter of money out, and yet up to the present have made practically no bad debts. I am a great believer in giving a man good value for his services, and it seems to me that these gentlemen are not by any means getting full value for the services they are rendering to the country. I think their salaries should be considerably increased, for I know that if they were in the employ of a private firm doing the same amount of business, their salaries would be double what they are to-day.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: There was an increase recently.

Hon. T. H. WILDING: I understood that that did not take place after all. I am pleased to see also that the private banks are now lending money on our lands; it serves to show that they have faith in the country, that they realise that the lands of this State provide good investment for their money. It is encouraging to see that the pastoral industry is so prosperous. There has been an increase of stock to 850,000 head of cattle and nearly five million of sheep. When we find the flocks and herds increasing at this rate, it must be realised how necessary it is that the Government should do something to enable the owners to get their stock to market. I am in favour of the Government putting up freezing works in suitable localities, more especially in the far north. The stock are up there, and I understand the owners are

prepared to accept a tax that will provide for the interest and sinking fund for the money spent in establishing the freezing works. That being so, there is no reason why we should not provide those facilities. We have not only the land taken up, with cattle running on it, but there are also vast quantities of even more suitable land requiring stocking, and now we are assured there is artesian water there is no reason why, if the people are given freezing works, that land will not eventually be taken up and stocked and bores put down; thus a further very valuable addition to the pastoral lands of the State would be provided. With regard to the Esperance railway project, I must say I have a good deal of sympathy with the people of the Eastern Goldfields. As has been said, it is necessary that the people on the fields should have easy means provided them to get to the coast in the summer months. We should in every way possible make provision whereby the large population up there can get to the coast. Whether the line should be built or not I am not prepared to say, for it all depends, to my mind, upon whether the agricultural land is suitable and in sufficient quantities to warrant the construction of the railway to Esperance. The board of experts have visited the locality but do not seem to be too favourably impressed, as they suggest there is not enough good land there. I understand they have taken means to find out exactly how much land there is in that locality suitable for agriculture. If there is sufficient land there to warrant the railway being built I am going to support it; but if, on the other hand, the line is to be only for the convenience of the goldfields people, I will not support it. Every goldfield has a certain life, for it is the experience all over the world that fields get worked out after having been in operation for a certain number of years. I know that our goldfields are at present flourishing, but the position is this, that if we build a railway wholly and solely for the benefit of the people on the goldfields, in some years to come the mines might become worked out, and then there

would be no use for the railway. The present difficulty as to people getting to the coast might be overcome if the Government made the fares much cheaper; in fact I will go so far as to say that if the people on the goldfields cannot afford to pay for a trip to the coast for the benefit of their health, I would be quite willing to bring them down free so that they could get the sea air. I will not, however, support the construction of the line until I see there is sufficient agricultural land in the district.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: With regard to the people being able to get to the coast now, the distance from Albany is 600 miles.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: And the fares are the cheapest in the world.

Hon. T. H. WILDING: The Government might make the fares even cheaper, for we should do all we can to make the lives of the people up there as easy and happy as possible, and give the residents the opportunity of coming down to the coast in the hot summer months. Another matter I wish to refer to is that of the Goldfields Water Supply. I cannot understand why the Government do not make use of the water in the weir at Mundaring for the Metropolitan area. We see that each year there is but very little water taken out of the dam, and that something like five feet is the lowest it has ever been reduced by, and we are now certain that there is sufficient water there to provide Perth and Fremantle with all they require. Even if that were not so, the weir could very easily and safely be raised another fifteen feet, which would give all the water needed for the Metropolitan area. If the people here are in need of the water, as they are, it should be brought down from Mundaring instead of being retained in the dam. The Government should have dealt with this question long ago. There is the water, here are the people wanting it and prepared to pay for it, but they cannot get it. I have very much pleasure in supporting the Address-in-Reply.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South): The Speech that was delivered in this Chamber by his Excellency the Governor is of such a very comprehensive nature that it is rather difficult to know what particular subjects one should choose to speak upon. It is also, as is always the case in such speeches, necessarily vague because, of course, no more than a bare indication can be given in such documents as to what the intentions of the Government might be. Let us take, for instance, a matter that is of very considerable importance to the State in general, although it does not directly affect this Chamber; I refer to the redistribution of seats. Although we are not immediately concerned in that matter, yet it is a question of common concern to the whole State, and I take it that this Chamber naturally is deeply interested in all such questions. Before one feels inclined to give his adherence to a proposal of that kind, or to suggest opposition, he should know something more about it than is possible under the present conditions. The parliamentary rolls certainly contain some anomalies, although those anomalies, when closely examined, are not so great as a superficial glance might lead one to suppose. I do not know what the Government propose in connection with this matter, but I presume that, as regards certain agricultural districts where the population has increased, there will be an increase in the membership and, I think, with regard to the province I have the honour to represent, and the province the Colonial Secretary has the honour to represent, we can make out a case which any impartial individual, who has gone into the matter, must recognise to be a sound one, and warranting the granting of additional representation to the Eastern Goldfields. I have here some particulars, which it is only necessary to refer to in order to convince members; and, I am sure, there is not an honourable member in this Chamber who, when seized with the facts, will not agree that the Eastern Goldfields, from the figures I can present, are certainly entitled to one additional member. I am sure that the Govern-

ment, in dealing with this question of the redistribution of seats, will exercise very great care, because they are dealing with seats throughout the whole State that are held by both supporters and opponents, and it is necessary that there should be no justification whatever for any charge of unfairness or jerry-mandering, or anything of that kind, in connection with the redistribution. I take the two provinces I have mentioned because they are those representing the Eastern Goldfields Provinces with which I am more particularly concerned, residing as I do, in one and representing the other. Those provinces returned 12 members to another place, and of those 12 members at present 10 belong to the Opposition. I am sure that the mere fact that those districts return a majority of Opposition members will not influence the Government against giving the goldfields that measure of representation to which they are fully entitled.

The Colonial Secretary: What makes you think they would not do that: why do you suggest it?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I did not suggest it, for I said I was quite sure the fact that 10 out of these 12 constituencies are represented by Opposition members would not influence the Government in the matter, or be a reason for any hesitation on their part to give this portion of the State the justice to which it is entitled. I should imagine from the interjection of the Colonial Secretary that he possibly misunderstood me, or, perhaps, I did not put properly what I intended to say. I suggested nothing of the kind he imagines, but rather the reverse.

The Colonial Secretary: The Government have not done anything of that kind in their public works policy, such as building railways, etcetera, for they never considered whether the constituency was held by a supporter or by an Oppositionist.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I have not said they have done so.

The Colonial Secretary: One would suppose from your remarks that they have been in the habit of doing that.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: If the Colonial Secretary will excuse me I will tell him that I suggested nothing of the kind. I said I was perfectly certain the fact that 10 of the 12 districts included in the Eastern Goldfields provinces were held by Opposition members would not influence the Government against giving that portion of the State the fair share of representation to which it is justly entitled.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: It was an irrelevant remark of the Colonial Secretary.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I quite agree that it was.

The Colonial Secretary: I do not know what bearing that has on the question.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am sorry that the Colonial Secretary cannot see the point of my remarks. I do not know whether it is necessary to repeat them. I am extremely surprised at the Colonial Secretary, who is usually so very quick of comprehension in these matters. The two provinces to which I specially refer are at present represented by twelve members in the Legislative Assembly, and I have here the latest Parliamentary rolls of the State. If the total number of electors for the whole of the State be taken, we find it is 133,000. If that total number of electors be divided by 50—the number of members in the Legislative Assembly and I do not presume for one moment that the Government will propose to increase the number of members of Parliament, for we surely have quite enough in Australia already—assuming, as I have said, that the number of the members of the Assembly should remain at 50, and if the total number of electors be divided by 50, you have a quota for the whole of the State, assuming that the representation of the Parliament should be on the basis of equal electorates. I may say I am not altogether in accord with the principle of equal electorates, but for the sake of argument, if we go upon the assumption of equal electorates, it will be found that the quota for the whole of the State is 2,663 electors for each particular constituency. I am

taking the 12 seats in the two provinces which include the Eastern Goldfields and I take the quota as 2,663 for each constituency. I have taken out the number of electors on the rolls for the twelve constituencies on the Eastern goldfields. I have the total of each particular electorate here. It means a number of figures, but I will not worry the House by reading them; I will simply say that I have had them checked by someone else and I can bear testimony to the accuracy of the additions. The twelve members represent 32,166 electors. If we divide that 32,166 electors by 12, the number of seats in the Eastern goldfields, we have a quota for the two provinces of 2,680. That is practically the same as the quota for the whole of the State on the basis of equal representation for constituencies in the matter of the number of electors on the roll. The quota for the whole of the State is 2,663; the quota for the Eastern goldfields is 2,680; to all intents and purposes it is therefore absolutely accurate.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: What would be the representation of Perth?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I have not worked that out but I notice there are some constituencies in the Metropolitan area that are below the quota of 2,663. The Metropolitan area I take it would include Fremantle.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: I said Perth.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I have not totalled that out. It may be said that these rolls are out of date although they are the latest available. It may be said also that these rolls are not representative of the people that are now upon the Eastern goldfields. I claim and I think I have ample justification for it that the population of the Eastern goldfields has certainly not decreased. Some hon. members of this Chamber were very much surprised yesterday when Mr. Patrick referred to the number of men engaged in the mining industry as being practically the same as it had been some time before, I interjected that the number had increased by thousands during the year. I have here in proof of that,

the last report of the Department of Mines and on that particular point I find that during 1908 the number of wage earners engaged in the mining industry was 17,266 and that the number in 1909 had increased to 18,336, an increase of men engaged in the mining industry of roughly 1,100.

Hon. J. W. Langsford: Representing the whole of the State

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: That represents, as my friend remarks, the whole of the State. I have here also particulars concerning each mining field throughout the State, and I find that on the East Coolgardie goldfield, which is the centre of the Eastern goldfields the number of men during the year increased by 353. On the Yilgarn goldfields, which is also one of the districts concerned in the twelve electorates I have referred to, there was an increase of 111. At Phillips River, which is also included in this particular district, the increase was 30. At Dundas, another of these constituencies the increase was 62. In the North-east Coolgardie field which is one of the divisions referred to, there was a slight decrease, but that decrease was only 30. At Mt. Margaret the number was practically the same; there was there a slight increase.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: There would have been a bigger increase in East Coolgardie but for the Perseverance fire.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: As my friend points out, the East Coolgardie figures are not a fair representation of the case. During the period of this return a large number of men were thrown out of employment as the result of the fire at the Perseverance mine. Since then these men have been employed, and in that particular respect it would mean a large number of men. There were 600 men thrown out of employment in connection with the fire. I am taking this report fairly, and I shall refer to the principal districts amongst these twelve in which there has been a decrease. In the North Coolgardie district there has been a decrease of 12 and in the Coolgardie district 74. Taking it all in all the decrease is comparatively insignificant. There has been a substantial

increase in the number of men employed on the Eastern goldfields, and I can assure this House that within the next two years there will be at least 2,000 more men employed. I have that on the authority of one of the mining men on the fields whose opinion is worthy of respect. As the grade of the ore diminishes so it becomes absolutely essential to go in for the treatment of large tonnages and also to extend the plants so that the tendency for the future will be in the direction of an increase rather than a decrease of employment on these fields. Therefore, I say, estimating the question on those rolls, which are the latest rolls available, there is no justification for a decrease, but there is very good reason for an increase. Another reason that might be advanced for an increase in the representation of the Eastern goldfields is this: Mr. Gladstone laid it down on many occasions that representation should have due regard to the question of distance from the seat of Government. That is recognised in many parts of the world, and in New Zealand, so I was told to-day by a New Zealander, so strong was the feeling on that particular question that it was seriously discussed that Wellington the capital of New Zealand should be put on a basis similar to that of the capital of the United States which has no representation, on the ground that every member is a member of the capital. Members must spend a good deal of time in the capital and although no one reasonably proposes anything of that kind in this State, at the same time I think that as distances from the capital is taken into account so there should be an increase of representation. Take Kimberley for instance. I claim that a thousand electors at Kimberley are as fully entitled to a member as three thousand would be at the seat of Government, considering the very great distance. I think the same thing applies, though not to the same extent, to other constituencies that are distant from the capital, although not so far away as Kimberley. And a fair and just mode of representation in this State to my

mind should be to take the quota to be obtained by a division of the total number of electors by the number of members, and that that quota should vary in accordance with the distances from the capital. I think that is a fair proposition. The people who live in the capital constantly meet all the members of Parliament, they constantly meet Ministers, they can constantly bring their wants and requirements under the notice of the Governmental authorities, but it is a very serious matter indeed for those at long distances from the capital when they have to bring a question of importance under the notice of the Ministry. To-morrow a deputation is to wait upon the Premier. That deputation will include a large number of men, some of whom have to travel five or six hundred miles. It will cost them a good deal out of their pockets, it is a very serious trouble, it is an interference with their business. How differently are those people situated who live in the capital and can simply walk across the street and bring their requirements under the notice of Ministers. I think it is not too much to ask that representation in this State should have regard to the question of distance from the capital and on those grounds I maintain that any person who goes into these figures can readily recognise we have a strong, and a very strong claim for additional representation on the Eastern Goldfields. There is another matter that, although this Chamber is not concerned in it to the same extent as the other Chamber, I think is worthy of attention here; I refer to the state of the finances. I think it is a matter of satisfaction that the deficit has been reduced to the extent it has. At one period the deficit reached close upon £400,000 and I think it is a matter for satisfaction that last year should close with a deficit of only £102,000. However, the good progress seems to have been very short-lived, because it is rather a regrettable thing that the months that has just closed, the first months of the current year, should show a deficit of £40,000.

