

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

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

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

House adjourned at 8.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th July, 1913.

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

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

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

in future to give a little more time by asking for questions to be put on the Notice Paper two days ahead.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it that the Premier's reference is to questions 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The PREMIER: It applies to all the questions on the Notice Paper. I ask that they be postponed until to-morrow.

BILLS (9)—FIRST READING.

1. Land Valuation (introduced by the Premier).

2. Land and Income Tax (introduced by the Premier).

3. Mines Regulation (introduced by the Minister for Mines).

4. Rights in Water and Irrigation (introduced by the Minister for Works).

5. Traffic (introduced by the Minister for Works).

6. Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Amendment (introduced by the Minister for Works).

7. Public Works Committee (introduced by the Minister for Works).

8. Wagon Agricultural Hall Transfer (introduced by the Minister for Lands).

9. Legal Practitioners' Amendment (introduced by Mr. Hudson).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. LAYMAN leave of absence for one month granted to the hon. member for Claremont (Mr. Wisdom) on the ground of urgent private business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I am sorry I was not ready yesterday to proceed with the debate on the Address-in-reply. One hon. member interjected that I had had a month in which to consider the Speech which had been placed in the mouth of His Excellency the Governor. That is quite true, but unfortunately when one is holiday-making it seems to be incongruous to have to study up politics to

get sufficient information for a speech in this Chamber, and therefore I left the matter alone until my return to the State. However, since the House adjourned last night I have carefully perused His Excellency's Speech and given study to the different matters therein announced, in the opinion of Ministers, I presume, for the advancement of the State of Western Australia. I will endeavour as briefly as possible to place before the House my views on what I take to be the salient features of that Speech, and of course I must indulge to some extent in a criticism of the policy of my friends opposite, who hold the Treasury bench. The Governor's Speech should be, of course, a synopsis of the twelve months' progress made owing to the actions of a majority of Parliament headed by the Government in power. It should be also our warranty for future progress and the future prosperity of the people of Western Australia. I must say at once that the Premier's vainglorious boast, made the other day when addressing the company at a complimentary banquet or dinner given to Mr. McCallum, namely, that he would before long such a tale unfold of what the Government had done that even his most ardent supporters would be astounded, made me look to the Governor's Speech for a wondrous tale of past progress and dazzling promises for the future. I have looked in vain. They are not there. This boast of the Premier's reminds me also of that memorable utterance by the Premier at Jandakot in 1912, shortly after taking office, when he said that the Government had given consideration to great questions, and he would venture to assert that in the near future they would startle those opposed to them. You will notice, Mr. Speaker, the similarity of those two expressions used by the Premier. He was to astound his supporters, as, two years ago, he was to startle his opponents. We have been waiting to be startled, and we are now waiting to be astounded; that is, in regard to what the Government have done in the past and propose to do in the near future. Of course, I must admit I have been startled to a very considerable extent by the way the affairs of this State have

been drifting under the management, or shall I say mismanagement, of the Premier and his colleagues. These statements made by the Premier are the statements of one who is attempting to sway public opinion by bluff and by bounce. They are the statements of a boaster rather than the mature utterances of a responsible Minister of the Crown who realises his responsibility to the King and to the people whose destinies he controls at the present time. There are, of course, in this Speech of His Excellency the Governor, which has been placed in his hands by responsible Ministers, several matters that, I think, we may congratulate the Government upon for having placed therein. However, they are few and far between, I am sorry to say. First of all, of course, I can join with the expressions of congratulation on the appointment of His Excellency Sir Harry Barron to succeed our late Governor, His Excellency Sir Gerald Strickland. I believe we have a very worthy representative of His Majesty in the present Governor of the State. I can also congratulate the Government on the re-appointment of the Agent General in London, Sir Newton Moore, who has done excellent service for his native country, not only in this Parliament during the time he presided over the country's destinies, but also during the years he has filled the post of Agent General in London.

Mr. Green: More spoils to the victors.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I cannot think that the Government could have done better than to re-appoint that hon. gentleman to the position he has so worthily filled during the last few years. At any rate, the eulogies passed on Sir Newton Moore's work by our Premier after jaunting in other lands, serve to show that Sir Newton Moore is the right man in the right place. I can also congratulate the Government and the people of the State on the splendid rains referred to in the Speech, rains which, though late in coming, have certainly been beneficial, and which I hope assure a good harvest in the coming season. The rest of the Speech is somewhat too indefinite to give much hope of that rapid advancement

which we all wish to see in Western Australia, and which means so much to a young country like ours. We have indefinite statements as to what has been done during the past, and many ambiguous references to what is proposed to be done in the future, and these do not convey, to my mind at any rate, anything in the nature of a warranty, which ought to be contained in the Speech, that much effort and energy and assistance are going to be given by the members of the present Government to the individual citizens of our State in advancing their prosperity and their prospects. It seems to me rather that Ministers are bent on prosecuting State socialistic enterprises in competition with our own people, regardless of the fact that the country's prosperity is certainly founded upon the individual prosperity of its citizens. The first duty of a Government, whether Labour or Liberal, is to give the fullest facilities for the expansion of the enterprises of our own citizens; but we find on every hand the object of the Government is not only to interfere and compete with the individual citizens, but to extract from the pockets of our people the money wherewith to carry out those very questionable enterprises. I shall endeavour later on to point out that we are drifting into very dangerous waters, and that if something is not done quickly to stop this drift we shall find ourselves in a very straitened position, and the State will suffer accordingly. I should like to point out—indeed it goes almost without saying—that £1,000 of private capital introduced into a new country like Western Australia is worth thousands of borrowed money, for which the State is responsible, invested in questionable enterprises such as we are embarking upon. The experience which we have had during the last twelve or eighteen months in connection with our State steamers ought, I submit, to have been a warning to members of the present Government. They ought from their experience culled in the running of the steamers—notwithstanding the great promises of success when the service was inaugurated, how they were to reduce the cost of living, and the cost of meat, how

they were going to encourage our small cattle growers, to give them an outlet for their stock, how they were going to run these steamers, if not with profit, at any rate without loss—the experience they have had of a very substantial loss during the last twelve months ought to have been a warning to them to be cautious before proceeding further with those enterprises. We find £60,000 revenue has been collected by our State Steamship Department during the last twelve months, while on the other side we have £86,000 expenditure, or a loss of £26,000 between the cash expenditure shown by the Treasury returns and the cash revenue collected for this service. And to this we have to add depreciation on these vessels and interest upon the capital expended. Depreciation on steamers such as we have purchased for our service is a pretty considerable figure, and I venture to think that 10 per cent. or even 15 per cent. per annum would be none too much to write off in depreciation on the class of vessels which the Government in their wisdom have purchased. If you add that to the cash loss shown by the Treasury returns you have an enormous deficit; and this is on the first State enterprise entered into on behalf of the people by a socialistic Government. And the worst aspect of this case is that the small grower has not benefited one iota, has not save a single five-pound note, because of the inauguration of the steamship service, while the consumer has not obtained his meat any cheaper than the ordinary fluctuations of the market have permitted in the past. A great problem cannot be solved by petty means, and the establishment of meat stalls at Fremantle and Subiaco—and now, through the influence of the member for Kalgoorlie, I presume at Kalgoorlie—will only further increase the Government's financial embarrassment without giving the people of the State one penny benefit. I am sorry for the manager, Mr. Sudholz, whose appointment, it is a matter of history, was made for services rendered to the Honorary Minister during his electioneering campaign. He was doomed from the start.