The Colonial Secretary: You cannot judge a year by a month's transactions; there were deficits in several months of the past year.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: That is quite true, but it is a disagreeable indication of what the future may be. It is pointed out that the first month is always bad. That also is correct. But why I think it is so necessary that we should square the finances as soon as possible, is that at the beginning of 1911 this State, in common with all the other States of the Commonwealth, enters on a new era so far as financial relations with the Commonwealth are concerned; and it is specially important we should do so in view of the legislation now before the Commonwealth Parliament, and which, there is not the slightest doubt, will be carried, since it has been brought in by a Government who have such a substantial majority in both Houses. I think we can take it for granted the legislation will be carried, and its effect will be this for the present, at any rate as far as the next ten years are concerned—to bring into operation for the year that will end on the 30th June, 1911, what actually would have happened had the financial agreement been carried, that is, the State will receive from the Commonwealth 25s. per capita contribution, in addition to the special subvention; but as the Braddon Section will continue in operation until the end of the existing year, what will happen will be that the Federal Government will pay back during the six months of 1911 only sufficient to make the total for the 12 months what it would have been had the financial agreement been carried. The result will be that the last six months of 1910 will be a period of comparative plenty in a financial sense, but the first six months of next year, 1911, will show a very considerable deficiency as compared with the preceding six months. So far as I can make out, and I think the figures will be found correct, we shall receive from the Commonwealth during the first six months of 1911 a little more than £100,000 less than we will receive during the second six months of 1910. As we are face to face with a

position of that kind, with the position that in the first six months of 1911 we shall receive £100,000 less than in the preceding six months, I suggest and urge that every effort should be made to square the finances by that time; if possible it would be extremely advisable to start that period with a surplus. I regret that during the last financial year there are some general points that do not give much indication that we shall wind up this year with square finances, to say nothing of a surplus. I have with me the financial returns for last year, and there is one very significant fact concerning them, that, while the revenue for the financial year showed a considerable improvement, an improvement of nearly £400,000, it is a rather regrettable thing that the expenditure during that period also showed an increase. Now, had the expenditure during the last financial year not been greater than during the previous financial year, we would have practically closed the last financial year almost square, the deficit would have been only £24,000; and as the Government were undoubtedly face to face with a reduction of revenue, because whether the financial agreement was carried or not we would still have a reduction of revenue from the Commonwealth, I think that the State Government might have made some effort to at any rate not increase the expenditure during the last financial year as compared with the previous financial year. There is another matter to which I would like to draw attention. It was referred to in the very excellent speech delivered by Mr. Gawler when proposing his motion. It was in the nature of warning he issued against the State placing all its eggs in one basket so far as the production of wheat is concerned. Anyone who has studied the figures regarding the prices of wheat that have ruled in the world for any period of time must recognise that these prices rise and fall as regularly as the tides. I have with me the figures that have ruled for the price of wheat in London during the last 125 years. I hope hon. members will bear up under the shock of disappointment when I

tell them that I am not going to quote them. I can, however, point out how the prices have risen and become depressed during that particular period. Of course at times the price has gone up considerably, during war times particularly. For instance, in 1812, during the Napoleonic wars, the price of wheat went up to the enormously high figure of 126s. per Imperial quarter. It was 119s. in 1801, the year of Trafalgar, and at another period it was 113s. a quarter; but these were very exceptional instances; and to show exactly how the matter affects us, we have to come down to recent times and take the figures, say, from 1894. I have the figures for the whole of the 125 years, and any hon. member who cares to study them can see them for himself in *Whitaker's Almanack*. The price of wheat was very low in 1894, being 22s. 10d. per quarter. In the following year it showed a slight increase and went up to 23s. 1d. From then onwards there was a gradual rise, the prices being 26s. 2d. in 1896, and 30s. 2d. in 1897, and reaching the high water mark in 1898, so far as that cycle was concerned. From 1894 to 1898 there was a regular advance in the price of wheat, which ranged from 22s. 10d. per quarter to 314s. per quarter. In 1899 there was a considerable drop in the price, and wheat went down from 34s. to 25s. 8d. Then a gradual upward tendency began and, with some comparatively trifling fluctuations, it has continued to rise till the present time. In 1900 the price was 26s. 11d. per quarter, in 1901 it was 26s. 9d. per quarter, in 1902 it was 28s. 1d. per quarter, in 1903 it was 26s. 9d. per quarter, in 1904 it was 28s. 4d. per quarter, in 1905 it was 29s. 8d. per quarter, in 1906 it was 28s. 3d. per quarter, in 1907 it was 30s. 7d. per quarter, in 1908 it was 32s. per quarter, the last quotation there is in the latest *Whitaker's Almanack*.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.)

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Before tea I was endeavouring to support the remarks

that have been made by the mover of the Address-in-Reply, Mr. Gawler, in which he advocated that in addition to the production of wheat, those interested in agriculture should go in for other products. And I then quoted the price of wheat with an endeavour to show that wheat was subjected to the ordinary law of supply and demand; in fact, I think there is no commodity that is so subjected to the ordinary law of supply and demand. At the present price of wheat there is no country in the world where wheat may not be produced most profitably. I have heard it said by others that the price of wheat will not fall in the future, and I have heard it said that the price will be maintained on two grounds. There are those who say—and they say so quite properly—that the production of wheat in the United States is overtaking the consumption and that the exportation of wheat from the United States is gradually decreasing. It is quite true, but as against that the production of wheat in Canada is very considerably on the increase. There is another argument that is advanced by those who contend that the price of wheat will not fall. They say that the Eastern nations, the Asiatic people, are becoming more of a wheat eating community. I read not long ago a very interesting article in the *Contemporary Review*, which put a somewhat different aspect on that question. It was pointed out that those who contend that the consumption of wheat in Asia would considerably increase were exaggerating the position. The people of Asia for many generations have lived on rice, and there was a particular reason pointed out by this writer why they should be very slow to go in for wheat. It was this, that when rice is thrashed the grain is at once suitable for food, it can be immediately boiled and is utilised by the Eastern peoples in that form; but in the case of wheat, when it is thrashed there is an additional process that it has to go through before it is fit for food; and although to us, who are accustomed to the grinding of corn it seems a simple thing, but to the Eastern nations who have not been accustomed to that method of treating corn

it is a very serious consideration, and will very seriously retard the people of Asia going in for wheat eating to the extent to which some people predict. The contention that wheat will not fall in price reminds one very much of the position that existed not long ago concerning the price of copper. Members of the House will recollect that copper last year and the previous year had a very sensational rise, from about £60 or £70 it gradually rose to £110. We were then told that the price of copper would never decrease; it was said that the amount of copper consumed was increasing every year, and that the use of electricity had brought copper more into general use, and that the price would not fall. But, what has happened? Copper has fallen from £110 down to as low as £50. There has been a drop in the price of copper to one-half of what it was originally. I think what has happened in the case of copper and what has happened in the case of most commodities in the world, is bound to happen sooner or later in the case of wheat. The world is producing more wheat every year. We know even in India the production of wheat has gone up. The year before last the production of wheat in India had risen to 212,000,000 bushels. Owing to the beneficent Government there extending irrigation works the people were able to go more freely into the cultivation of wheat, so that it rose to 212,000,000 bushels. We also know that the great wheat areas of Siberia are coming into cultivation. In addition to that, the Argentine is coming forward as a wheat producer, and, of course, we all know of the experience of Canada. I have here a very significant report that was prepared by the board of agriculture as far back as 1906, and the figures that were given on that occasion were very significant. The Board of Agriculture, which is under the control of the Imperial Government, have given figures which it is unnecessary for me to quote at length, but they show this, which is an extremely important fact—this was the case in 1906, four years ago—that whilst the population of the world was increasing at the rate of 33 per cent. the wheat production of the world was in-

creasing at the rate of 42 per cent. Since 1906 the production of wheat has advanced very materially, as is shown here by a considerable number of figures concerning the wheat production of the different countries. Take the case of Canada. In 1904 the wheat production of Canada was about 75,000,000 bushels; in 1908—that is two years—it had risen to 114,000,000 bushels. Last year I had the opportunity of travelling in Canada, and travelled under circumstances that enabled me to see a great deal of the industries of that country, and also to learn the views of members of both the provincial Parliament and the Dominion Parliament. I, in company with a number of Australian and New Zealand journalists travelled in a party across the Canadian Dominion. We travelled along the Canadian-Pacific Railway through the great wheat provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario; we travelled for days, whilst on each side of the railway wheat fields stretched to the horizon. That railway has done much to render Canada such a wheat producer because it has enabled those areas to be utilised for the production of wheat, whereas they would not have been utilised if there had not been the means of transport. That railway is but one of two other railways in course of construction. There is another similar transcontinental railway that will be finished next year, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. That will open up a similar continent of wheat country to that opened up by the Canadian-Pacific. Further North, the Canadian Northern Railway, another transcontinental railway, will open up a similar belt, and, in addition to that, they are building a railway further North to Hudson's Bay, also tapping a very large area of wheat-growing country, and the port will be in Hudson's Bay. In face of all these facts, and many others that might be mentioned, I think the words uttered by Mr. Gawler ought to be taken to heart by the Government of the country. It is not for me to suggest what other directions the agriculturists of this country might be induced to devote their energies to by the Government. The Minister for Agriculture has suggested

the expenditure, I think, of £100,000 in developing the dairying industry, and when we find that no less than £800,000 in products such as bacon, eggs, jam, and dairy produce is still imported into Western Australia, a proposal of that kind is certainly worthy of the consideration of Parliament. Personally, as one of the members who represent mining constituencies, if the majority of members who represent the agricultural constituencies consider that to be the best means by which a danger of this kind may be safeguarded against, I will have very much pleasure in supporting the Government in a proposal of that nature. As a mining member I am always guided in these matters by other members who have experience of agriculture, and projects either in this or any other direction which the Government may see fit to adopt for the encouragement of the agricultural industry in all its branches, shall ever have my warmest support provided they meet with the approval of members representing agricultural constituencies. I sincerely trust that the present price of wheat may be long maintained. At the same time in face of the facts to be found in any of these books of reference it is extremely unwise not to be prepared for, at any rate, any possible drop that may be sustained.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: On the other hand, the markets of Japan and China are increasing wonderfully in the consumption of wheat.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Yes, the figures are given here concerning the consumption of wheat in Japan; and it is a significant fact that whilst the number of people who are consuming wheat in Japan is increasing, so also is the production of wheat in Japan increasing in somewhat similar proportion. I find that during the year 1904 Japan itself produced 19 million bushels of wheat, while during the year 1903, that is, two years ago, the production of wheat in Japan had increased to 22½ million bushels. That is to say, it had gone up by from three to four million bushels. So I have no doubt that if the people of the East do become a wheat consuming people, so

also will the people of the East, just as we are doing in Australia, increase the quantity of the wheat produced. And, as I say, as against all these facts regarding the increased consumption of wheat in Asia there is the significant fact that whilst in 1906 the population of the world increased by 33 per cent. the production of the world's wheat increased by 42 per cent. I sincerely hope the present price of wheat will long be maintained; but anything that can be done to encourage the development of other branches of farming is worthy of the support of this Chamber, and certainly shall always have my support so long as I am satisfied that a majority of the agricultural members consider it advisable. At this point I would like to say that I have been upon the goldfields for the last 16 years, and I think I know a good deal about the mining population. I can assure the representatives of the agricultural industry that the mining population regard the advancement of the agricultural industry in this State with feelings of the most lively satisfaction, and anything that the mining industry can do to help the kindred industry of agriculture will always have the warmest support of the mining people. I have been a member of this Chamber for two years, and there has been no proposal put forward for the benefit of the agricultural industry which has not received my support. Some proposals have come forward about which the agriculturalists themselves have differed. Last session we had a proposal to increase the facilities of the Agricultural Bank. Some agricultural members expressed doubt as to the wisdom of that proposal, but I think the mining members, if I remember rightly, were unanimous in supporting the proposition. Any proposal that in this Chamber received the support of the majority of the members representing the agricultural industry has always received my support and, I think, the support of the other mining members in the House. There are certain individuals in the State who wickedly represent the mining industry as hostile to the agricultural industry. I cannot remember any instance, or any utterance on the part

of any public man, or any statement in the goldfields Press that would support a contention of that kind. There is a policy to which the goldfields have always offered the strongest opposition, and always will. It is a policy which, on the goldfields, is claimed to be just as detrimental to the agricultural industry as it is to the interests of the mining industry. That policy is the policy of centralisation. But, so far as agriculture is concerned, whenever any public man goes up to the goldfields and talks about what has been done for land settlement, whatever he may say in advocacy of a policy of land settlement and assistance to agriculture is always received with rounds of applause. I am sure Mr. Dodd, who essentially represents the miners, can bear out what I say. I have been endeavouring to support what Mr. Gawler has said as to the advisableness of keeping a watchful eye on the position regarding the price of wheat. And what has happened over and over again in the past, I say is as certain to happen again as it is that to-morrow's sun will shine. Now, before I conclude there is just one matter I wish to refer to. I would not touch upon it at all were it not that it is to-day the most burning question on the Eastern Goldfields, and if I did not refer to it I would be scarcely doing my duty. I am alluding to the movement which has been in existence during the last 16 years in favour of the construction of a railway from the Eastern Goldfields to their natural port. To-morrow a deputation is to wait upon the Premier. That deputation will be representative of the whole of the Eastern Goldfields. Representatives will be there from Lawlers, Boulder, Southern Cross, Coolgardie, Esperance, Norseman, Katgoorlie, and probably Menzies. Almost every centre upon the Eastern Goldfields will be directly represented, and with respect to Menzies, even if that place be not directly represented, the local municipal council have passed a resolution strongly in favour of the construction of the line, and have sent that resolution to somebody in order that he may speak on their behalf at the deputation. The Eastern Gold-

fields are between 300 and 400 miles from the capital, while some of the places I have mentioned are over 500 miles distant from the metropolitan area. A large number of the representatives who will be at that deputation have come down expressly for that purpose, paying their own expenses; or at least the bodies they represent will have paid them, which shows how earnest are the fields in respect to this matter. I have looked up *Hansard* upon this particular question and I find that a resolution in favour of the construction of that railway was passed in this Chamber so far back as 1902. That resolution was introduced by the gentleman whom we have all regarded, and still regard, as a warm friend of that railway: I refer to the Colonial Secretary. He and I and Mr. McKenzie and a number of other goldfields representatives, during the whole of our public lives have done everything that lay in our power to further the interests of this railway; and, knowing the Colonial Secretary as I have done for a great many years past, I am perfectly satisfied that he is just as loyal and good a friend to that railway to-day as he was years ago.

A Member: He was not Colonial Secretary then.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I have known him so long that I am perfectly certain he is not going to break any of his political pledges because of the office he holds, and I am sure he is going to act straightforwardly throughout this matter. He has supported the Esperance Railway League, not only by his voice in the House but also by money, and I am perfectly certain he would be one of the last of men to back down from the position hitherto maintained. We have always understood him to be favourable to the project and, as I say, he moved in the House the following resolution:—

That in the opinion of this House the immediate construction of a railway connecting Esperance Bay with the Eastern Goldfields would be of great benefit to the State.

On that occasion he delivered a very able speech in support of the proposal and, subsequently, Mr. Jenkins moved a slight

amendment which was accepted by the Colonial Secretary, the amendment being as follows:—

In the opinion of this House it is desirable that a railway connecting Esperance Bay with the goldfields should be constructed as early as possible.

That resolution was subsequently carried by 13 votes to 9. To look at the division list of eight years ago conjures up rather sad reflections, because it reminds one how great have been the changes in this Chamber during the short period of eight years. But I am glad to find there are still among us some hon. members who then voted in favour of the railway. Those hon. members who thus voted and are still with us are, Mr. Brimage, Mr. E. M. Clarke, Mr. Connolly, Dr. Hackett, Mr. Jenkins, and Mr. Glowrey. In reading through the very interesting debate that took place in connection with that resolution—I am sorry that Dr. Hackett is not here just now; however, I told him that I intended to quote from his speech. My only reason for so quoting from his speech is that in all the great quantity of literature I have perused in connection with this railway, I cannot find a better statement in favour of the construction of the Esperance railway on national grounds than was given by that gentleman in the course of the debate. His speech bears out exactly the views I have always held. I do not regard it as a parochial question; it is national in the essential meaning of the term. That is how Dr. Hackett looked at it too, and it gave me very great pleasure to find that his views so closely coincided with mine; only that they are better expressed than I can ever hope to express them. I find from *Hansard* for the 10th December, 1902, that on page 2805 Dr. Hackett, when speaking to the Colonial Secretary's motion, said—

It seems to me a danger to Australia that our points of settlement should be so few. Centralisation has been talked of in this debate; and to me it is quite evident that if centralisation goes on with the attendant evils, moral and social, which always follow centralisation or the gathering together of people in a few large cities, Australia has a

very poor future indeed before her. When we reflect, for example, on such a nation as the Germans, who are now 60 millions strong and rapidly increasing—and I need not refer to the Russians and the Chinese—when we consider those peoples and then remember that the population of Australia shows a tendency to congregate in a few large towns, and that all town populations have a tendency to fall off, I say there is a danger before us which it is the duty of every far-seeing man to endeavour to combat. Between Albany and Port Lincoln is an immense strip of country with a fine climate, but containing absolutely no settlement of, I suppose, 100 persons, except at Esperance Bay. I therefore urge, in the interest of the Commonwealth, that something should be done to create settlement there. If the settlement existed, all that there is in the country behind it—agricultural, pastoral, mineral—would be profitably developed, which now can be developed only at a loss, and therefore to great disadvantage. On this ground, that it is to the higher interest of the community of the Commonwealth that settlement should be extended along that coast—and this proposal affords almost the only chance of establishing such settlement—I am disposed to give the motion my support. That hon. gentleman subsequently voted for the motion, which I have already told the House was carried by 13 votes to nine. I am certain that hon. gentleman's views, as they were then expressed, are the views he holds to-day. When that speech was made, when the Colonial Secretary's motion was carried, the case for the Esperance railway was not nearly so strong as it is to-day. When the Colonial Secretary fought so hard for that motion the railway was not even surveyed, it was not constructed half-way; to-day we have it constructed half-way, we have it surveyed for the whole distance. In addition to that there is another argument that has been brought forward. It is the argument that the land between Esperance and Norseman is useful for agricultural settlement. The board that my friend Mr. Wilding referred to, stated in the course

of their report that they passed through 20 miles of, I think they used the words, "good farming land." The Minister for Agriculture told me in conversation with a number of others, and also said publicly at Esperance that, according to his opinion, the railway would pass through 30 miles of what he described as "useful farming land." Those are the most pessimistic views that I have heard expressed. Some months ago numbers of men came to me and told me of the value of the agricultural land down there. As I was always interested in the construction of that railway, I was inclined to think the wish was father to the thought. However, they told me what they thought about the country, and I was very glad to hear it, although I do not mind saying I thought they were so eager for the construction of the line that perhaps they exaggerated the position. Since then numbers of men have gone down there; I know most of them; they are men who have no political axe to grind, they are neither tied to the Labour party, nor are they bitterly opposed to it. Some of them may be associated with the one party, some with the other, but every man I know who went down there, and I know a great many, with the object of looking for land with a view of applying for a block good enough to settle on; these men I say, and there were between a dozen and twenty of them, on returning from their trip were, each and all, wildly enthusiastic about the land. They are mostly men who have had experience of farming in the other States, men who know a good deal about the mallee lands of Victoria and South Australia—all have come back with that high opinion. It must not be forgotten that this opinion was formed as the result of their experience in the Eastern States. With all due respect to the Minister for Lands I do not know whether he is an authority upon mallee lands or not; there are members who might be able to tell me if this State has mallee lands or not.

Hon. T. H. Wilding: Yes.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: One can easily understand that a Minister, or anyone else unacquainted with mallee lands, might form a very different judgment

concerning the value of that land from that formed by men experienced in that class of land in South Australia and Victoria. All I can say is this, that the men who have taken up land there are men who have only one object in view; they want to settle in this State. One man said at a meeting in Kalgoorlie, "I want to make my home in Western Australia, I want to make my home somewhere near the south coast, where I consider the climate is cooler and more suited to me than elsewhere in Western Australia. I have a farm at present in Victoria but I want to sell that and settle in Western Australia, if I can get land between Norseman and Esperance. If railway facilities are provided I will stay here, but if not I must go back to the Eastern States." That is the position of many, many men who have taken up land there. There was information supplied to-day to another place to the effect that within the last few months land was applied for in that district to the value of £49,000, practically £50,000. There had been no promise made of a railway but still that land has been applied for. I want to present this question to the consideration of the House in such a manner that it cannot be said that I have overstated the position. I believe that a great majority of the people of Western Australia are in favour of the construction of this railway. I know the opponents of the line, who they are, who inspired the opposition, but those opponents do not, I claim, represent the views of the man in the street, and it is the man in the street who is governing Western Australia to-day. Wherever I go in Perth, wherever I meet the worker, the wage earner, and the man of that type, and many of them come to me, perhaps being old gold-fields men and having their interests in Perth, I hear from all that they will do everything in their power in the interests of the railway. There are two reasons advanced against the railway. One of those reasons is advanced by some people who are possessed of what I think are foolish views. Those people fear that if the railway line is constructed it might do some damage to the vested interests of Perth and Fre-

mantle. Those who take that view are unwise for there is no justification for it. I do not think Esperance will ever be a port that will do any serious damage to Fremantle or to Perth. I am perfectly convinced on that point; besides, the position of those two great centres is so established that surely they need not be afraid of what little trade Esperance might get if the line is constructed. There is another section of this community who are opposed to the Esperance railway on another ground. They fear that if the line be built it might open the back door of Western Australia to the products of the East. I think their fears are very foolish. Those who know that district best, those who have spent their lives there, men like Mr. Dempster, Mr. White, and scores of others—I have been there many times myself—all are agreed that that district alone could produce all the food supplies the goldfields would want. I do not think there is the slightest question on that point. It is these two sections of people, who, although they are small in number, have the ear of those in authority, and it is they who have blocked us for the past 16 years; but the great majority of the people of Western Australia, those who have given the matter any thought, are, I am convinced, with us, and if the question were decided, either by referendum or a general election, I am sure the people who oppose the line against all reason and common sense, those little Western Australians, would be swept into oblivion. I would ask the House to consider the position in this way. Supposing that what I say is not true, supposing that the people of Perth, Fremantle, and the farming districts were against the line, supposing that for the sake of argument, it is certain that the Eastern Goldfields are virtually unanimous, as unanimous as a population of 70,000 or 80,000 people can possibly be. The Eastern Goldfields population represents one-third of the people of this State, and if one-third of the people of the State go to the Government and say they are unanimous in asking for the construction of the railway, and are able to point out that they

represent people who contribute so much to the revenue of this country, people who contribute, I claim, a larger share than the people of any other portion of the State, if they say they want the Government to construct a railway, are the Government going to say "No, we will not comply with the wishes of one-third of the people of this State, we will not do it," and this though the railway is only to cost £220,000? Are they going to say "no" to so big a section of the people who are absolutely unanimous on the question? These people say that within a few weeks' time, without any promise of the railway, over 110,000 acres were applied for in that district, and if supposing 500,000 acres are applied for, or even supposing 1,000,000 acres, but we shall say 500,000 acres, in the Norseman-Esperance district, this area at 10s. an acre would yield £250,000, a sum more than the total cost of the railway. Will it be constructed then? Is the Government to answer "No," we will not; Is that to be the answer to be given to us? But there is another aspect of the question that we might present to the Government, and it is this. Since you say you will not comply with the united wish of one-third of the people of Western Australia, and if you have any doubt on the point, we shall demonstrate to you by any means you may suggest that one-third of the people of the State are in favour of it. We will demonstrate to you by means of an election, by means of a referendum, or by means of a petition, or by public meetings, or by any means that the Government wish to suggest, that to all intents and purposes one-third of the people of the State want the construction of this line. If after an offer of that kind, and if we say, will you do it, and the money be forthcoming in the way we suggest, and the Government still say no, there is a third position that we will present, and it is this: There are a number of public bodies on the Eastern goldfields. The Government in the past have granted to various private companies the right to construct what are called tramways, but which in reality are railways—they are as much railways as the line which

at present runs from Coolgardie to Norseman. If we say to the Government "Will you give to the representatives of the public bodies on the goldfields who are responsible to the people by election, the same powers that you have given to various wood companies, such as the Kurrawang, Lakeside, and the Kanowna Wood Company, who now have longer railway lines than those we are asking for; will you allow the public bodies of the goldfields to construct this railway and they will surrender it to the Government upon fair terms whenever the Government wish it; will you then allow it to be done?" Personally, I would like to see this railway constructed by no one else than the Government. But, if we cannot get the Government to do it, if they will allow the public bodies to build it, I believe that we could form one body in which all the public bodies would have representation. It would be practically a goldfields governing body which would control this railway. If we should say, "Will you allow us to build it, and there will be no difficulty about the money to construct it, what is the Government to say to that? Is the Government to say "No, we refuse the wishes of one-third of the people of the State; we refuse, although the money to build it is assured; we refuse even to allow the public bodies of this State to build it." If the Government are going to send back an answer to the Eastern goldfields to the effect that they will not allow it to be constructed under any circumstances, what is the conclusion we are to take from that? It is this: No matter what case we are presenting for this railway which we have asked for for 16 years, the Government is to say "No." Whenever the people ask for railways to be constructed the Government regard them in the light of people who are desirous of promoting the interests of the State, and seeking to develop it, and they are received by the Government as people who are worthy of encouragement and assistance. But, as soon as people from the Eastern goldfields start to ask for the Esperance railway they are agitators, they are objection-

able people, people who want to stir up strife, and who are trying to set the goldfields against the coast; they are outrageous. These are practically the inferences to be drawn from the criticisms of the actions of those who simply ask for a railway to their natural port. We shall await with a considerable amount of interest the Premier's reply to the deputation. He may not give a direct answer, he may say—and I do not think anyone will take exception to it—that this is a matter of great importance, and he would like to discuss it with Cabinet and give it consideration. If he says that, no one can take any objection to it, it will be a reasonable proposal. I do hope, however, that we shall have a definite reply, yes or no, within a reasonable time. We have been waiting for 16 years for this railway, and we have been put off over and over again. This Government has done one good thing for the railway, and because of that it was the most popular Government as far as the goldfields were concerned. This was due to their construction of the line to Norseman two years ago. The construction of the Esperance railway has been supported generally on the goldfields. When Mr. Connolly was standing for election, and when I was standing for election, the Government were certainly not unpopular. Probably my friend will say when he was standing for election he was not cross-questioned with regard to the railway, but neither of us was. I expect Mr. McKenzie will say that he has never been asked a question regarding this railway; his opponent would say the same thing. The matter is so universal on the goldfields that there has never been a fight on the question because we can never get anyone against it. I notice Mr. Kingsmill is smiling. I daresay he had a few questions put to him; but still, on the goldfields every opportunity is availed of in order to further the question. The goldfields members when standing for goldfields constituencies may or may not have been asked questions, but it has always been taken for granted that they have been in favour of the construction of the line. I assure members that this

is not a party matter; the goldfields on this question are absolutely united. There are no party differences on the fields, on the question and I trust as a result of this movement we shall have that line constructed, and that the Premier will tell us that he will accede to our request. I am amongst those who claim that while the agricultural development of that country is certainly a strong additional argument, still, that in itself is only an additional argument. But there are other arguments. Mr. McKenzie spoke about the urgent necessity for providing the people of the Eastern Goldfields with access to their natural health and holiday resort. If any member of this Chamber has spent a summer, a long dry, hot summer upon those Eastern goldfields, and has seen what the women and children have to endure, and knows how the distance to the sea coast might be shortened, I am quite sure that even from that aspect alone and no other the railway will be considered to be fully justified. They talk about going down to Fremantle, Busselton, or Albany. With all due respect I would say that Fremantle is not in the same latitude. I was speaking to a doctor just before I came down, and he told me that every doctor upon the goldfields would sign a petition, if necessary, to point out the urgency of this matter from that one aspect alone. In addition, there is the right of every people to have access to their natural port. That is the right which is recognised in every part of the world. When talking about Canada I mentioned that there they were opening up ports everywhere; they are just now opening a port at Hudson's Bay, which is in a corresponding position to the one that we are talking of now, only it is on a larger scale. Wherever they can they are opening ports and building railways, and I claim that to be the way to develop a country. We in Western Australia, a mere handful of people, have one of the biggest problems that Australia can present; we have control of a territory which covers one-third of the Commonwealth, and that territory contains ilimitable undeveloped resources: it is almost unexplored, and it is the duty of