He never had an opportunity of making a success of the venture.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I wish the leader of the Opposition to withdraw that statement. Mr. Sudholz never assisted me in a campaign in his life.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in rising. There is no point of order involved. The leader of the Opposition is perfectly within his right in making a statement of that kind.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Whether it is true or not? He knows it is not true. Anyhow I have got my statement in.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I can quite understand the hon. member's objection. He knows full well that Mr. Sudholz was an ardent supporter of his.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Nothing of the kind. He never supported me in his life.

Mr. Thomas: Why don't you be manly?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That remark must be withdrawn.

Mr. Thomas: I withdraw.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The public knows he was an ardent supporter of the Honorary Minister, and it is undoubted to my way of thinking, and in my opinion, and it is common talk, that the appointment was secured because of services so rendered.

Mr. Lewis: You gave a civil servant a holiday to try and get a Minister into Parliament.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He was doomed from the start. If he was a good officer, with bad tools he cannot make a success of his work.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Is that the reason your clique is on to the man?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I belong to no clique. I wish I had a clique such as the hon. member has round him. If I had a clique as substantially strong as the hon. member has, I would be sitting on the Treasury bench and he would be sitting in Opposition to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): No, you would not. You would be further out than you are.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It does not matter. If you give a man bad tools, however capable he may be, he has an impossible task. The Ministry are to be blamed for having bought such ships that no man could make pay, although some men might minimise the expenses. The Treasurer took me to task for criticising the crack vessel the "Western Australia," otherwise known as the "Mongolia." He said I criticised it without having seen the vessel. I venture to say that I have made a more critical examination of the vessel than the Minister has ever done. I went through that vessel from stem to stern.

The Minister for Lands: You have never been near it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I went right through that vessel from stem to stern; into the so-called engine room and all, and I spent two hours on board of her.

Mr. Lewis: Were you any wiser afterwards?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think the Minister ought now to withdraw his statement that I had not been on the vessel or near it.

The Minister for Lands: I still say you have never been near it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The chief engineer accompanied me down below and into the stoke hole and the captain I met, if I remember aright, after I came on deck and I had tea with him. Some other people came on board and I then went away. I was there from eleven o'clock till one o'clock and then I went to luncheon on another steamer alongside the wharf, and I say unhesitatingly that there was never a more unsuitable steamer purchased by any Government for the tropical trade in which it is engaged.

The Premier: What do you know about steamers?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Seeing that I spent a considerable number of years, not only in steamship offices and in the management of steamships, also in the manufacture of marine engines and boilers and the fitting of vessels and machinery, which includes a considerable

amount of ship-building, I venture to say I am as capable of pitting my opinion against that of the Ministers who now so scathingly denounce my criticism. The lack of experience of Ministers, which they are displaying in a very full measure at the present time has led them into the belief that it only required the benediction of the Government to bring success to vessels which had previously been discarded by private owners, hence they rushed in and purchased vessels, on whose authority I know not.

The Premier: Yes, you do.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Which are eminently unsuitable for the trade and which no steamship manager could make a success of no matter what salary he is paid or what experience he has had. What guarantee have we that any other State enterprise will not be equally disastrous?

Mr. Heitmann: The railways, for instance.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, they are getting pretty near it under the mismanagement of my friends opposite. I tremble at what the result will be if they remain in office much longer. What guarantee have we that the other State enterprises on which these gentlemen are embarking will not be equally disastrous as the State Steamship Service. One portion of His Excellency's Speech tells us that good progress has been made with the erection of State sawmills, yet the Premier told me in reply to a question yesterday that the contract between his Government and the Federal Government, has not yet been signed, for the sleepers for which these sawmills are apparently being erected to cut. He will remember that about twelve months ago I asked him if it would not be wiser to have the contract completed, sealed, signed and delivered before committing the country to the enormous expenditure which undoubtedly would have to take place—and I shall show directly that he cannot carry out the contract he proposes to enter into. Why has that contract been submitted to the Crown Law authorities by the Federal Government? Presumably it is to test its validity, so

that they expect trouble. Possibly we may expect a repudiation of the contract which has certainly been signed by the Minister for Works, but which is still incomplete so far as the Commonwealth Government are concerned. Why did not the Premier see that his friend the Labour Prime Minister of the Commonwealth signed that contract months ago? Why did not the Minister for Lands, when he went to the Eastern States to barter away the State's Savings Bank in order that he might get some little financial assistance, and came back with £100,000, why did he not see then, when he travelled to Melbourne, that the State's interests were duly protected and that this contract was completed, seeing that it pledged the country to a considerable amount of money? Ministers have shown a pretty sad lack of business acumen and certainly administrative ability in neglecting this one main feature that before you embark your capital you ought to have a contract signed so that there is no getting out of it. Supposing the contract is not signed, what is the position we are in to-day? Supposing the contract is not signed, and we are expending £150,000 on sawmills, how is the Premier going to employ that machinery?

The Premier: I have a better opinion of the Liberals than you have.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member should take his gruel kindly. What is the nature of the contract that the Premier has undertaken to carry out? I understand that the contract has been signed by the Minister for Works and it specifies the delivery of a certain number of powellised karri sleepers after the end of the year. After December next the Government have undertaken to deliver 30,000 sleepers at both ends of the Transcontinental Railway line per month. Sixty thousand sleepers have to be delivered per month for use on the Transcontinental Railway line: 30,000 at Port Augusta and 30,000 in this State. That is in January next. The size of the sleepers is 9 x 10 x 5, they contain 37½ super feet each, or 16 sleepers equal one load of 50 cubic feet of timber, so that we have this position: that 3,750

loads of sawn sleepers have to be provided and delivered each month after December next. Everyone who has been engaged in the timber industry knows that if you cut a load of sleepers out of karri trees, you will get approximately a load of other timber, such as scantling, in the process. The capacity of the mills therefore required to carry out the contract must be equal to 7,500 loads of sawn timber per month, or 300 loads per day counting 25 working days per month. That is the limit you can get month in and month out. Of course I admit the Government might give instructions to burn all timber outside the sleepers and get an increased output thereby, but I do not think even the socialistic government represented by my friends opposite would contemplate the sacrifice of good timber as that would entail, to say nothing of facing a certain loss in such a process. This means that we ought to have six mills of the capacity equal to the Dwellingup mill which was established for the requirements of our Railway Department and which has cost this State anything up to £40,000, as the Minister for Works or the Minister for Railways will bear me out; or we ought to have nearly four mills equal in capacity to the Mornington establishment controlled by Millars' Trading Company and the cost of an establishment of that sort with all its branch railways, log lines, rolling stock, horses and jinkers, would run into approximately £100,000 if not more, so that the capital expenditure required to deal even moderately well with this contract ranges between £240,000 and £300,000. The Government are erecting mills at two different centres at the present time, and have been erecting these mills for the last twelve months with a total capacity at the outside of 150 loads per day—about half the quantity required to fulfil the contract which they hope the Federal Government will sign within the next few days. Even if these mills which the Government are at present erecting are completed by the end of the present year. I want to know what hope they have of giving the delivery they have taken on in January next. There is a penal clause attached to this contract naturally, as to all contracts, and if we

as a State, as the contractors, do not keep up to our delivery, and fail in delivering the quantity of sleepers we have undertaken to deliver, the Commonwealth can buy against the contractor in the open market. In other words, the Federal Government can buy at the risk and at the cost of the State Government, and can refuse to take delivery later of the shortage of sleepers delivered. Public opinion will not brook any delay in regard to the construction of the Trans-Australian Railway. All sides have urged the expeditious construction of this line.