every member of both Houses, to my mind, to always have a map of Western Australia imprinted upon his brain. A most important question in this State is to secure population for our vacant spaces, especially the Northern areas which are now such a menace to all Australia; a menace by reason of the fact that every moment they are a temptation to the powers of the East, and so in the same way are the vast vacant spaces in the Southern areas, and every effort should be made to fill them. This railway, to my mind, will strike a blow at centralisation, and I would appeal to members not to be little West Australians, but West Australians in the true sense of the term. If they are trying to develop only that which can be covered by a postage stamp on the map, what can one think of them? Is that a statesman-like policy to pursue? Recently a man standing for Parliament who ought to have known better advocated concentration, which is another word for centralisation, and he probably would not say that he was in favour of centralisation. There are few men who say they are, few men who admit it. The man who favours centralisation or concentration is ashamed to admit it. Of all the States of the Commonwealth centralisation is least desirable in this State, the largest State of the Commonwealth.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): One of the few disadvantages of speaking somewhat late in the debate is that the congratulations I have to offer may appear somewhat stereotyped, may appear unoriginal; but I feel sure, Mr. President, that you will appreciate the fact that though they come late, and after many others have been uttered before them, they are none the less sincere, and they come from one who has had every opportunity of judging and endorsing your fitness to hold the high and honourable position to which you have been elected. With regard to the Governor's Speech I suppose all mundane affairs for the purpose of debate may be divided into two categories, those mentioned in the Governor's Speech and those which are not. The first we are justified in touching upon because there-

is mention of them—and may I say in this Governor's Speech those which are left out form an inconsiderable minority—the others we are justified in expressing surprise at the omission of. If one were to touch on each point raised even in the Speech itself, without dealing with its omissions, those insignificant omissions perhaps, to which I have alluded, one would find that any reasonable time limit which was set would be very much exceeded. I do not propose, therefore, to do more than touch upon a few points which appear in the Speech and, if I may be permitted, a few points which do not appear, but which, in my humble opinion, should find place there. I should like to take this, the first public opportunity I have had of congratulating the Premier upon the immense success of his trip to England as Premier, and of congratulating the man upon the recognition of his services to the State, and, may I say, to the Empire, so definitely made by his Sovereign. The next point upon which I wish to touch is one on which I am sure most hon. members will be at one. I wish to endorse the note of regret in the Speech at the rejection of the financial agreement which meant so much to Western Australia and even more to Australia; because I maintain that by leaving the financial powers of the Commonwealth within the power of the Commonwealth Government without a reference to the people of Australia, by taking out of the Constitution that right which the people of Australia had to alter it in regard to the finances, a great blow has been struck at those State rights which even the most ardent federalists, and I claim to be among them, will maintain are the very essentials of the agreement into which the States of Australia entered as a chief precedent to their entrance into Federation. I am glad indeed to hear from the hon. gentleman who has just sat down that such a feeling of amity exists on the goldfields towards the coast. I am glad to hear it from the hon. gentleman, because I have done him mentally for the last month on two an injustice perhaps, an injustice for which I make every reparation. I felt sure

from the attitude that gentleman took up—not so much Mr. Kirwan himself, but the paper, that famous paper on the goldfields with which he has been so long and so creditably and so honourably associated—that there was just perhaps a little tinge of feeling between the goldfields and the coast; but after listening to the hon. member's declaration to-night, I have to wipe the last vestige of such a suspicion from my mind.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The paper has always supported the agricultural policy. It opposed centralisation. I rather think you are confusing "centralisation" with "the coast." They are two different things.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I had thought that the hon. gentleman in making that speech, which any member would be proud of making, had every opportunity to explain every aspect of the question and every phase of thought he possessed, but I find it is not so, I find now that when I am gleaning up the last bits of suspicion against the hon. member some explanation is necessary in order that he may explain his mental and, if I may say, his journalistic attitude.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I am explaining your speech.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: My speech is mainly devoted to making an apology for having mentally wronged the hon. gentleman who has just sat down. I find among other subjects touched upon in the Governor's Speech mention of a subject which concerns me very greatly. I find that the declaration made by the Acting Premier, that this State was about to invade what was undoubtedly the province of the Commonwealth in taking upon itself the responsibility of building the Western Australian portion of the Transcontinental line, finds a place in the Governor's Speech. I thought when that declaration was made that it was made in haste and would be repented of at leisure, and I am surprised, therefore, to find that it is not repented of at leisure but that the State, or rather the Government of the State, are about to take upon themselves powers in a manner which the people of the State I do not think for one moment will allow; that they are about to undertake the

building of a line which is, to all intents and purposes, purely a Federal undertaking, the object of which is undoubtedly the defence of Australia, not of Western Australia, but the defence of the whole of Australia. I regret to find that this has a place in the Governor's Speech. I hope that like many other projects which appear in Governor's speeches it will not get out of it. Indeed I may indicate the hope that it will never get into it again and that we will have no attempt made by the Government, for their own sakes, to put this in a more concrete form than the form it now has in a paragraph in the Speech with which they open Parliament. I am pleased indeed to be able to endorse the remarks made about the enormous development, the wonderful development of the agricultural industry of this State. As hon. members know, I had under circumstances which I need not now recall, an ample opportunity of examining all the resources of a great deal of the State; and I went through the country at a time when the bountiful harvest just reaped was in process of being successfully taken to the coast—that portion of it which did not go to the goldfields—by the railways which the Government have done so much to forward, the agricultural lines of Western Australia. One thing that struck me was the bountifulness of the harvest, and another thing was the promise of a still more bountiful harvest next year. Wherever one went one could see the process of burning-off and extending operations. I feel sure that if nature is not too prodigal to us in the matter of rainfall this year the harvest of last year will be eclipsed by the harvest that is to come, and in a State that after all is only at the beginning of its agricultural possibilities. With a few big seasons like these are, it not only puts settlers on their feet but it encourages them to bring their friends from the other States and from the goldfields, some of whose population—perhaps replaced by arrivals from other States, perhaps not—are now turning their attention to the agricultural possibilities of the State. The agricultural outlook is very promising; indeed it is more than promising, it is performing. And let me say it justifies the Govern-

ment amply in the efforts they are making to give every farmer the opportunity that every farmer should have of having a railway within reasonable distance. However, there is one thing I hope the Government will observe. It is a peculiar thing that the more railways we build the more roads we want. There has been a tendency in the past to cut down the roads grant. I hope that tendency may be checked before it becomes pernicious. I hope the Government will realise the fact that I have just spoken of, that the more railways we build the more roads we want.

The Colonial Secretary: Certainly, to feed the railways.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I think the leader of the House will agree with me that, through financial stress and for other causes, the tendency has been to somewhat curtail the roads vote. I hope the tendency to cut this vote down will become less when the revenue is more buoyant, such as we may reasonably expect in the near future. Now, to pass away for the moment from agriculture to the pastoral industry, it seems that Providence has been very good to the State for the last few years. Again, we find in the North-Western areas every indication of a bountiful season. I learn with a great deal of pleasure that the Government have finally decided to place freezing works at Wyndham and elsewhere. Apparently the only person who seems to be satisfied as to the meaning of the word "elsewhere" is our friend, Mr. Drew, who apparently comes to the conclusion that "elsewhere" means everywhere but Geraldton. I do not think that was the intention of the Government when that paragraph was being framed. It must be indeed an intense disappointment when a paragraph such as this in the Governor's Speech, which may reasonably be expected to fit every place in Western Australia and secure universal approbation, is bowled out, so to speak, by the representative of a district who has made up his mind that his district cannot be included in the word. I do not suppose any site for these freezing works has yet been fixed upon, and in my opinion it will be a very diffi-

cult matter. Knowing Wyndham as I do, and speaking without any disrespect for it, I say it is unfortunate in its position; nature has made it so. It will be difficult to establish freezing works at the town of Wyndham. Those who have been there will bear me out in this contention. There is barely room between Bastion Hill, which is 600 or 700 feet above the town, and the waters of Cambridge Gulf for the not very extensive township that already exists. Another difficulty is that the water supply Mr. Connor alluded to has not yet been found. It may or may not be found by artesian boring; I hope it may; but with these two difficulties in the way, and the difficulty that the country is but ill supplied with fuel, I think the Government would be wise not to rush hastily into the selection of a site for these works. There must be other places, there must be better places, there must be places easier of access to the cattle country of Kimberley. Undoubtedly there are places better situated from the points of view I have enumerated than the town of Wyndham itself. I do not wish to raise a storm of indignation at Wyndham. As a matter of fact, Wyndham as a town is too hot for people to be so energetic as to be very indignant. I hope my remarks will be taken by those they affect in the spirit in which they are made, that they will be taken with that view always in mind Mr. Kirwan has alluded to, eschewing parochial ideas and looking at the matter from a purely national standpoint. It is undoubtedly a fact that unless freezing works are established the small squatter in Kimberley—and there are scores of small squatters there—will not have any chance of getting an outlet for his produce. Nay, more, the large squatters will not be able to supply this part of the State at a reasonable price unless they be assured of a market elsewhere for the disposal of their surplus stock. Mr. Connor, than whom there is no better authority in Western Australia, has pointed out that these markets are to be found in what we call the East. These markets need exploitation, and I suppose exploitation will be given to them. Until these markets are developed the outlook

for Kimberley is a very dismal one indeed, and the first means of improving it is the step the Government are taking in providing freezing facilities in that part of the State. I notice, too, with pleasure the coast of the North-West, which is renowned as one of the most dangerous in the world, not only on account of the rocks and reefs, but on account of the shifty currents, is to be surveyed. A survey is being carried out to replace the survey which at present is very insufficient and inaccurate of that part of the coast. The next point I have to touch upon is to congratulate the Government on taking the step which I think is a very wise one, that is the appointment of a board whose main object is the consideration of the advisability of building new railways. I was surprised that in the eloquent appeal which Mr. Kirwan made to the House, and through this House to the country, I was surprised in that eloquent appeal he absolutely ignored the existence of such a body of men: he absolutely ignored the fact that these men had already travelled over the country which he was speaking of in support of the Esperance railway.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: In the night time.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I am speaking of the speech the hon. member has just delivered. The advisory board, as Mr. Dodd will find in the Governor's Speech, consists of the manager of the Agricultural Bank, who besides being a financial authority is a splendid authority on agriculture. Then there is the Surveyor-General who, no doubt, will satisfy the desideratum of Mr. Kirwan, that of having a man acquainted with mallee lands. These two gentlemen, the manager of the Agricultural Bank and the Surveyor-General, above all men should be able to form some idea of the probable area of country to be tapped by any proposed line. Then there is the Chief Inspector of Engineering Surveys, who would have a good idea of any engineering difficulty that may lie in the way of making these railways. The hon. member chose to ignore the fact—possibly I am wrong in saying he chose to ignore it—but it happened that he did not mention the fact

that these gentlemen had already been over the route of this railway.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Admittedly in the night time.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I did not see that admission. I hear so many curious things about this railway that one does not know exactly what to believe. I did hear some mention of it on the goldfields when I was speaking there, and I was asked most extraordinary questions about it. At one meeting I was asked whether I was in favour of that part of Lord Kitchener's report wherein he laid down as a conditional precedent to the establishment of the Trans-Australian railway that a line should be built from Esperance to tap the railway.

The Colonial Secretary: Did Lord Kitchener say that?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I had not seen it and I said so, and after the questioner had expressed his pity for my ignorance he allowed me to depart in peace. I was also asked about the fortifications of Esperance and making a harbour there, and I was asked so many questions, so much so that one could be excused a certain amount of confusion arising in the mind as to what is expected. I happen to know Esperance very well indeed, probably I know Esperance a good deal better than any member of this House. I have spent months there at all times of the year and I know the surrounding country. I am not an expert of mallee land, and nobody but an expert in mallee land should express an opinion on the land around Esperance. I am not going to express an opinion. I suppose I am in order in discussing the Esperance line when dealing with the advisory board. I take it that the Esperance line should be built for two reasons; the two reasons that Mr. Kirwan laid down. These two reasons are, the existence of a very large extent of extremely good agricultural land, and, secondly, the existence in Esperance of a magnificent health and pleasure resort. So far as the agricultural lands go, if I were a fervid advocate of the line I think I should pin my faith to that, if I were sure of 5,000 acres there to be taken up for land settlement. This board that has been appointed by the Government, a

board of experts independent of any political control, a board of men who have made their names in Western Australia, and made their names, some of them, in Australasia, they are not going to lend their names to any little parochialism such as some of the people in that part of the world are accused of advocating. I think any report these gentlemen give will be an accurate, true, and fair report, and as far as I am concerned I think that the main object of that line, if built, should be the opening up of the agricultural country, and I am quite prepared to stand, or let Esperance stand or fall, by the quality of the report which these gentlemen put in. Not a report made, after a cursory inspection of the country that Mr. Dodd says was made, but let these experts make a further examination of the country and then let the Government say whether the line should be built or not.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Before the channels of trade are established.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Yes; go before the channels of trade are established, but now the channels of trade have become established. Before that it would have been good for the goldfields to have had a line built, and at that time I supported the building of the line. I am not ashamed to say that I have since changed my mind, that is, so far as the building of that line to put it into the carrying trade of the goldfields, is concerned. For this reason, there is a certain amount of traffic to be taken to the goldfields, and the fact of Esperance being opened up will not increase that trade, but instead of having, as we have now, one payable line, what would we have: we should increase the capitalisation of our railways and harbours because Esperance harbour is not a natural harbour, and a good deal of money would have to be spent there to make it in any degree equal to the harbour at Fremantle, and it would not increase their carrying capacity one penny, that is looking at the matter from a national standpoint. If the goldfields have anything to complain of in connection with a railway service I should be the first to remedy it, but the goldfields

people will take up an attitude that the railway should carry jewellery at the same rate as they carry jarrah. The majority of the goods carried for the goldfields people is in the line of general merchandise, and no one would maintain that drapery should be carried at the same rate as coal and timber, which forms the traffic along the coastal line. If you go to the fields or stop in Perth—and remember, I have been a goldfields member, not in the sense in which the term goldfields is used in this Chamber, I came from a goldfield which is not recognised as a goldfield, because when members speak of the goldfields here they mean the Eastern Goldfields and nothing else. I often wonder how the other goldfields representatives stand here and listen to the goldfields being spoken of in the way they are. I was about to say that if you go to the fields, and if people begin discussing railway matters you are met with the argument that the freights to the goldfields are far higher than to any other part of the State. That assertion may be made by unthinking people. Freights, undoubtedly, are high, but on the same class of stuff the same freights are applicable to the goldfields line as to the other parts of the State, therefore, it is not a just assertion and should not be much considered. Let me touch for a moment on the second reason why Esperance should have a railway line. That is that Esperance is a health and pleasure resort for those on the goldfields. I have had experience of nearly the whole of the Western Australian coast from Wyndham to Israelite Bay, and in my experience Esperance is easily the best summer resort in Western Australia. I do not know any summer resort in Australia—

Hon. R. W. Pennefather: Is it better than Albany?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Far better. Not in climate but in other ways. So far as facilities for sport are offered in Esperance, Albany is not to be compared. It is, indeed, one of the finest health and pleasure resorts I have known, but whether the State is justified in building a railway purely from a health and pleasure point of view alone, that is a matter

on which even Mr. Kirwan must admit opinions may differ.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: When the money for its construction is assured.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: During the hon. member's temporary absence from the Chamber I have dealt, to my satisfaction, with what I thought was that aspect of the question. I have already explained to the House that my opinion was that if this very large area of good farming land is available, and I am not offering an opinion principally for the reason that it would be presumptuous on my part, not being experienced in mallee land to offer an opinion, but if that land is available in the estimation of the advisory board, which the hon. member did not mention—

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I did mention it.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I must have been absent from the Chamber when the hon. member dealt with that point.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It is said there are 20 miles of farming land, though Mr. Mitchell says there are 30.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Then Mr. Mitchell has rather more praise for it than the Railway Advisory Board. If the Railway Advisory Board can recommend the building of the line from an agricultural point of view, certainly I think the line should be built.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does nothing else count with you but the agricultural view?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: What else should count?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Should not the health point count?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Yes, but if the agricultural prospects of the line are not such as to warrant its construction, then the Government would not be justified in undertaking it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But have not the people of the goldfields the right to have access to their natural port?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: For what purpose would the hon. member use this natural port, seeing that the hon. member has declared that the port would not have the slightest effect upon the trade of the ports of Fremantle, Bunbury and Al-

bany? Personally I do not think it would. But I have already pointed out that while it would not affect the trade of Fremantle or Perth, it would affect the capitalisation of our railways. It would largely increase that capitalisation without adding to the earning power.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Are we to be compelled to carry our goods 180 extra miles in order that the railways may pay the better?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Now the hon. gentleman is rather receding from the position he originally took up. He first said the line was worthy of being built for two reasons; first of all from the agricultural point of view, and secondly from the point of view of health and pleasure. He was good enough to say that the line would not affect the trade of Fremantle or Perth. By that, I take it he was quite content to have those goods carried in the way in which they are now carried. If not, why say it would not affect the trade of Fremantle or of Perth? Personally I do not think it would affect this trade; but, even if it did, if it gave that inlet to other provinces of Australia which the hon. member says some people are afraid of, those people would indeed be very unfederal in spirit if, for no better reason, they objected to the proposed railway.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But why not favour the building of the line if the cost of construction be assured?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: It may be assured from the hon. member's point of view, but let me ask him—

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: If 500,000 acres of land be taken up in that country, would you be in favour of the construction of the line?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I have already said that if I had an assurance on that point, and if the Railway Advisory Board were in favour of the building of the line, I would not oppose it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Railway Advisory Board who spent three days in racing over the country!

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I am so sorry to have to repeat portions of my speech merely to satisfy the hon. member's passion for interjection. I have already dealt with the point he now touches

upon, and I have said that the Railway Advisory Board, if they thought sufficient inspection has not been made, should go over the ground again. I am glad to find that this inspection of theirs was not so cursory as I at first thought. I gathered from Mr. Dodd that they had hurried over the country in the manner of a criminal evading justice, spending only one night in the passage. Now, it would appear that the time occupied was three days. Really the testimony is so extremely conflicting that it makes it very hard for a person like myself, who is open to conviction—

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: You are not open to conviction. The goldfields vote at the recent election settled you in respect to this railway.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Not at all; the hon. member must know my mind better than I do myself. I do not bear any animosity at all against the people of the goldfields for their vote. I am not one of those who, because a man does not vote for them, think he must be wrong in principle and a ruffian of the deepest dye.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Your colleague does not agree with all you say.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I daresay Mr. Dodd's colleagues have said things with which he does not altogether agree. Even in his party, supposed to possess the quality of unanimity in the highest degree—even in the ranks of that party one can find little traces of dissension, or, I will not say dissension, but little differences of opinion. You find extremists even in that party. I am glad this House has gained in Mr. Dodd one who is not an extremist, but whose object, as shown during the brief time he has been in the House, is to lay before us the views of his party with moderation and discretion. I feel certain that if he were free to admit the fact he would say that sometimes the extremists of his party have gone further than he would care to go.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Yes; but why do you want the Railway Advisory Board's report in respect to this particular railway when it has not been given in respect to other railways?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: We want it in the case of this and all future rail-

ways. The reason why, in the past, we have not had it, is because the Board did not happen to be in existence. I trust that is a good and sufficient reason why we had no report from the board.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan interjected.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I do not exactly see the force of the hon. gentleman's interjection. As a matter of fact he appears to me, as I have already said, to be possessed of an inordinate passion for making interjections. I am sorry it is so. It is, perhaps, characteristic of that part of the world from which he comes. I allude, of course, to the gold-fields. But I do hope that while I am making these few remarks the hon. gentleman will accord to me the courtesy I accorded to him when I sat and listened to his remarks. Perhaps my remarks are disjointed, and in all probability they have not that compelling force which makes hon. members listen to Mr. Kirwan in silence. However, let him possess his soul in patience. No doubt if I say anything very violent or wide of the truth he will rise to a point of order.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I understood that interjections were by way of compliment to a speaker.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: If that were so, I should feel the most flattered man in Western Australia.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Well, you are making out a good case for your constituents, and deserve well of them.

Hon. J. W. KINGSMILL: I was trying to explain my attitude, not from the point of view of my constituents alone, but from that of the whole of the people of Western Australia. This, I think, should be the main object of everyone in the Chamber.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The way to arrive at that is to take a referendum.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: As for the probable issue of a referendum, it is comforting to know that there is no limit placed on the powers of prophecy possessed by members. We can always talk about the absolutely certain result of a referendum if it were possible to get one. I wish it were possible, for just out of curiosity it would be interesting to see what would happen.

Hon. J. W. Pennefather: We have had one referendum too many.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I would like to see this referendum, just to satisfy the hon. gentleman whose mind is intent upon acquiring knowledge through unusual processes. The next point I wish to touch upon is one mentioned the other night when I listened to that little bear story related by my friend and former colleague. I would like to remind my hon. friend that bears, though large and sometimes truculent of aspect—although I understand the animal in question, in that admirable cartoon drawn by an artist for whom I have the greatest respect, was not truculent of aspect but, rather, wore a smile. To my mind the bear in question had a sort of air of innocent protest. However, I was going to remind the hon. member that bears, though so large in size and fierce of aspect are yet of timid disposition, and if unduly harassed, even the one in question, instead of coming further down the pole may seek refuge at the top again. Then, again, there is a good deal in the adjustment of those steps upon the pole. Some bears like short steps, while others like long ones. Now the Government bears, if I may be pardoned the use of such a term—as a matter of fact the Government just now appear to be operating rather as “bulls” than “bears”—like their steps cut very long, notwithstanding the fact that any other bear might lose his balance on passing from one to the other. But, to drop allegory: What I would have said if an opportunity had occurred last session was that I would be prepared to meet the Government half-way. I think they are going too far in asking so great a reduction as was asked in last year's Bill. However, I am prepared to meet them with a £20 qualification; and if this will fit the case my services, I may say, are at their disposal. If not, and if the Bill emerges from Committee—at which stage, of course, my position debars me from taking an active part—with such a reduction as I have said, well and good. If it does not, then undoubtedly I shall have to oppose it at the next stage. I hope I make my position perfectly clear. I do not intend to enlarge upon the sub-

ject of redistribution of seats. As a matter of fact I think it is always unwise to meet the trouble half way; and we are going to have plenty of trouble about this. I can hear a gentle rumour of it, and indeed it is to be felt in the atmosphere. Whatever it may be in the first place, one would be unwise to prophecy as to what the shape of the Bill will be by the time it gets here. However, by that time I will be prepared to study it and come to some conclusion as to what action I shall pursue in the matter. With regard to the encouragement of secondary industries, I think members would do well if they were personally a little better acquainted with the secondary industries that already exist. I am sure Mr. Kirwan will pardon me if I mention the obnoxious name of Perth, but I am sure it has given me a great deal of pleasure, during the past five or six months, occasionally to visit some of the factories which exist in and around the city, which exist and do well under conditions not always too favourable. It is undoubtedly true that it behoves any Government or municipality to see that the capital of a city shall not be too great a parasite on the country surrounding it. If it is possible for us in Perth to make our position more secure, to render ourselves less the sport and plaything of the agricultural seasons or of the times of depression, or inflation, of the mining industry, by buttressing up this town with factories and industries of its own, everything that can be done should be done in this connection. It might surprise members to learn that even to-day this State is sending away biscuits to Melbourne, confectionary to Sydney, and even leather goods to the other States, and are competing reasonably even although the conditions are not so good here as there, with the larger firms in the East. I am sure members will be glad to learn this, and if they have any doubt on the matter I would like them to verify for themselves what I have said. I am very pleased to find that a Department of Industry has been established, and I feel sure everything that can be done will be done. With the terms of our Federal Constitution

always kept rigorously in sight we should encourage as reasonably as we can those industries that can be encouraged. Mr. Throssell was good enough to pay some little tribute of compliment to me for having been instrumental in bringing before this House, as I will do again this session, a motion referring to the manner of dealing with lapsed Bills. For one reason or other this unfortunate provision has not yet found a place in the Standing Orders, not through any fault of this Chamber, but because another place have wanted either the time or the inclination to deal with it. I hope that will not be the case this year. I feel sure members will again agree to support the motion I will put on the Notice Paper. Let us hope that in another place it will be recognised this session that the motion is not an insidious trap laid for them, but a measure of common sense, introducing to this Parliament what has been the practice in other Parliaments the world over for years, a practice that has met with good results. It will have the effect of greatly saving both time and money to the country and, I am sure, will give every satisfaction. There is one matter not mentioned in the Governor's Speech, and which I would feel almost ashamed to mention here were it not for the urgency of the case. I feel sure the Colonial Secretary will forgive me for mentioning it. I have spoken of the subject before, and it refers to the distribution, the inequitable distribution, I think, of Government funds to the various charities of the State. The Colonial Secretary knows to what I allude. Last night a meeting was held of the Children's Protection Society; it was the annual meeting and, by the courtesy of His Excellency the Governor, took place in the Government House ballroom. At that meeting a state of affairs was disclosed which was very interesting, and was fully set forth in the report of the society then placed before members. A few of the salient points of that report I will touch upon. My main object in making this appeal is because the society is the one charitable organisation here which receives absolutely no Government support, although it is admitted by the Colonial Secretary himself

and by those of his officers who are there to advise him, that the work the society is doing is excellent and deserves encouragement. If this recognition is not given the operations of the society must before long assuredly be seriously retarded. It is not as if it existed for Perth alone, for the children under its charge have come from the following places:—Lawlers, Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Fimiston, Ravensthorpe, Geraldton, Norseman, Bunbury, Mandurah, Greenbushes, Harvey, Beverley, Kurrawang, Pilbara, Northam, Laverton, Busselton, Sandstone, Sydney, and New Zealand. There are now some 73 children under the charge of the society, and they come from the different places I have mentioned. The Colonial Secretary has gone so near promising to help this society on one or two occasions—I will not say that he has absolutely promised, for if he had done so that promise would have been fulfilled—that the society feels it has some right to expect recognition of its work. I make this appeal on the Society's behalf. Perhaps I might be almost taken to be unjustified in introducing this subject. I take it, however, that it is a serious omission from the Governor's Speech that the good work the society is doing, and is prepared to do is not recognised, and the assistance granted which is no more than its due. Some of the other societies to which Government recognition is extended are, perhaps engaged in a work not so necessary as that carried on by the Children's Protection Society. I have to thank members for having listened to me with a fair amount of quietude, and I have to thank those members who have paid me so many compliments. I have to thank the House for their kindness in placing me in the position I occupy. Allow me to say that after travelling the length and breadth of Western Australia it is pleasing to come home, as it were, like the prodigal son of old, and be welcomed as I have been in this honoured and august assembly. I have much pleasure in supporting the Address.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (North): I was thinking before I stood up that if I remained a little longer, and waited for a few more subjects to be touched

upon, everything I possibly could say would be said much better than, perhaps, I could express it myself. At the risk, perhaps, of wearying the House for a few moments I desire, without prefatory remarks, to offer you, Mr. President, my sincere congratulations upon being again elected to the seat you have held worthily for so many years. I desire to extend the same to Mr. Kingsmill, and I can assure him that I and others welcome his return to this House. The Speech of His Excellency, which was proposed in concise and lucid terms by my honourable and learned friend, Mr. Gawler, commends itself, I think, to every member of this Chamber who is not of a partial mind. There is much matter in it which leads to differences of opinion, and with some of those subjects it would be unwise to deal at present. At the same time, however, I can assure my friend, and among others, Mr. Kirwan, that the subject so dear to his heart, the railway to Esperance, should it come before the Chamber this session will receive, at my hands, and I am sure at the hands of every member, a fair and candid deliberation, undetermined by any preconceived ideas, no matter from what quarter they came. I have to thank Mr. Kingsmill for referring to the intention of the Government to establish at Wyndham freezing works. He is acquainted with that part of the State, having visited it on more occasions than one, and he could assure members of some of the difficulties that will have to be faced in that quarter. It is true there may be some difficulties in fixing the site, but they can be overcome. There is plenty of land available, so it is only a question, perhaps, of a little expense in fixing a wharf on that side of the stream. But as regards the water, I can assure my friend, for I have visited the district since he has, that there is a large and copious supply of fresh water eight or ten miles away, on the high tableland, that can be brought down in pipes and will flow by gravitation. That will be a cheaper way than by endeavouring to find artesian supplies. I have no doubt that the initiation of the work will lead

to the cheapening of meat in this market, for meat can be brought down in a chilled condition in a very much better state than if the animal is transhipped. It will open up a market for our extra products in the East. Unfortunately there are difficulties prevailing at present owing to the laws of quarantine being so strict in Manila, and other islands north and west of our Continent, but we hope with better representation these will shortly be overcome and the regulations relaxed to a considerable extent.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: Great assistance will be given to the small growers.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: Yes; it means annihilation to them if some such institution as freezing works is not established. The small grower is not able to charter ships and is at the mercy of the large squatter, who offers what price he thinks fit. As the latter, himself, finds a difficulty in getting rid of his surplus stock he naturally does not want the stock of others to compete with his. I am much indebted to Mr. Kirwan for his reference, in the course of the long, able and exhaustive speech he made, to one subject which will engage the attention of the House in a lively manner, no doubt, before long; that is the Redistribution of Seats Bill. Mr. Kirwan pointed out what has been expressed before, but I will pay him this compliment, that I have never heard it expressed in such a concise and emphatic manner as he placed it before this Chamber. That is, that the representation of the constituency should not be guided solely by the per capita of the electorate, but by other considerations, mainly the one of remoteness from the capital; that is, that the representation in remote parts should be according to the distance from the capital. This strikes home to me, because I make it a religious part of my duty, as a representative of the North Province, to visit that place once a year, and I am one of the worst sailors that ever went on a ship. I go on board in fear and trembling, for I know that I will experience several bad hours on the boat. If it be so difficult to go there from here, how

much more difficult is it for those who have no such facilities to come south? My colleague, Sir Edward Wittenoom, has referred to the necessity for the Government to arrange for a Supreme Court judge to visit the North-West, and particularly the town of Broome, once or twice a year. Much injustice is being done there, I fear, owing to the want of that convenience because, as Sir Edward pointed out, and I can bear testimony to it also, many cases are not brought into court simply on account of the great expense that has to be endured in order to bring witnesses to Perth, and the people would rather endure an injustice than run the risk of bringing witnesses so far at such great expense. I have never had an opportunity and I do not think any of the members of this Chamber have had an opportunity, excepting the Colonial Secretary, of seeing the Bill dealing with liquor law reform.