Mr. Munsie: It took your side 10 years to think about it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It does not matter what my side took. This is much too risky an undertaking to be treated with levity in this respect. I might be as black as the hon. member can paint me, but that will not make members of the Government white in their administration. Public opinion will not brook any delay in the construction of the Trans-Australian railway. All sections of the community have demanded that that work shall be pushed on with all expedition and the recent occupant of the Department controlling the construction of these works imported track-laying machines with a capacity for laying 7 miles per day. Is it reasonable to suppose that the penal clause will not be enforced, or are we to come to the conclusion that the failure on the part of the State Government to comply with the conditions of the contract will be met by the most strict observation of the terms of the contract; and that the sleepers will be purchased against the Government of Western Australia, and that the Government will have to pay the difference, whatever it might be? Disaster is imminent; it is apparent that the Government will never be able to carry out the terms of the contract, and the country will suffer enormous loss in consequence.

Mr. Heitmann: Where will they purchase those sleepers. I wonder?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I understand that the hon. member's knowledge of an intricate question of this sort is so meagre

that he must, of necessity, make senseless interjections. I am not going to educate him on that point, to relieve his ignorance. The Government have entered into exactly the same mistake in connection with saw mills as they have with regard to their State steamers. They appoint a good man, and a decent enough man, although a supporter of the Premier. They have appointed decent men, good men so far as their limited experience goes. They have appointed Mr. Properjohn as general manager for this huge commercial undertaking. Mr. Properjohn is a white man, a good man in his capacity as millwright erecting these mills. Mr. Cummins, I believe, is also a good man. I do not know Mr. Cummins, but I know Mr. Properjohn. Mr. Properjohn is a good man and the right man to have charge as millwright, erecting these mills, but when you come to put this man into the managerial chair to control a vast commercial undertaking, to see that risks such as Ministers in their ignorance have embarked upon in the name of the State should be avoided, then we should not put a man whose qualifications are for supervising the erection of such mills into that chair but should get someone with a wider commercial knowledge. The total output of Millers' combined mills, 12 in number, is 160,000 loads per annum. The Government are attempting to produce over one half of the quantity of the output of these 12 mills, with mills of a capacity at the outside of 54,000 loads per annum. How can we expect anything but disaster to follow such maladministration, such lack of intelligence, such want of ordinary capacity for abstracting knowledge from those who are capable of giving it, such as has been evidenced by Ministers of the present Government, in handling this matter?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You want a halo put around your head.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier took exception to a statement by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) yesterday with regard to the royalty which will have to be paid for powellising under the agreement which was published, with-

out the Minister's sanction, in the Press a short time since.

Mr. George : And gave them a bad bilious attack, too.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The member for Northam said the Government would have to pay 2s. per 100 super. feet royalty on the sleepers to be provided for the Commonwealth portion of the Trans-Australian Railway. It seems to me that the Premier took exception to that statement without having read the terms of the agreement. Indeed, it would appear that he has not given that close attention the clauses of this marvellous agreement which the Minister for Works has signed, and which Executive Council has approved of in a very tardy manner some 16 months after it was completed, such close attention I say as the people in this State should expect to receive at his hands. Let me draw his attention to the clauses which deal with the amount to be paid in royalty, and I want to do so carefully because we have nothing to go on other than this published alleged copy of the agreement, and there has been no denial by the Minister as regards its accuracy. Here is the clause dealing with that matter—

And whereas the patentees made a proposal to the licensee to grant to the licensee full license and authority to treat, improve and preserve timber under and in accordance with the specification of the said letters patent for use, sale or other disposition within Western Australia, and also for export beyond Western Australia at the royalty of 2s. per one hundred superficial feet—

And whereas certain concessions have been given to that powellising company, notably an extension of timber country of some 15,000 acres and also a contract for a million powellised karri sleepers, at what price we know not as yet—

the patentees have agreed to allow a rebate of 1s. 3d. per one hundred superficial feet of the said royalty payable in respect of all timber treated under this agreement for the use and requirements of the said Government in Western Australia, thereby reducing such

royalty to 9d. per one hundred superficial feet—

Then later it goes on to say—

As from the expiration of the said recited indenture of July 15. 1908, the licensee shall, subject as hereinafter provided, during the continuance of this agreement, quarterly, namely on October 15, January 15, April 15 and July 15, in every year pay to the patentees a royalty for every one hundred superficial feet of timber treated by the licensee under the said patented process during the preceding three calendar months, at the following rates :—
(a) For all timber treated for the use and requirement of the said Government within the State, 9d. per one hundred superficial feet; (b) for all other timber so treated, 2s. per one hundred superficial feet.

Can anyone make any different meaning than the member for Northam put upon it that Ministers will have to pay 2s. per one hundred super. feet for the royalty for treating, by the powellising process, these sleepers to be supplied to the Commonwealth Government? Is the Premier going to argue that it is for the use of his Government that he has entered into this contract, when he sells the sleepers to the Federal Government? Will he argue that he can get these sleepers powellised at a royalty of 9d. per one hundred super. feet under the clauses I have read out, and which are presumably—

The Premier : Nobody ever asserted it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : It is quite true there is another clause which points out—

If at any time during the continuance of this agreement the royalty agreed to be paid by the Commonwealth to the patentees for treating by the said process timber used for the construction of the Transcontinental railway is less than two shillings per one hundred superficial feet, a similar reduction shall during such time be made by the patentees in the royalty to be paid by the Western Australian Government in respect of all timber treated by the

said process for use in the construction of the Transcontinental railway.

But is it likely that the powellising company are going to reduce that price?

The Premier : We told you last year that they did reduce it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Is it likely they will reduce it when they have—

The Premier : We answered a question last year in another place and said distinctly that it had been agreed that the price was to be 1s. 3d.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The Premier has never given answers. He gave 1s. 4d. or mentioned 1s. 3d. and then on another occasion he mentioned 9d.—I have it all in *Hansard*. We have had question after question put to the Premier, and each has been answered in a certain way and no one could make head or tail of the answer. This is the position on the evidence placed before us, and I say if the Premier takes his price for these sleepers at 5s. each on rails at the closest main line station to his source and deducts the cost of his royalty plus the cost of powellising, he will find he is left with a very small margin indeed, if any, to produce a profitable result from his great venture in embarking on this contract. I should like to know if it is not a fact that the department was negotiating for some time for some firm to supply a portion of this contract, that is, to take it off the Government's hands, when they found they were getting into difficulties and were likely to be placed in this unenviable position into which I have pointed out they are slowly but surely drifting now.

Mr. George : Trying to unload, you mean.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Did not the Government try to negotiate with a private firm to supply a portion of this contract, and was not the offer made under the terms of this contract turned down at the price by that private firm? What guarantee have we that the price is a payable one? What guarantee have we that we can produce these sleepers and make the proposition payable in the interests of this State, or are we

to have the same result as from State steamers? On whose recommendation was the tender put in? On whose recommendation was this contract taken at a price which private firms were at any rate looking askance at at the time, and since, although they have been offered a portion of the contract, so I understand, have refused?

The Minister for Works : It is as well to qualify that remark by saying you "understand."

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I am not afraid to have any remark of mine brought forth.

The Minister for Works : I do not like you telling stories.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The Minister can qualify himself but will have his work cut out the same as he did in the Labour Parliament which sat during the last few weeks at Fremantle. The Labour Parliament was issuing instructions to hon. members who support the Government as to their future actions, and I believe that only in one instance were Ministers able to carry amendments or to get their original motions passed. Even departmental labour for carrying out the public works was opposed by the Minister for Works, and he said—and honestly too, and I am glad to hear it—he sometimes found departmental labour satisfactory and sometimes unsatisfactory, and that he did not want his freedom curtailed, but the Labour Parliament turned the Minister down and carried their view, which Ministers have to obey, that all work should be carried out by day labour. I have shown the dangerous waters into which we are drifting in regard to these enterprises, the magnitude of which is not even appreciated by hon. members supporting the Government. And yet we are going still further. We are to have agricultural implement works erected; in fact, they are being erected now and the Governor's Speech, if you please, says "with modern equipment." We know that the expert appointed in connection with these works, after spending six or eight months in endeavouring to secure a suitable site for the works, visited my friend the hon. member for Bunbury's electorate and

that the largest town, Bunbury, created a favourable impression.