The Colonial Secretary: You saw it last session.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: It never reached this House. I throw out the suggestion in connection with Bills dealing with subjects that are already on our statute books, scattered, some of them, over eight or ten Acts of Parliament, that whoever draws up the measure should try and codify the laws on the subject and put all into one Bill. That would be a great saving and would put our laws into a convenient form. I believe there are some 14 or 15 amending Acts on the liquor question. I would like to re-echo what I said on a previous occasion when the Address-in-Reply came forward, on the subject of reorganising the Agent General's office. We have not heard any definite statement yet from the Premier as to what the intention is, but I still hold the opinion, and it is shared by a good many members in this Chamber and another place, that that office should be reorganised with the view of bringing into it fresh blood from this State, men who have lived here for a number of years and who are thoroughly saturated with Western Australian affairs, and who would know what they were speaking about. I think it would help very much

to facilitate and efficiently conduct the business of that office if this course were followed. I would like to say one or two words with reference to the proposed establishment of the University. This is a subject I have always taken a deep interest in, and I am glad to see that the Government are going to take steps to give it concrete existence. I think before any attempt is made to establish secondary schools or colleges, that the Government should see that in every part of the State where there might be a sufficient number of children that primary education is given. I have ascertained that the custom is growing up to secure quarter-acre allotments alongside schools in order to give the children the benefit of the study of nature. I hope that this will be practised extensively throughout the country centres. I trust that, notwithstanding the movement to establish secondary schools, the first consideration of the Government will be to lay down the rule that primary education is the first essential.

The Colonial Secretary: So we do.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: In speaking of primary education, I cannot help sympathising very deeply with the school teachers who have very arduous duties to perform, and many of whom, I regret to say, are getting salaries which are not commensurate with the importance of the work they have to discharge. I do hope that the Government will see they are treated in a liberal and fair manner. I would like to bring under the notice of the Colonial Secretary that the extension of the jetty at Broome is a subject that the people in that quarter of the State are looking forward to with considerable interest. Their desire is that the work of extension should be carried out without any great delay. No doubt it will cost a reasonably large sum of money, but, at the same time, it will serve a great want, because the completion of the work will mean that the steamers going up and down will be able to load and unload irrespective of the tides. With reference to the establishment of the battery at Marble Bar and the construction of the railway connecting that mining centre

with Port Hedland, I feel sure that the Government have done very wisely. I recently visited that district and was pleased to see at Marble Bar that a great number of claims which had been abandoned or neglected, were all being worked, and worked, evidently, satisfactorily. Now there is the opportunity of mining below water level. Before, this was out of the question, because there was no timber grown locally that would answer the purpose. There is a feeling of hopefulness in the district now and the place is growing prosperous. There is a fine stamp of manhood engaged at work there, and although the temperature is high they all appear to be in excellent health and, in fact, it seems to be one of the healthiest localities I have visited, in spite of the summer temperature being almost unbearable. The Government need not have any apprehension that the line which is rapidly approaching completion will not pay; on the contrary I believe it will pay handsomely, and will be the means of opening up another place which also has great mining possibilities, and that is Nullagine. I am at a loss to appreciate some of the remarks which have been made with reference to the likelihood of the over-production of wheat. I think the object of the hon. member who gave utterance to this remark was not to encourage people too much to go in for wheat, because of the fear that in developing their land they may find that at the end of a harvest they have made a loss instead of a profit. At the same time, the amount of wheat produced here would scarcely affect the European or the world's markets. My friend was referring to the wheat production in foreign parts where it is in excess of the demand: but that is an open question, as a good deal depends upon market operations which regulate the prices. I should like, if it would not be trespassing too much upon the time of members, to refer to a subject which has given me a great deal of worry, and that is, what we are to do with our immense coast line along the Northern part of the State where we have a belt of rich alluvial soil which will grow anything that the climate will allow. That soil is simply reeking with organic

matter, but there lurks a danger behind it when it is turned over and the tropical sun beats upon it. Throughout the length of that coast line I do not know whether a white man has attempted to cultivate anything of a tropical nature. That is significant on the face of it, and it seems to me to bear out the fact that along that coast where the country is low lying and where the atmosphere is humid, and tropical conditions prevail, it is not the place for a white man. Inside on the table land, however, where you go into the purer air of heaven a different condition altogether prevails and the white man can work there. But on the coast line, as a rule, if he tries to work there he is bound to get malaria. Why should we run the risk of sending our white brothers to such a fate as that? Suppose it were possible to economically and physically get the white man to work there, I see another difficulty staring us in the face. If you produce an article in the tropics it must come into competition with a similar article grown elsewhere by cheap labour. If you pay 10s. a day for white labour in our tropical parts, how is it possible to compete with tropically-grown products which come from places where men are paid 10s. a month? That, to my mind, is a strong argument against the economical possibility of developing our coast line with white labour.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: The customs duties would prevent these products from coming in.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: The customs duties would not help you in the least when the disparity in the wages is so great.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: It was said that sugar could not be grown by white labour in Queensland.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: Yes; and what are they doing now; they are charging us £8 a ton more for it. If you do that with every product you will have the people in such a condition that they will soon kick against it. If you grow these products with cheap labour in other countries, labour which is paid for at the rate of 10s. a month, how can you possibly compete against such a thing with white labour. The products

grown by this cheaper labour could pay any duty and then find their way in. There is another aspect that I would refer to in connection with the question of coloured labour. The Commonwealth have taken over a portion of New Guinea, and I learn that in Papua there are 800,000 coloured men. If these coloured men are treated as Commonwealth subjects then they have a perfect right to roam over the Commonwealth, and I do not see any Constitutional law which will stop them. This, then, might solve the question of coloured labour on the coast, but I view with horror the idea of mixing the two races. Any man with common-sense must know that it is most suicidal to do a thing like that, but we might utilise this labour under restrictions similar to those which are imposed upon the men engaged in pearling in Broome, where they are compelled to return after three years, and when a fresh lot are brought back. With regard to the coast-line where coloured labour would have to be employed, it might be employed with restrictions such as these. Many men run away with the idea that we all want an absolutely white Australia. So we do, but at the same time are we going to leave a coast-line, some 2,000 miles in extent, a mere waste and open to anyone to settle on? If you take away from that coast line a few towns like Wyndham, Derby, Broome, Hedland, Cossack, and Carnarvon, we have 2,000 miles remaining where, perhaps, not more than 10 white men exist. I sincerely hope that this question, which does not affect hon. members in this Chamber except indirectly, will be brought significantly under notice in the proper quarter by our Government, with the view of securing a relaxation of some of the regulations affecting the employment of coloured labour where it is essential that it should be employed. The Commonwealth Government have admitted coloured labour in connection with pearling, but have imposed restrictions which are annoying to those engaged in the industry. If a boat is destroyed or lost in a tempest, a pearler is allowed to transfer his labour to a new boat, but not so to an old boat. It seems a very queer law, and is giving a lot of trouble

up at Broome. Representations have been made to the proper authorities about this matter, but at present the difficulty still remains. I will not occupy the attention of the House any longer, for I know there are other speakers to follow.

Hon. R. LAURIE (West): It was not my intention to take part in this debate, but there are one or two matters to which I wish to draw attention. Before doing so, I desire like other members to offer my congratulations to you, Sir, on your re-appointment to the high office you have so worthily filled for some years past. Some of my friends representing agricultural districts—and particularly Mr. Hamersley, who is not here just now—appear to me to have taken up a peculiar attitude towards the Government over the erection of grain sheds at Fremantle. The Government are about to spend some £50,000 or £60,000 on that work to further the interests of the agricultural industry, and I do not think Mr. Hamersley's attitude is a fair one. This question of wheat handling has given people a great deal of thought, not only in the Eastern States, but all over the world. One of the first things those connected with the industry should study is as to whether wheat can be carried in bulk from here to the home markets. The expense here would be great. There is the building of railway trucks for the transport of wheat. Then there is the provision of the elevators at considerable cost. We know that throughout Canada they have those means of handling wheat, and no doubt the necessity for cheap handling of wheat will absolutely force the Government to seek the most modern methods. But I think a little study on the part of those connected with the industry will tend to show that the Government of the State are well-advised not to spend a lot of money until they are quite sure of the result. There is this again: the steamers to be employed would require very great alterations as demanded by the Board of Trade for the safety of those who sail in those vessels. Because, when wheat is carried in bulk and not properly trimmed it means very grave danger to human life, and the Board of Trade have de-

vised some drastic restrictions on the carriage of wheat in bulk. We all know that shipping companies the world over are prepared to do business that is profitable; but in this case it requires very great and costly alteration to make the ships suitable. I commend the Government for what they have done, and I trust they will not stop there; because the building they are putting up could easily be converted to the system of elevators when necessary. Then, again, there is still a diversity of opinion as to whether wheat can be carried from Australia home in bulk, although so far, the weight of opinion seems to be in the affirmative. Experiment has been made, and it has been shown that it means a considerable saving in handling charges. The present Government, who have given so much attention to agriculture, will probably see their way clear in due course to erect the elevators so necessary to a reduction in the cost of handling. Mr. Kirwan has called attention to the necessity for being careful not to bestow too much attention on the growing of wheat alone. A little thoughtful consideration would have shown Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Gawler—who in this respect was the first to raise the cry of caution in this House—that the Government have encouraged in every way the grazing of stock in the South-West and other districts, and have done everything possible to foster mixed farming. I know the numbers of sheep that have been imported into this country by the Government, and the numbers also that have been brought from our Northern districts for our small farmers in the South-West. The Government have been specially careful to encourage the raising of sheep and other stock. A question was raised by Sir Edward Wittenoom as to the Agent General's office in London, and I find Mr. McKenzie making complaint in respect to the management of that office. I was there three years ago, and while in London I was very much in and out of the office. I do not wish to resent Mr. McKenzie's complaint, because if he sees any reason for complaint he has every right to ventilate it. But when a complaint is made against a person not in a position to reply, and any

member can conscientiously defend that person, I think it is his duty to do so.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: I was not complaining of individuals, but of the methods employed.

Hon. R. LAURIE: Mr. McKenzie has complained of the methods employed. Twelve months ago a member of the Opposition in another place went home, and I am pleased to say that on his return that gentleman got up in another place and justified the way in which the officers of the Immigration Department looked after their work and saw that only proper persons were sent out here. We know that in all businesses mistakes will happen; but this member of another place not only testified in that place to the excellent way in which the work was being carried out in London, but he did the same in the Trades Hall at Fremantle. I only mention this matter because while I was in London I was impressed with the belief that these gentlemen at home were doing very good work. I do not like to hear criticised the methods of an office which I consider is very well conducted—leastways I think that criticism should not be allowed to go without challenge when there is one here who has recognised the good work being done. Another subject I would like to touch upon is that of the Fire Brigades Act passed last year. Very few people suspected that its effects would have been so far-reaching. I have a statement from the secretary of a roads board in my district containing 12,186 acres. It is a question whether the fire brigade could possibly get around such a district in time to lend material assistance in the case of a fire. The boundaries of the board include Bieton, Palmyra, Applecross and Bull's Creek. With a very small revenue that board have to pay £102 17s. 7d. for the upkeep of the fire brigade.

The Colonial Secretary: They should have applied for exemption. They have not done so.

Hon. R. LAURIE: It is all very well for one with the knowledge of the Minister to say that they should have applied for exemption; but we all know perfectly well that the secretary of a roads board has not such knowledge, and in conse-

quence he waits until the account comes in, when he at once takes the proper course to have the matter rectified, namely by calling public attention to it. I have now called to it the attention of the Minister, and of Mr. McKenzie, who is a member of the board. It may have some effect, and serve to rectify a grave injustice. Every house in that district has to pay £1 2s. per annum for fire brigade service, and I say I doubt if there would be a possible chance of calling the brigade to give any assistance at all. The £1 2s. would insure every house in the district. I trust that if the application for exemption be made the board will get the benefit of it.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: Give us the other side of the case. What about Fremantle?

Hon. R. LAURIE: We all know what happened at Fremantle the other day when a writ was about to be issued upon them. Evidently the municipal authorities of Fremantle are not satisfied.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: They are getting an expenditure of £3,500, and their contribution is only £800.

Hon. R. LAURIE: However, I refer, not to a prosperous town like Fremantle, but to a roads board district.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: I admit there are some hard cases.