Mr. Thomas: That is where they should have been erected.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That electorate had strong claims but the decision was in favour of the electorate of the Honorary Minister. The personality of the Honorary Minister was there and it is a pretty strong personality too.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You used that statement at Bunbury.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have used it on several occasions with great effect. Possibly the majority of one which the Liberal Government enjoy in the Federal Parliament is due to my utterances during that campaign. After the site was duly selected—

The Premier: That is touting for the Interstate Commission.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is quite welcome to his opinion. There has not been any touting for the Interstate Commission.

The Premier: How did you get on?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I got on splendidly; I had a nice ten days' holiday and but for a slight attack of bronchitis I enjoyed myself immensely. We are told in His Excellency's Speech that the implement works are to be equipped with modern machinery. The expert, after having finally sent in his reports, at any rate after Cabinet had finally decided in favour of the Honorary Minister's electorate against that of the member for Bunbury, sailed off to South Australia and purchased the second-hand plant and buildings of defunct implement works there. I know the Minister for Lands has taken me to task for making this statement and he still states that it is modern machinery, but the works in question have been in existence for 12 or 15 years, and the Government have bought them out lock, stock and barrel.

Mr. Heitmann: They can make a profit out of them to-day.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not care about that. They certainly will not make a profit from the manufacture of implements. If you want to get good results you must have a modern equipment and

you must have experts and properly qualified men to select the equipment. That which has been purchased by the Government is being shifted to Rocky Bay in the Honorary Minister's constituency, second-hand galvanised iron and all, and we are erecting these works which are to give us better and cheaper farming implements than have ever been produced before. How can we expect such a result from such an undertaking and under such management as I have indicated. There is nothing said in the Speech in regard to the brickworks, but I believe a site has been purchased and I presume shortly we shall have a continuation of this policy of second-hand plants. Possibly we shall hear of a second-hand plant being purchased to equip our State brickworks and the same result is bound to accrue as has already accrued in regard to the second-hand steamers. The infatuation of inexperience, that is what I call it; second-hand steamers, second-hand ferries, second-hand implement works.

Mr. Underwood: Second-hand Opposition.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And yet Ministers expect to compete with up-to-date appliances and works and turn out something better and cheaper than has ever been produced before. I think, without taking any notice of the gibes of my third or fourth class friends on the back Government benches, I have said sufficient to show that there are grounds for doubt and unrest in respect of these experimental and speculative ventures which have often brought private firms to bankruptcy. I can quite understand that Ministers are indifferent to a loss of £40,000 on the State Steamship Service. If a private company, or an individual, had embarked on such an undertaking on similar lines they would have had no opportunity of recovering, they would have been in the bankruptcy court within 12 months; and yet hon. members smile when they put the State into the position of having to suffer loss which would have sent a private firm into the bankruptcy court several months ago. Now I want to call attention as briefly as possible to several other clauses in the Speech and the first that catches my eye is with ref-

erence to the Premier's visit to the Old Country.

Mr. Swan: It was not as expensive as yours.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would like to ask what was done on that occasion. I have stated that it was unnecessary for the Premier to visit London to put a correct statement of the affairs of Western Australia before the people in the Homeland, but I also admit it must, of necessity, have been a great education to him, and perhaps on that account the money has been well spent.

The Premier: Thank you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Press reports which came to hand from time to time of the Premier's proceedings tell us of jaunts to Scotland, to Cornwall, and to the Continent of Europe.

Mr. Green: And Japan.

The Premier: I did not touch Japan.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And during his meanderings to these portions of the civilised world the Premier gave evidence of his genial capacity, and his utterances suited the audiences he was addressing for the time being. When he appeared before the financiers in the metropolis of the world he allayed all possible alarm by declaring for a continuation of the Liberal policy of his predecessors, and he pointed out the progress this great country of ours had made under previous Liberal Governments, and declared in words which stirred my admiration and made my blood flow fast through my veins, "Give us the people that we in Western Australia may give them our land." But he carefully avoided any reference to the policy of the abolition of freeholds, and he was reported on one occasion to have said that as a man he would not be driven by his followers. But, on the other hand, contrast his remarks with those he uttered when addressing a socialistic gathering; then it was that he said the workers had nothing to defend. He encouraged disloyalty and practically advised them to lay down their arms and let foreigners come in and take possession.

The Premier: That is worthy of you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He hoped to have the power conferred upon him to nationalise all land in Western Australia. During the last general election, when he gained his present position, he denied emphatically that his party or himself had any intention of nationalising all land in Western Australia, yet in London, if he was correctly reported, he did not deny it. He hoped soon to have the power to nationalise all land, notwithstanding all other statements he made. The Labour Parliament has put a spoke in his wheel during the past few weeks by stopping his immigration policy, which was the burden of his eloquence during his visit to the Motherland. Immigration, of course; we want the people in order that we may give them land; tens of thousands of them; we are to continue the immigration policy, but he has received his orders from the Labour Parliament and I presume we are going to have disaster as the result of the cessation of the immigration policy. Another clause in the Governor's Speech states that land settlement is proceeding satisfactorily and it also mentions that a million acres have been held up, although surveyed, as being on the eastern margin of the reasonable rainfall belt, and that it is being held up until it can be proved that that land is safe for settlement. I wonder why they had the land surveyed; why did they not wait until it was proved to be suitable for settlement before they went to the expense of surveying? Statistics as published by the Statistical Department hardly prove the statement that land settlement is proceeding satisfactorily, for I find on turning up the figures that they do not bear out the statement in the Governor's Speech. For instance, whereas there was granted under conditional purchase agreements in 1910 by the Government with which I was connected 1,727,000 acres, in 1911 there were granted 1,349,000 acres, and in 1912, the first year of management by my friends opposite, the figures dropped to 891,000 acres; and during the first six months of the present year only 271,000 acres have been granted. Free homestead farms in 1910 totalled 238,000 acres; in 1911,

197,000 acres; in 1912, 186,000 acres; and during the past six months only 66,000 acres. With these figures before us how can we agree with the statement in the Governor's Speech which sets forth that land settlement is proceeding satisfactorily? My colleague altered the system which made approvals follow the survey; hence even the 891,000 acres which Ministers are taking credit for in their first year's reign. But are they holding up settlement in the eastern districts in order to drive settlers to the Attorney General's district, Esperance? It would appear so, and the country has been saddled with a considerable expenditure of public moneys, contrary to the advice of the responsible officers of the Government, in order to induce settlers to go on the land just outside of Esperance. Why have similar facilities not been granted to settlers in other portions of the State? I notice by an extract from a newspaper, which publishes some report which the Government have made, that the Agricultural Bank, which debars any advance to settlers in that portion of the State, has been supplanted by the Agricultural Department and a sum of £5,583 has been spent already, and a total commitment of nearly £10,000 has been made. I want to know what justification Ministers can bring forth for utilising public moneys for settlement in an area which up to the present, at any rate, has not been found by experience to be suitable for settlement, when they refuse to make equal advance in other and more suitable portions of the State.

Mr. Hudson: In the absence of a railway?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What right have the Government to spend this money in the absence of a railway? Parliament refused to build that railway until further evidence was forthcoming. Parliament will build the line as soon as there is sufficient evidence to prove that settlement can be safely carried on there. But here, on the one hand, we have a million acres locked up because it is not proved that settlement can be successfully carried out, and on the other hand we have a couple of million acres or so thrown

open to settlement, notwithstanding that Parliament has not been convinced as to the desirability of constructing that railway, or the advisability or safety of settling that district. Then we have the matter which the member for Northam referred to, the repurchased estates. We find that selection under the Lands Purchase Act has dropped from 26,000 acres in 1910, 45,000 acres in 1911, the last year of our tenure of office, to 6,000 acres in 1912, and some 7,000 acres during the last six months. In June there was no selection made at all. Of course, we know very well that the Avondale estate had been shut up by the Minister for some reason or other, and we know that every acre of that estate could have been sold had he accepted the applications which were put in. We know, on the other hand, that Yandanooka has been purchased at a large price, that the land is being paid for on the bond system, and that we owe the money and will some day or other have to foot the bill. Yet that estate is not being thrown open for settlement according to the Act, but is being utilised for running store cattle from the North-West in order to fatten them, I presume, for the State butcher stalls. Are the State butcher stalls to foot the interest bill on the purchase money of this estate? Is this £6,000 per annum to be debited against the Minister's meat stalls in Perth, Subiaco, Fremantle, and shortly in Kalgoorlie? If so, we are going to see just as disastrous a result with regard to the butcher stalls as has already overtaken the ill-fated State steamship service. Then I notice by these figures that the application for pastoral leases has held fairly good, about 7,330,000 acres during the last six months, and this, I take it, includes the memorable grab at Eucla by the Premier and his colleagues. The Premier took exception to some remarks made by my colleague yesterday in connection with this matter. The Attorney General waxed wrathful and wanted to know if corruption was implied in connection with the taking up of this land by the Cabinet syndicate. My colleague did not imply any corruption, and I do not imply corruption, but I say that it was highly improper for Ministers to form themselves

into a syndicate and take up this land, and it was certainly most undignified to see the Premier with "Brother" Chinn bustling through the Lands Department in order to induce the officers to grant the land on the plans which "Brother" Chinn had marked.

The Premier. That is absolutely untrue.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier tells us that the Ministerial syndicate, including one or two favoured occupants of the Government cross-benches, are concerned in these leases, and that during his travels he had an offer which would have left a considerable profit on the transaction. It seems to me that the people in the Old Country, or America, or wherever he got this offer, were not going to run after the Premier to make an offer for the leases. Therefore, we have it on presumption that the Premier approached somebody else to get an offer. At any rate that is the only view a commercial man can take of the transaction, that the Premier in behalf of his Ministerial syndicate, after paying a few pounds to get the grant of these leases, had approached somebody on his travels to get an offer which would leave a profit.

The Attorney General: Do you call an insinuation of that kind manly?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, I do.

The Premier: It is like you. That sort of thing is up to you. You are a muck rake.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, if the Premier will deal in muck it is my duty to rake it up, and I am going to rake it up as long as I stand in my present position.

The Premier: And I am going to return some of it; do not forget that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Let the Premier return what he likes. I defy him to return anything of this nature. He has been at it for some years, and I do not think he can do worse than he has in the past.

The Premier: You might tell us what you are doing on Bartram's doorstep in Melbourne every time you go over.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Certainly, I will tell the Premier. I was calling to

see Mr. Shepherd, a personal friend of mine, and after I had seen him he had lunch with me and eventually I had dinner with him at his private house. Both he and Mrs. Shepherd are personal friends of mine, and I take pleasure in visiting them whenever I go to Melbourne.

The Premier: I did not know you had visited them, but I thought you would admit it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I suppose the Premier had a private detective out, and if all the information he gets in regard to my movements is as meagre as a call on a friend who happened to be a director of Bartram and Company, I confess he will be dumfounded at not being able to rake up some evidence of something improper.

The Premier: You made an agreement which meant Government expenditure to suit them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I did not.

The Premier: I say you did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I say the Premier is making a false statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I say the Premier is making a false statement, and I wish him to withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! the leader of the Opposition must withdraw the assertion that the Premier made a false assertion.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: When he accuses me of wrongfully spending public money?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not care what he accused you of, the statement must be withdrawn.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: May I say it is a wrongful statement? I am not going to be accused of wrongfully spending public money.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the leader of the Opposition does not withdraw the statement that the Premier made a false statement, I shall not allow him to proceed further. I ask him to rise and withdraw the assertion that the Premier made a false statement.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, I say that it is untrue. I cannot accept a statement that impugns my honour.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have asked the hon. member to withdraw the words "false statement."

Mr. Monger: See him damned first.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Well, then, I withdraw the words "false statement" if you like, and say that it is an untrue statement, or that it is a wilfully incorrect statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The leader of the Opposition must not say that it is an untrue statement.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then I say that it is a wilfully incorrect statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the leader of the Opposition take his seat. The member for York must apologise for a remark he made. He interjected the remark, "See him damned first."

Mr. Monger: I apologise for having made the remark.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I now ask that the Premier withdraw his insinuation that I had improperly spent public moneys for the benefit of Bartram and Company.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not going to ask the Premier to withdraw that statement. I refused to ask the leader of the Opposition to withdraw a statement that a certain person was appointed to a Government position because he had assisted the Honorary Minister in his electorate. Any hon. member can make a statement, and that statement can be denied. The Premier has made a statement, and the leader of the Opposition is on his feet and has the opportunity of denying it.

The Premier: But not the statement he accused me of making.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What statement did the Premier make?

The Premier: Not that, but I am not going to repeat it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is not man enough to say what his statement was, or to withdraw it, and yet he has the audacity to twit me with being ungentlemanly.

The Premier: So you are.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would be sorry to sit in the Premier's chair and impute against any hon. member, no matter on which side of the House, that he had wrongfully spent public moneys.

The Attorney General: You are doing it all through your speech.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am doing nothing of the sort. I am accusing Ministers of incapacity, maladministration, ineptitude, if you like.

The Attorney General: You did more than that; you accused the Premier of hawking the lands at Eucla.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier told us so himself.

The Premier: Never.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The statement is reported in the Press and why does not the Premier deny it?

The Attorney General: It has been denied again and again.

Mr. George: It has not.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It has not been denied. Why do Ministers commit these transactions when they do not like being told about them?

The Premier: You did it, anyhow.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I never did it. I never did anything improper during the whole of my life, let alone during my occupancy of the Treasury bench. If I had done so, the hon. members would have been the first to put me out of that position by every means and any means in their power.

The Premier: That is why you are over there, we did put you out.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Now the Premier has consulted firms in the United States of America, so he says, to consider the matter of boring for water on this syndicate's land in order to prove their bona fides. I wonder what is wrong with the firms and individuals we have in Australia who have been boring for water successfully for many years, and I wonder if he is going to carry any conviction with the people of this State because he has consulted some firm to consider the possibility of boring for water in this country.

The Premier: What has that to do with politics?