Hon. R. LAURIE: I am satisfied to leave the case in the hands of the hon. member. I do not wish to delay the House longer. I am convinced that we have a prosperous season in front of us with, perhaps, double the quantity of wheat that we had last year. It means that this part of the country is going to gain something from that prosperity, and I am satisfied we have a very bright future. The Government have done, and still are doing much. Sir Edward Wittenoom and Mr. Pennefather have called attention to the North-West. The Government have put up lighthouses and done everything possible for shipping, and perhaps in their wisdom they may see fit to extend the jetty at Broome into deeper water. I know if it is done it will mean a great saving of time. I hope also the Government will be able to do something at Port Hedland so as to make

the harbour fit for ships to go in and out at any time. I am afraid, however, it will be too costly at the present time, but the Colonial Secretary has been there and, if the Government are able to do it, probably the money will be provided.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): I feel in having to reply at this late hour to this long debate I am apt to weary the House, and I am certainly at a decided disadvantage; but at the risk of wearying the House, in order to save members assembling next week, I shall make some remarks. I would not have done so had I not been occupying the position that I do as representing the Government, but as the Leader of the House it is necessary that I should make a few remarks and reply to some of the utterances of hon. members. The Speech His Excellency has delivered is, as has been remarked by many members, a very comprehensive one, and it is so because it comes at a time when the Government have been in office some four years, sufficient time to enable them to carry out most of their programme. The most gratifying feature in the Speech is the reference made to the very satisfactory state of our finances this year. We are in the happy position of having a surplus of revenue over expenditure, the first financial surplus for six years. With all due modesty I claim that it is to a large extent, indeed entirely, owing to the efforts of the Government, to the policy of opening up the country and assisting the primary industries by the establishment of public works and railways in particular. When we refer to the amount of land taken up last year, as set out in the Speech, 1,400,000 acres under conditional purchase conditions, and 250,000 in homestead farms, and when we see that 2,600,000 acres have been surveyed, it constitutes an admirable record of the work of the Lands Department, a record not only for Western Australia, but, I venture to say, for any other State of the Commonwealth, probably for any country in the world. But the surplus is not solely brought about by that policy, but partly as the result of four

years' strenuous efforts on the part of every individual Minister constituting the Government. When we took office it was not a popular time to take office, for there had been a deficit for a number of years and there was every probability of deficits continuing for several years. We took office in the face of a falling revenue in customs and excise, which meant of course that we had to face the music of imposing taxation; and any Government that has to impose direct taxation need not look to be a popular Government. Nevertheless we faced the position. First we imposed taxation, and each Minister gave close attention to his office so as to keep down expenditure in every possible direction. I do not wish to go into details at this late hour as to how that economy has been effected, but it will be sufficient if I give a few figures in connection with the department I control. It is one in which it is not easy to economise; but nevertheless, despite the fact that some £41,000 was spent last year on charities, harbour and light, lunacy, aborigines, and medical more than was spent in 1905-6, the year before we took office, there has been £7,000 less expenditure than there was in 1905-6. There have been decreases since that year in such departments as gaols, £4,400, and police, £10,000, and there has been a decrease in hospital expenditure of some £14,000, while there has been an increase of £4,700 in revenue in medical and health, making a total of £19,000 between 1909-10 and 1905-6. In undertaking to make these economies we quite recognised, myself in particular, that we were not adopting a popular course, yet it had to be faced. I recognised that in cutting down votes such as hospitals, it was not a popular proposal; at the same time I was prepared to do my duty and to do what I could to help the Government to meet the falling revenue and to make ends meet. I say without fear of contradiction that, notwithstanding there has been a sum of £10,000 per year saved in the police force, it is just as numerous—it is a little more so—and just as efficient as it was before. There has been a saving between 1905-6 and 1909-10 in the Medical and Health Departments of £19,000; and again there

I say without fear of contradiction that there is not one person who should have received treatment from the Medical or Health Departments, that is in the hospitals, has gone without that medical treatment.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: But it has been hard on the subscribers to the hospitals. They have not fared so well.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There was a system of imposition on the hospitals which was growing up year by year, and no Minister would tackle it until I did. After I had been in office a few years I was quite satisfied I was on the right track, and I had no hesitation in tackling the task to such an extent that I made a reduction of £16,000 in one year; and I did it in the face of severe criticism, and I say now there is not a person during last year who should have received treatment who was, through the economy I effected, turned away from any hospital. That is only a sample of the work Ministers have had to face during the past four years. After four years' experience I am quite convinced that it is very foolish to change Ministries any oftener than is necessary. Naturally when a Minister first goes into office it takes him some time before he is satisfied that certain things can be done. Of course he must be under the guidance, to a great extent, of the permanent officials; but when he has been a couple of years in office, if he has made a close study of his work, as Ministers of this Government have done, he should be in a position to take a strong hand and say what can and what cannot be done. That is the position taken up by the present Government and the result is, as you know, that to-day for the first time for some six years a surplus is shown in the financial position of the State. I claim with all modesty that the credit of that state of affairs goes to the Government, for Ministers, one and all, devoted their time—I venture to say more time than has ever been devoted hitherto—to the details of the working of their departments. The good result in the financial position of the State will prove of enormous benefit to the country. In regard to a question upon which there has been a good deal said, and which is pro-

minently mentioned in the Speech, that of immigration, I desire to take this opportunity of paying a tribute to the very hard work, the grand work, the Premier did for this State during his visit to the old country. When he left here he was not enjoying the very best of health, and he went away as much for a change as anything else; but I am afraid he did not study himself, but worked even harder while in England than he did here. However, it was all to the great benefit of this country. During his stay in England the Premier gave the immigration policy of the Government a great fillip, and the result is that we are receiving an increased number of immigrants by every Orient boat since his visit. In order to encourage and further assist immigration it has been decided to create a separate department of immigration under the Colonial Secretary. That has been put into force this week. It has also been decided to add to that branch a tourists' agency. This is not, one might say, a tourist's country in the same sense as, perhaps, New Zealand is, but we have in this State many very nice pleasure resorts which can be opened up and which we might be able to induce people to visit. It must be remembered that we have a constant stream of people passing to and from the old country, and if we can organise a department to offer these people facilities to stay here, to say to them that if they stay here for a while we can show them such and such interesting places at such and such a cost, the chances are that we shall get the people to tour the country. If this result is achieved the country will not be the loser. For that reason the tourist agency has been added to the Department of Immigration.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What will the tourist agency cost?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The cost will not be very great. The printing will probably come to a couple of hundred pounds a year, while there will be one officer in addition to the ordinary clerks in the Immigration office. The total expenditure should not be more than £500 or £600 a year for a begin-

ning. I am sure that even by the end of the first year a direct profit will be shown, because on issuing coupons and organising tours there is always a commission given, which goes to the credit of the department. We have taken over the Caves Board, and the tours in connection therewith will in future be worked by the department. In the issuing of coupons and organising the tours last year a profit of several hundreds of pounds was made. It can, therefore, be well understood that there will be sufficient direct profit to meet the extra cost; while the indirect profit, by means of the traffic on the railways and by people being brought here and shown our resources, will be very considerable. With regard to immigrants, it has been said in another place and published in the Press, that we are bringing people here who are undesirable and for whom there is no room. Such is not the case. If we turn to the returns of our Labour Bureau we find that in March last for country work some 600 men were wanted but only 298 were available. For the next month there were 373 wanted and only 265 were available.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: What were the wages?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The wages are published side by side with the applications; they were of the very best, ranging from 25s. a week to £2 a week for farm labourers, with board, or 8s., 9s., 10s., and in one or two instances 11s. a day to men for clearing. There is no fault to find with the wages. In June 300 men were wanted and only 264 were available; while in July, the month just closed, 265 were wanted and only 218 were available. When one remembers that July falls in the depth of winter and that there is nothing much doing in the country in that month it is surprising that as many as 265 men were wanted in the country and that only 218 were available. That shows the absolute necessity for doing everything we can, for the sake of the settlement of the land, to see that as many suitable immigrants as possible are brought in, as the demand for labour will increase very considerably in the country during the spring

months. I am only speaking now of country labour, but in addition to that a great number of men were found work in the towns. However, I can confine my remarks to the country labour, for the policy of the Government has been only to induce the farm labourers and the domestic servant. Mr. Dodd interjected to-night that there was no need to assist the farm labourer as if we brought the farmer here the farm labourer would soon follow. I do not agree with that. Surely if we assist to settle people on the land we must do all we possibly can to give them the necessary labour, more particularly when they are willing to pay the very best wages. There is no difficulty whatever for these men to obtain employment.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: You mistook my meaning; I was referring to Mr. Wilding's statement that there was no need to assist any other kind of labour.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There has been no class of labour assisted except the farm labourer. Something has been said about dissatisfied immigrants. During the last 12 months 2,000 immigrants have been assisted, and I would ask members whether they have heard of 20 dissatisfied immigrants. That would only be one per cent. If one were to select 2,000 persons in the old country to work would one be dissatisfied if out of that large number 20 did not turn out as well as was expected? But there is just this difference in this country. While in Canada everyone seems to try and help the immigration policy, in Western Australia there appears to be a desire on the part of certain people and even members of Parliament. I regret to say, when dissatisfied immigrants appear, instead of trying to make them satisfied, pleasure is taken in making public the fact that these men are dissatisfied. Then their cases are taken up by the Press in the Eastern States and the old country, and that kind of thing, of course, retards our efforts considerably.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: Can the Minister give any idea of what immigration cost during the last 12 months?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The

report of the Immigration Department will be laid on the Table of the House shortly, and I think the hon. member will find the information he wants in that.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I notice that the excess of arrivals over departures, according to the statistics in 1909, was 1,100.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: More assisted immigrants than that came in. What I wish to say is that the conditions under which immigrants have to work are very different from what they were years ago when the bulk of the population came to Australia from overseas. At the present time if a man cannot get just exactly the position that he wants, and at the shortest notice, there is immediately a cry that the immigration policy is wrong. With regard to another matter mentioned in the Speech—the freezing works at Wyndham—I am quite aware of the difficulties concerning the water supply. Of course, it is not to be supposed that these works will be put there until such a difficulty has been overcome and a permanent water supply has been obtained. The main thing, however, is to put them somewhere. Mr. Drew in speaking criticised the proposed works and thought that the wealthy pastoralists should construct them. But I would point out that the freezing works are not for the wealthy pastoralists at all. It is probably unknown to a great many members that a majority of the pastoralists in the Kimberleys are not wealthy men, but small and poor pastoralists. At the present time they are standing still, their holdings are not producing anything, their cattle are unsaleable, the market is limited, and the supply of meat from the far North is entirely in the hands of two or three big firms.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: And they are controlled by the shipping companies.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is so. I know of my own knowledge of dozens of small squatters in the Kimberleys who own from 10,000 to 20,000 head of cattle and who have not been able to sell during the last year or two sufficient to pay working expenses on their stations. I know of other instances where they have small overdrafts, and although they have

10,000 or 15,000 head of cattle they have not been able to sell enough to pay interest on their small overdrafts. The freezing works will be a boon to these people, because they will be able to take their bullocks there. There will be another advantage. A great proportion of the Kimberleys is not settled at all. There is beautiful pastoral country there, but there is no inducement, for the reason I have mentioned, to settle that country. If there is a market for the small man that country will be taken up and it will bring revenue to the State in the shape of rents from the holdings. At the present time it would be madness to take up areas there because there is no market for the stock. The Government, becoming alive to these facts, were induced to erect freezing works at Wyndham, or at some other suitable place in that part of the State. I might mention that the Government have made a departure in the way of cattle stations; they are trying an experiment, and one that I hope will prove successful. The protection and the care of the natives in this State comes under my control at the present time. There has been a good deal of money spent on the natives, and notwithstanding that, there has followed a great amount of trouble between the squatters on the Kimberleys and the aborigines, especially as the result of the latter spearing cattle. We find all the gaols in the far North are crowded with natives convicted principally of the crime of cattle spearing. The Government decided, after giving the question great consideration, to try an experiment. They have purchased at Nicholson's Range, some 25 miles east of Hall's Creek, three small stations which hold about 10,000 head of cattle, and it is intended to work those stations for the benefit of the natives only. The cost of working them will be small, and all the natives around will be allowed to go on the station and live there, and while sufficient meat will be killed for their requirements, the surplus fat bullocks will be sold. Vegetables will also be grown at this place sufficient for the purpose of the natives.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: You will have these natives travelling round Perth in motor cars soon.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the natives can get an idea that the station is their own, it will, I hope, in time prevent further spearing of cattle which belong to the pastoralists.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: The different tribes will not fraternise.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is intended to take young cattle from these three stations and go out into other country and open up other stations for the same purpose. This will not only reduce the cost of the maintenance of the gaols, and the cost of the police force, but will help to open up and civilise and settle this far Northern country. It is an experiment, and one that I think will be very satisfactory, both in the way of reducing the cost of the upkeep of our gaols, and in the better treatment of the natives. If the experiment does not prove successful there will be no loss to the Government, because the stations have been bought at a ridiculously low price. Only 30s. per head has been paid for the bullocks, and all the station equipment has been given in, so that when the freezing works are built the cattle will be worth the money paid for them, and if the experiment should prove a failure, the cattle can be sold and no loss will be made. During the recess I paid a visit to the North-West, going as far as Derby. I went purely on departmental business to look into the care and protection of the aborigines, and also to open some new lighthouses, and generally look into the affairs coming directly under the control of the Colonial Secretary. My friend, Captain Laurie, touched on a matter that I would like to say a few words about, that is the erection of grain sheds at Fremantle. There has been a good deal said during this debate with regard to the question of whether the Government were wise in allowing the Harbour Trust to build those grain sheds. Although Mr. Hamersley, who is a wheat farmer, talked very glibly in regard to the shipment of wheat in bulk, it is a very big question indeed.