The Attorney General: It is mud throwing.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have told the Attorney General that if he will wallow in dirt he must expect to get some

that will stick to him. We, when in office, took care to safeguard the public interest by reserving a large tract of country on either side of the proposed route of this railway—

Mr. Dwyer: You reserved the Avondale estate, too.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: So that members should not get within a certain distance of the track itself, but they take good care to get as near as possible. I do not see anything illegal in the thing. I have never imputed corruption, indeed, but they knew that their duty as Ministers if they thought this land was too cheap, and was going to have a large unearned increment attached to its value, was to preserve the increment to the State, and it was their duty to withhold any granting of pastoral lands until they had an opportunity of amending their legislation and putting what they considered was a fair value upon it. They did not look after the interests of the State, but rushed the Lands Office and were the first to get in. According to the Premier, we are only disgruntled because they got in ahead of us. Ministers can always get in ahead of the public if they like to make use of the information at their disposal, especially if they have someone like brother Chiun to see what an opportunity they have for making money. If anything would make a man think that Ministers were false to their trust, it is a transgression of this description, which one cannot call corrupt or illegal, but is certainly improper from my way of thinking. We have somewhat marvellous ideas of Ministers' offices with regard to rectitude of conduct, and marvellous ideas as to political morality. We have the Premier, who, while we were in office, was a great champion of the liberties of the civil servants, and who advocated on every occasion, in season and out of season, that civil servants should have perfect freedom, even to go on to the hustings and attack the Government of the day, if they thought fit; we have him actually complaining because civil servants have taken the liberty which he suggested was theirs, and according to him, had actually canvassed in the corridors of the public offices on

behalf of the Liberal candidate, Mr. Fowler, during the recent Federal elections. He made a marvellous statement at a social with regard to the civil servants. According to the report of the recent Labour social he said, referring to the defeat of Mr. McCallum at the Federal election—

He believed that that defeat had been due to the action of a good number of the civil servants who had deliberately and openly canvassed in the public departments for Mr. Fowler, because they claimed they, as public servants, were not getting a fair deal from the State Labour Government. (A voice "They are getting too much as it is now") But the time would soon arise when he, as Premier, would take the opportunity of telling the people what the Government had done for the civil servant, and it would be shown what consideration the civil servant was getting to-day, compared with the workers outside the service. (Hear, hear.) The civil servants apparently were not satisfied with the fair deal they had received, but wished to squeeze even more out of the public purse, regardless of the interests of the public as a whole. (Hear, hear.) And, as far as he was concerned, he was not going to allow one section of the community to obtain certain things and squeeze more out of the taxpayers' pockets, while others were without fair rates of wage.

That is manly and straightforward. The Premier was taking what he considered to be a proper stand to put the civil servants in their right place, and was not going to allow them to do any squeezing. He said—

The State Government had done a great deal for the civil servants during the last two years, more, perhaps, than should have been done.

There is an admission at once, "More than should have been done." The report of his speech continued—

And he wanted to say that night that when the people were shortly told by him all that the Government had done for the civil servants, they would tell the public servants that in opposing

Mr. McCallum they had acted wrongly, and, moreover, shown a paltry spirit.

Did any one ever hear such a peculiar announcement! According to the Premier, the public servants, in opposing the Labour candidate, had shown a paltry spirit, in view of the consideration he had meted out to them. According to the Premier's words that consideration was more than they ought to have received; they had acted in a paltry spirit in opposing Mr. McCallum's candidature. How could any hon. member possibly put any other construction on those words?

Mr. Munsie: You could.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I could put a construction on the hon. member if I liked. I quite understand that hon. members do not like this; they must expect criticism, and it is my duty to criticise. See how a leading morning paper in Victoria views this question. I guess the Premier has not read this short article.

The Premier: Oh yes, I have; you are quoting it from the *Daily News*.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The article I have here states—

Mr. Scaddan, Premier of Western Australia, is a very candid gentleman. He acknowledges that the public servants of Western Australia are expected to vote for Labour because the State Labour Ministry has done something for them. He complains that public servants "canvassed for Mr. Fowler," the Liberal candidate for Perth, "in spite of all that the Scaddan Government has done for them." He is indignant about it. While Mr. Scaddan is shuddering at the ingratitude on the part of the public servants more enlightened people will reflect upon the moral twist in the mind of a man who can assume, as a matter of course, that Ministers may, by spending public funds, ensure votes being given in return. Mr. Scaddan's position may be thus expressed: "We have bribed these people and they refuse to do the job." It is very disappointing to Mr. Scaddan: it is very insulting to the public servants. The community can only conclude that Mr. Scaddan is annoyed be-

cause his plot failed. His intention was not to deal fairly with the public servants, but to induce them to vote for his party by paying them a large amount from the public funds. It seems that the State servants regarded their increases as neither bribe nor favour, but as justice. Either Mr. Scaddan gave the public servants a measure of justice or he misappropriated public money. His own words as to the "paltry-spirited and wrong action" of the State servants are open to interpretation as a confession of a misuse of the moneys in the Treasury. And the confession is ingenuous. Mr. Scaddan sees no wrong in it. This brings us to this position: that if it be right to give increases to public servants on the understanding that they will support the generous party, it is equally right to withhold them because of the omission to support a particular party.

Mr. Munsie: You will have arrived somewhere directly.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The article goes on to say—

It will be perfectly in accordance with Mr. Scaddan's ethics if he punishes the public servants for their baseness. He will, of course, see no wrong in that; he cannot on the hypothesis that the public servants have erred in omitting to do what he paid them to do. He can justify holding a blunderbuss at the public service and saying, "Not another penny until you vote for my party." It is very far-reaching and full of possibilities this idea of public morality. The buying and selling of support can be reduced to almost an exact science, and intimidation is absurdly simple to the man in possession of the public purse. It is a dreadful thing, suggestive of a trust or of Tammany, for private individuals to use their private wealth to buy votes; but for public men to use the public money to buy a block vote is something in an altogether different category. One is a crime; the other is—policy.

Mr. McDowall: Very pathetic; that is a typical *Argus* article.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Could there be a more scathing indictment of the foolish announcement made by the Premier?

The Premier: Could there be any greater rubbish printed?

Mr. McDowall: It is mighty indeed.

The Attorney General: "Mite" is the word. What do they say about Fowler?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know what the *Age* said about Mr. Fowler. I do not think it said much. I was not quoting from the *Age*.

The Attorney General: No; it was from your conservative hack; a precious piece of spleen.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have already exposed some of the fallacies under which the present Administration are labouring and the erroneous views they appear to take of their responsible positions. I propose now to criticise briefly the public works policy. We are told in His Excellency's Speech that a vigorous public works policy has been consistently maintained, and that 256 additional miles of railway have been opened for traffic. Remembering full well the pronouncements made from time to time by the Minister for Works, and parrot-like repeated on more than one occasion by the Premier of the State, to the effect that his Government were doing more than twice as much as any other Government had done in respect to railway construction, one naturally turns to the public records to see what has been the result of their efforts. I find that the *Statistical Abstract* gives the mileage of railways that have been opened from year to year, and if hon. members like to consult this they will see that these boasts that have been made by responsible ministers have no foundation in fact. If we take the last year of the Liberal Government's term of office, 1911, we find that 231 miles of new railways were opened. In the next year, 1912, the first year of the present Administration, 222 miles of new railway were opened, all more or less railways that were well under way and in progress when they took office. In 1913,

according to the Governor's Speech, we have 256 additional miles of railway opened and handed over to the Working Railways Department to be run. But that 256 miles of opened railways includes the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway, which was well on towards completion when they took office, and was only officially opened on the 1st July of last financial year, namely, 1912. So it is easily seen that all this boastfulness is so much wind which ought to carry no weight with thinking members of the public. In 1911, according to the *Statistical Abstract*, we spent £643,000 on railway construction, and in 1912 our friends opposite spent £1,213,000. Of course they say "Look at the employment we have given." They say "We have bought more rolling stock." It is true they have spent more on rolling stock, but even allowing for all increased expenditure in that direction I venture to say that when the truthful records of costs are produced, it will be found that the work done by the Public Works Department during the last two years cannot bear any comparison to the economical work carried out during the previous Administration.

Mr. Heitmann: The officers are the same.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But there is a different Minister. And yet we have this continued assertion, which is groundless, that the present Administration are doing more in the way of public works construction than any of its predecessors. We look to the Speech to see what we may expect in the immediate future in this connection, and I draw the attention of hon. members to the railway programme that our friends placed before the country in His Excellency's Speech. We are to be asked to give authority for the construction of railway lines to open up the Esperance agricultural areas. This is the only railway we are to be asked to give authority to construct: a line which on two previous occasions has been brought before Parliament, and on both occasions has been thrown out, for the reason that Parliament as a whole is not satisfied that these agricultural areas are suitable

for successful settlement, or will warrant the huge expenditure that will be attached to the construction of that work. We know full well that is the position, and hon. members know well that members of the Opposition in this Assembly will not oppose the construction of that line if this 2,000,000 acres of agricultural land, which is supposed to be good agricultural land, is proved to be good in fact. But they do oppose the launching of heavy expenditure on a project which has been condemned by some of the best experts the State possesses, and which up to the present has not been proved to be land which can be successfully and profitably worked.

The Premier : Who are these experts?

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Mr. Paterson condemned it.

The Premier : He did not condemn it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I have on many occasions given the House the recommendation Mr. Paterson laid before us as a Government. He showed that it was risky. He proved that it would be unwise to incur this expenditure until actual proof of the suitability of the land was forthcoming, and he recommended that steps be taken to prove its suitability. That has not yet been done, notwithstanding which we have the Government putting into the Governor's mouth as the only railway project to be considered during the present session the railways to tap these agricultural areas, railways which have been refused by Parliament on two previous occasions. What about the extension of other agricultural lines? Here we have an intimation that surveys have been authorised for the Margaret River-Flinders Bay railway and for the extension of the Wagin-Kookering railway and the Katanning-Nampup railway. The Margaret River railway was promised by the Premier twenty months ago, with the additional promise that a Bill for its construction would be introduced and carried. And the Premier promised last year again that the Bill would be introduced this session of Parliament. Now we have this position taken up, we have this attitude taken up, namely, that the Government apparently are going to re-

pudiate that promise, notwithstanding that they have recently purchased Millar's Trading Company's line from the Margaret River to Flinders Bay. Why is this attitude taken up? Why is the railway policy of the State to be hung up on account of the Esperance railway line? Is it that Ministers are going to force Parliament to carry out a project which they believe to be unsound, by refusing any other railway construction until that project is assented to by Parliament? Is it because another House has refused to pass a measure which will entail an enormous expenditure of money on flimsy grounds? Will the Premier tell me that he is justified in shelving a line which he promised on two occasions merely because—

The Premier : I promised the Esperance line.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The Esperance line has not received approbation at the hands of another place.

The Minister for Works : How do you know that the Margaret River line will receive it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Try it and see. The Premier kept his promise in regard to the Esperance line and brought down his Bill, but he is not going to keep his promise in regard to the Margaret River line because his Esperance line is not passed, and, I presume, because also the Margaret River line is in my electorate. If this is the way we are going to develop our State, namely, by hanging up important works, refusing extensions of our agricultural railways, stopping our immigration policy at the behest of the Labour parliament, which has been sitting recently, according to the *Worker*, then we may expect to see shortly, in conjunction with the losses on our State enterprises, a condition of financial disaster and stagnation which has never been passed through before. Ministers are not concerned as to the progress of the State. All they care for is to carry out their own party policy. And in regard to an interjection as to this line being in my electorate, let me point out that all this agitation and pressure is brought to bear in the electorate of my friend the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: Because it deserves it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Unfortunately, the hon. member deserves a lot that he does not get. The important question of finance is one which we cannot debate at any extent at the present time. It is true the figures have been published at the end of the financial year, but without the full details which the Public Accounts will provide later on it is impossible to make an accurate analysis of the financial position. As presented by these figures, however, we can point out the fact that the deficit of £287,000 shown in the Treasurer's Budget Speech of last year, that is, the accumulated deficit which he anticipated at the end of this year, has swollen to £311,000, and this after annexing something like £40,000 from the credit of a special fund to provide interest, etcetera, on harbour improvements in connection with our Fremantle harbour extension. The Treasurer, and I presume his colleagues, feel perfectly justified in annexing this sum to decrease the deficit—that deficit which has been an incubus during their occupancy of the Treasury bench—

The Premier: You never had one, did you?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: A deficit growing larger and larger notwithstanding the emphatic promises made by the Treasurer from time to time that the deficit would be extinct and a thing of the past each succeeding session. When I took charge of the Treasury I had to face a very stringent financial term. I found a deficit which it took all my time, with the assistance of my colleagues, to stem—

The Premier: You did not stem it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And to create into a surplus.

The Premier: Oh, oh!

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I found a sum of £80,000 standing to the credit of a trust account being the proceeds of sales of Government property. According to the ethics of the Premier, I ought to have used it to wipe out my deficit.

The Minister for Lands: You could not, because it was the result of selling property bought by loan funds.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I could have taken it as easily as the Premier has taken this money, which was standing to a trust account for a special purpose, but I did not do it.

The Premier: You did it in practice.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I took a vote of Parliament as to how I should deal with that £80,000, and I spent the money in accordance with the instructions of Parliament and not to decrease my deficit. But the Premier in his anxiety to show a good financial balance, will annex anything he can lay his hands upon. He has annexed this £40,000 standing to the credit of a trust account for a special purpose, and heaven only knows what else we shall discover later on.

The Premier: You do not attempt to state it correctly.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier in the course of his Budget Speech, of which he was by no manner or means ashamed, stated that he would predict, for the second time, with some degree of certainty that the deficit would be extinct within 24 months. Well, months have gone by, the deficit is £311,000, according to his figures, and £350,000 odd so far as we know. What hope has he got of extinguishing that deficit within the next twelve or eighteen months. If he goes on handling the finances of this State during the remainder of his tenure of office in the same manner as he has done during the past two years there is nothing but a huge debt to be faced, and extra taxation to be imposed by whoever may be in power, extra taxation which our settlers and our citizens at the present time can ill afford to bear. In addition to this loose handling of current revenue we have had loan funds borrowed to the tune of some five millions during the past two years. During the whole of my occupancy of the Treasury—six years—I borrowed something like seven millions of money, a little under that sum, I think, but the party opposed to borrowing on principle rush in, grab all the money they can get at any price they can get it, borrow five millions within two years, and I wonder how much of that five millions is left to-day. Now, let me turn my attention just for a moment to the proposed

legislation. Let me ask hon. members to glance at the legislation which we are to consider according to the Governor's Speech during the present session of Parliament. Most of it is a re-hash of previous sessions, Bills which we have had before us, many of which could not be dealt with for lack of opportunity, and others of which were thrown out because Ministers were unreasonable and would not listen to a reasonable compromise. We have to have our liquor laws modelled and revised in the direction of complete local option. I presume this is in fulfilment of an agreement—if I may term it as such—which the Rev. Tregear stated had been come to between himself and the Premier. The Local Option Bill will be introduced once more, the Bill which was lost during the last session of Parliament, and it is to be made a party question, and the Premier is going to see that it is carried on this occasion. I notice that the Labour parliament apparently will have none of it.