It is a question that probably, as Mr. Laurie says, will come about in time; but there is a very big expenditure involved, and a great deal of consideration required.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Yes, even for the farmer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To do the thing properly you must begin right at the farms. The farmer has to get a particular wagon in which to cart his bulk wheat to the train, and elevators must be provided at every siding, while special rolling stock will require to be built for the traffic: on top of which, of course, we must have elevators at the ship. Then, as if that were not sufficient, we want a special ship to carry the grain. All this had consideration by myself in conjunction with the Harbour Trust before anything was decided upon. The point that had to be faced was this: It was not a method to be adopted straight off, but one more likely to be adopted, if at all, during the next five or six years. We had to ship 50,000 tons of wheat and, next year it is estimated that the quantity will be considerably over 100,000 tons. There was barely time to make any provision for the handling of that wheat, and, therefore, the sheds and handling appliances had to be gone on with at once, and there was no time to go into the question of whether or not the wheat should be handled in bulk. But even if, after a lapse of four or five years, it be decided to ship wheat in bulk, very little of the expense incurred at North Fremantle will be lost. And in any case, even if the bulk method were to be resolved upon, probably for the next 10 years its adoption would only be partial. Take the Argentine to-day: There the greater part of the wheat is brought down to the ships in bags and is taken from the bags and put into the ships in bulk. Now if that system were adopted in Western Australia the present shed and handling appliances would be required just as much as they are to-day. In order to show the difficulties surrounding this question I may mention that in South Australia a Royal Commission sat for 20 months

considering the matter. And this is the summary of the Commission's report—

Among the advantages claimed for the system of bulk handling are:—

(a) Saving in the use of bags; (b) cheaper handling between the farm and the export wharf; (c) expeditious loading of boats and cheaper sea freights; (d) expeditious use of railway rolling stock; (e) higher prices through grading and better cleaning. The principal objections urged against the adopting of the system are:—(a) Its great initial cost; (b) Unsuitability of vessels now used for carrying wheat; (c) Uncertainty as to whether the grain will carry satisfactorily in bulk from Australia.

That is the point. As Mr. Laurie has said, it is not at all certain that wheat can be carried satisfactorily in bulk from Australia to the home markets. The report continues—

(d) Insufficient quantity exported to justify the installation of the system; (e) the hostile attitude of shippers; (f) the limited number of foreign ports possessing facilities for handling wheat in bulk. After a careful review of the pros and cons your Commissioners feel that, while the case for the adoption of the bulk handling system is strong, they would not be justified in recommending its installation forthwith. The unfriendly attitude of the wheat shippers, the fact that the securing of an adequate shipping provision would take a considerable time, and the need for completely demonstrating that the questions of insurance, conveyance on the ocean, condition of the grain, rates of sea freight, delivery at the other end, and the price obtainable for graded wheat, present no substantial difficulty, convince us that the time is not yet ripe for a full institution of bulk handling methods.

That was the finding of a Royal Commission sitting in South Australia for 20 months. I only mention it to bring before hon. members the difficulties to be met in considering this question. It is a very big problem indeed, and one that I notice has been touched upon

in the Press by correspondents who are prepared to deal with it in a very few lines. I simply make these remarks in explanation of the Government's action in having these wheat sheds built at North Fremantle. In regard to the mining industry I notice certain hon. members, principally Mr. Brimage, inferring that the Government are not dealing fairly by the goldfields and the gold mining industry. Mr. Brimage went on to say that he was not at all jealous of the attention being given to the agricultural industry; but I think, although he may have been unconscious of it, there was an element of jealousy in his feelings. Nothing has been said to show that the Government have altered their attitude towards the goldfields, or that the gold mining industry is treated any worse to-day than it has been during the past 10 years. Principally in the development of goldfields come railways and water supplies. In regard to railways the Government certainly cannot be accused of not attending to the requirements of the goldfields. The railways constructed and under construction by the Moore Government total 733 miles, of which the goldfields railways aggregate 373 miles at a cost of £662,000. Those in other parts of the State have a length of 360 miles, or 13 miles less than those of the goldfields, while the cost has been £623,000, or £40,000 less than the amount spent on the goldfields lines. There have been the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe, the Coolgardie-Norseman, the Mount Magnet-Sandstone, the Port Hedland-Marble Bar, and the Nannine-Meekatharra railways constructed by the Moore Government in furtherance of a policy of developing the mining industry—surely not a bad record. It will be seen that whatever may be said in regard to assistance given to agriculture and the building of agricultural railways, just as much has been done for the goldfields during the last four years. Then again in regard to water supply. One member was rather severe in his criticism in regard to the treatment of the goldfields in reference to water supply. I find that last year there was £30,000 spent on

the goldfields on water supply, and that since 1901 the expenditure on water supply on the goldfields has been £248,000.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Apart from the Goldfields Water Supply?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am glad the hon. member has reminded me. I am leaving out of account altogether the Goldfields Water Supply. When I mention £30,000 it is covered entirely by dams, wells, etcetera throughout the goldfields, apart altogether from the Goldfields Water Supply; and the £248,000 has been spent on the goldfields in the development of water supplies. Interest and working expenses on that sum would represent £189,000, and the revenue received was only £92,000, showing a net loss of £97,000 on water supplies for the goldfields, on the expenditure provided from the vote for the development of goldfields.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Can you give any estimate of the revenue derived from the goldfields as compared with the rest of the State during that period?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; I am not prepared at the moment to give the total revenue; I am pointing out the amount spent on water supplies and assisting new goldfields. Notwithstanding there has been a deficiency of £597,000 no reasonable request has been refused, and this is clearly shown by the fact that £30,000 was spent last year in this direction. Now the country from Ravensthorpe, Norseman, and Southern Cross right up to Sandstone and including the outside districts like Mulline has been connected up with water supplies, such as wells and dams. This is a sufficient reply to hon. members who have stated that nothing is done for the prospector. Again, at the latest discovery at Tanami, wells have been put down between there and Hall's Creek, so that if that goldfield develops, though it is in South Australia, Western Australia will get the benefit of the trade. Speaking of Tanami I am rather reminded of a remark made by Mr. Kingsmill to-night which is very true. Mr. Brimage in speaking of the goldfields always seems to think that anything not done on the

Eastern Goldfields is not done for the mining industry. Surely other goldfields are entitled to some consideration as well as the Eastern Goldfields?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The hon. member is not here to defend a statement of that kind.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is a very wise remark made generally, I think.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I certainly think it is not a proper representation of the hon. member's views.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Again, every facility is offered by the Minister for Mines for cheap crushing. Also in regard to assisting the prospector, we find that the prospector can hold 18 acres for 18 months without paying any rent. In no other part of Australia is a prospector treated in that way. It is to the credit of Mr. Gregory, the present Minister, that he brought in this system of free prospecting areas, of which 845 are held representing an area of 12,465 acres without any rent ever being asked or paid for them. Again where public batteries are not available thirty private batteries are subsidised, and at these batteries 30,000 tons of ore were crushed last year at a cost to the State of 1s. 5½d. per ton. By the end of 1909 there were 35 State mills, and since then batteries have been provided at Marble Bar and Mt. Sir Samuel. The capital cost of the State mills has been £282,000. The receipts from the State plants have amounted to £695,634 and the expenditure to £727,857, showing a deficiency of £32,223. These mills have crushed since their inception 735,000 tons of ore for 764,000 ozs. of gold, or over an ounce of gold to the ton, and having a value of £3,283,119. That is money produced in the State and assistance given to the prospector that will bear favourable comparison to that given in any part of the world. I point this out merely in justice to the Government and in justice to myself as representative of a goldfields province when it has been said that nothing has been done for the mining industry.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: No one said that nothing had been done.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not say that; but, rather by inference than by direct statement, certain members would have us believe that the mining industry was not receiving fair treatment at the present time. Now, in regard to the crushing charges, the hon. member said that the crushing charges were something like 10s. per ton. Taking last month's statement of the public batteries operations during June, I find that the crushing at the Menzies public battery cost 5s. 2d. and that the department's charges to the customers were 8s. 2d. Let me say that most of the batteries crush by the hour, and if they get the quantity of stone they can crush a great deal cheaper than if they are only kept going a third of their capacity which, unfortunately, they have only been doing lately. I do not wish to go any further into this matter. I think I have said sufficient to show that everything possible has been done for the prospector, and in the future everything possible will be done for him. I think, however, credit ought to be given to the Government that this assistance is given. If we take these public batteries we find the amount spent on them to the end of 1909 was £275,000. Interest on that amount is £86,000, and the losses in working and interest amount to £105,000. If we add depreciation, which is £152,000, it shows a loss of £273,000. If we wish to make interest on that money we would have to increase the crushing charge by 2s. 6d. a ton; that would represent £86,000. The batteries, however, are not asked to make interest, so the crushing charge is kept down by 2s. 6d. a ton. In other words it is £86,000 in assistance to the prospector to crush his ore cheaply. Let me say again the assistance given to prospectors by the present Government will compare favourably with the assistance given in any other part of the world. I know, unfortunately, that to-day mining in Western Australia is not fashionable, and because it is not and capital is not flowing in people are apt to blame the Government for not giving assistance. It is not possible for any more assistance to be given

to the mining industry than the Government are giving it now. Ten or twelve years ago mining, so far as Western Australia was concerned, was very fashionable, for a large amount of capital for mines floated in, and whether the mine was a good one or not no difficulty was experienced in getting it floated. As a matter of fact sometimes too much capital came in, for the people who put money in did not even question the value of the properties in which their money was invested. Now, however, that capital has ceased to flow. This is not due to any neglect on the part of the Government, or to any want of assistance given to the industry by them. Another rather peculiar statement made during the debate was in regard to the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie being under the control of the Mines Department. If there is one thing goldfields members should rejoice in it is the fact that the School of Mines is under the direct control of that Department. What would happen if it were under the Education Department, as the hon. member suggested? The result would undoubtedly be that in time the School of Mines, would become more or less a technical school. The Mines Department, however, have control of a School of Mines which is of the greatest benefit to Kalgoorlie and to the mining industry generally. Surely for having adopted this course the Government should receive praise from a goldfields member rather than condemnation. With regard to the question of assisting the prospectors we find that under the Mines Development Act there has been no less a sum than £1,450,000 spent on the development of the goldfields out of Loan votes alone, not to speak of assistance given to prospectors under the Mines Development Vote.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does the Colonial Secretary consider that a paragraph of six lines in the Governor's Speech is doing justice to the big mining industry?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the member looks at the Speech he will find that more than six lines are devoted to the subject, but no amount of space devoted in the Speech to the

industry will assist it. What is contained in the Speech is principally the programme of work to be carried out during the session. It is no argument that because one-half, one-third, or one-fourth of the Speech is not taken up in mentioning mining that the subject is neglected. The Government cannot do more for the industry than they are doing. They continue to assist the prospector and the small mine-owner. Surely that is not a matter to be stated in the Governor's Speech.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Are not the Government following the lead of those people who consider mining in Western Australia to be unfashionable?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Surely that cannot be suggested in view of the statement I have made as to the assistance which is given to the industry in the shape of water supplies, advancing money to prospectors under the Mines Development Act, loaning prospectors camels, and, in fact, assistance in every possible way. Mention has been made of the officials who have been appointed in the Agricultural Department as showing that more attention is paid to agriculture than to mining. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Agricultural Department is new compared with the Mines Department, and, therefore, it is necessary that certain high officials should be appointed, such as the Director of Agriculture and the fruit expert. It is argued that because no corresponding appointments to these have been made of late in the Mines Department therefore the mining industry is neglected. That argument will not hold water for one moment, for appointments in the Mines Department, corresponding to those I have referred to in the Agricultural Department, were made years ago, when such officials as the State Mining Engineer and the Government Geologist were chosen. I could say a great deal more in regard to this particular question but I am afraid I would be taking the risk of wearying members if I did so at this late hour. There are one or two other matters, however, I wish to refer to briefly. Remarks were made by Mr. Dodd in connection with

the Arbitration Act. I regret to say that the working of that Act has not been altogether a success, but the complaint made by the hon. member was one as to the hardship experienced in getting cases before the Arbitration Court. I was rather disappointed in his remarks in that respect, because I expected from the position he is occupying that we would have received some suggestions from him as to how the Act should be amended in order to provide that the awards of the court were better carried out than is the case at present. Undoubtedly the weakness in the Act now is the carrying out of the awards of the court. I know that lately, according to the statement of the President, a weakness has been referred to, that is the difficulty that exists in getting a dispute brought before the court. That matter is receiving attention, but at the same time I think a more important matter is to devise means whereby the parties to these disputes should be made to carry out the awards given by the court. I do not wish to delay the House longer.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about those children?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: With regard to the small matter which the hon. member mentioned, as to a grant to a very deserving society, I can only say I have the greatest regard for the work that society is carrying out, and that in the coming Estimates the question of making a grant will receive the best consideration in order to see whether some assistance cannot be afforded. I desire to thank members for the hearing they have given me, and for the generous criticism with which the Speech has been received.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

ADJOURNMENT—STATE OF BUSINESS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): I think it will meet the wishes of members if I move the adjournment until Tuesday, the 6th September. I will do so because it is not

proposed to introduce a great number of Bills into this House this session for the simple reason that, I think, we would be wasting time, remembering that there are such measures as the Health Bill, the Licensing Bill, the Redistribution of Seats Bill, and a few minor Bills to be got through in another place. I hope the other place will be sufficiently advanced by the time we meet again to keep us going. This adjournment will obviate the necessity for country members to come a long distance for, perhaps, a day's sitting a week. I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Tuesday, the 6th September.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th August, 1910.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: 1, Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into charges made by Mr. A. A. Wilson against the trustees of the Collie Coal Mines Accident Relief Fund Trust. 2, Return showing accidents to guards and shunters in the Railway Department.

QUESTION—UNCHARTED ROCK, "PERICLES" WRECK.

Mr. MURPHY asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to continue the search for the rock upon which the "Pericles" is supposed to have struck? 2, If so, will the Government, in keeping with the importance of the danger to human lives and the amount of private property concerned, commence the research as soon as possible?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Government have requested that one of the vessels of the Australian Fleet be despatched to thoroughly examine the waters in the vicinity of the position given by the master of the "Pericles" as to where the ship struck; all that was possible having already been done by the Government with the appliances available to find the rock. 2, The Government are awaiting a reply to the communication referred to from His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT OFFICES RENTED.

Mr. KEENAN asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the total rental paid or payable by the State Government for offices rented in the city of Perth for the use of State Government institutions? 2, What provision, if any, is made in respect of such tenancies for surrender of same?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, £1,850 per annum. 2, All these tenancies, with the exception of the following, are terminable on either one week's or one month's notice:—Taxation Department offices, 30th September, 1911. Charities Department and Children's Court, 31st October, 1911. Stores Department's offices, 6 months' notice.

QUESTION—TREASURY FUNDS, INTEREST.

Mr. KEENAN asked the Treasurer: 1, Has he entered into negotiations with any bank or banks carrying on business in Western Australia to take on deposit for a fixed period or otherwise moneys now in his hands as Colonial Treasurer? 2,