Mr. Green: It is a great bogey to you.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What position is the Premier in now? On the one hand we have the Rev. Tregear who says he has the Premier's promise that this Bill will be introduced again and made a party measure, and will be put through. On the other hand we have the Labour parliament, the delegates to which said they will have none of this Bill, but that the laws must be left as they are at present, and they made this decision owing to the opposition of the Honorary Minister, one of the Premier's colleagues on the Treasury benches. We are to have before us again the Mines Regulation Act Amendment to stop night shifts on the mines. We are to have this language test imposed time after time in order that poor Italians who are residing in our State should be thrown out of employment as soon as an inspector can be found who will impose such a test as probably ninety per cent. of the English workers themselves could not pass, and a reasonable request made by the representatives of the different mines—

Mr. Heitmann: And the Chamber of Mines.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And the Chamber of Mines, that a foreign worker who has once successfully passed any test should be exempt from further examinations, is thrown to one side. No; they are to be examined time after time until we can get rid of these objectionable workers according to the tenets of the party in power, who are working in the interests of one class, and one class only.

Mr. Green: That is the whole of the State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then we are to be treated with a repetition of the Public Works Committee Bill. This Bill was rejected by Parliament last year, but it is to be brought once more before Parliament, and I presume that in view of the additional pressure and the refusal of railway construction where it is so badly needed, the Government will try to force this measure through another place. Hon. members know the reason why the Public Works Committee Bill was objected to, both by members on this side of the House and by members elsewhere, and has anything happened during the last twelve months to warrant Ministers in thinking that members have altered their opinions?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Your party has adopted the policy.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Are the Government anxious to provide a position of emolument for adherents of their party in connection with this Public Works Committee Bill, that they must needs try to force the measure down the throats of politicians. It seems we are going to waste the time of this Parliament mostly during the present session rather than carry out useful work, giving liberty to the subject to advance his own interests and fashion his own fortune in his own way, with as much liberty and freedom as we can confer upon him. The Labour parliament sat and offered congratulations to hon. members supporting the Government, expressed appreciation of the actions of the Government notwithstanding, as I said before, that every principle advanced by Ministers who were sitting in that Congress was defeated. According to the Congress, Ministers had shown great administrative ability, and had also managed

well the financial affairs of the State. I have pointed out some of the administrative ability exhibited by Ministers in control of the departments. I have proved some of the financial disaster which must follow, and has already followed the management of the financial affairs of this State by the Premier and his colleagues. I, of course, cannot endorse this eulogy of the Labour parliament which is the master of hon. members supporting the Government. The ship of State is on a lee shore—

Mr. Taylor: On the rocks.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And is fast drifting on to the financial rocks in the hands of incapable administrators, and I hope that it will not be long before the people of this State have an opportunity of voicing their opinion at the ballot box as to whether Ministers and their followers have conducted the administration of the affairs of this State in the satisfactory manner which the resolution carried by the Congress would lead us to believe.

Mr. Munsie: Where did you read that resolution?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In the *Worker*.

Mr. Munsie: No.

Mr. George: Well, it is true.

Mr. Munsie: It is not.

Mr. George: You have your orders, you know.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is published in the hon. member's party paper anyhow.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): It has been the usual practice when the leader of the Opposition hurls an indictment against the Government, for the head of the Government to ask for an adjournment in order that he might prepare something by way of a reply and justification for the actions of the Government during the recess, but on this occasion there is so much that is of the nature of abuse and innuendo, and not fair criticism of the actions of the Government, that I am going to take this the earliest opportunity, of replying to some of the statements made by the leader of the Opposition. I say I have been in this House for something like nine years, and I have

never on any occasion to my knowledge heard a speech delivered by any member, much less by a leader of the Opposition, and one who had previously occupied the position of Premier, that will in any way compare with the delivery made by the hon. gentleman this evening for accusations of a nature which do not do him credit, and which, if there was the slightest likelihood of them doing him good, would not do credit to the Parliament of Western Australia. The hon. member evidently imagines that we should follow in the tracks of some of those engaged in politics in other parts of the world, such as America, and endeavour to make the public believe that every man who enters public life does so as a business and for the purpose of making something at the expense of the people, and he considers that by making the people believe this he will be able to regain some of his lost glory. I tell the hon. member that it is merely because his case is so bad that he has to fall back on such utterances, and actions such as those he has adopted. I have waited for months to hear from the hon. member or those attached to the Liberal party some of the statements made this evening by the leader of the Opposition, and last evening by the member for Northam and a few of the echoes by the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr. George: A few of what?

The PREMIER: The hon. member never speaks, he only echoes what others say. I want to say that they have been exceedingly careful and I might also say clever in avoiding saying straight out what they have attempted to lead the public to believe by way of innuendo and inference, as they have done to-night and last night. If the hon. member can prove any one of the statements that he made with regard to what might be termed suspicious actions, as he asserted on one occasion, on the part of my colleagues and myself, he has the right to stand up and demand a public enquiry. He has no right, however, occupying the position he does as leader of a party which one day hopes to replace those who are now on the Treasury benches, to leave

the suspicion in the minds of the public that those who are in charge as trustees are attending to their own interests against the interests of the people as a whole. It will probably some day reflect upon himself. The hon. member has occupied himself so much this evening in getting into the gutter and scraping up mud and throwing it across the Chamber that I propose, at the risk of being called a bore, to also get down there and throw a little back and see whether it will stick. One of the reasons why the people of the State removed him from the Treasury bench to the position of leader of the Opposition was because in the opinion of the great bulk of the people he was not to be trusted in politics. The statement has been uttered on every side that the leader of the Opposition is undoubtedly clever and smart in politics, but he is not to be trusted. It comes from his own friends and the hon. member knows full well that when recently a president of the Liberal League had to be appointed, he had a strong opponent in the member of another place who ran him pretty close for the position.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are wrong.

The PREMIER: Some of his friends have told me that they even went round touting at the meeting urging those who were supporting the other gentleman to support the leader of the Opposition because they pointed out that it would be a tremendous loss of prestige to the leader of the Opposition and the party if he were defeated.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are absolutely wrong.

The PREMIER: And it is because of that touting and the assistance he got from his friends that he is to-day President of the Liberal League.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Quite wrong.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may not know it, but I can assure him it is true. The gentleman to whom I particularly refer is looked upon by the Liberals in this State as a man who will lead the Liberal party at the next general elections.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Well, why not?

The PREMIER: I want to know why it is so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why is it so?

The PREMIER: I am telling the hon. member.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But is it so?

The PREMIER: It is so, and it is because they look upon the leader of the Opposition as a smart politician, but too smart to trust on the Treasury bench; yet the hon. member comes here and talks about land deals and powellising contracts.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, explain them.

The PREMIER: I am going to do so, and I shall compare them with some of the deals the leader of the Opposition has made.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Bring them all in.

The Minister for Works: The Claremont Asylum.

The PREMIER: Yes, I can bring in the Claremont Asylum, in the construction of which the hon. member's brother-in-law was interested and I can also refer to the railway where the hon. member's greatest friend in the State called upon him and obtained the contract at £6,500 above the departmental estimate.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is not true.

The PREMIER: It is on record; it is in *Hansard*. I say the statement is correct. The files show that the tenders were turned down because they were too much above the departmental estimate, and the gentleman whom I said was the greatest friend of the leader of the Opposition was sent for to go and see the Minister in his office. But there is nothing on record to show what transpired in the office, except that the tender at £6,500 above the departmental estimate was accepted, and as the member for Murray-Wellington would say by echo, "I wonder what he did with the money"?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did not the Engineer-in-Chief recommend it?

The PREMIER: Let me deal with the statements of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. George: What is the name of that individual?

The PREMIER: I am not worried about the name, the hon. member knows it. The leader of the Opposition made reference to what he termed the "Eucla

land grab," and he has been endeavouring by innuendo—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not innuendo.

The PREMIER: Yes, by innuendo, to make it appear that Ministers were in possession of some particular information which was not available to the general public, and that we withheld it from the public when we rushed to the Lands Department as soon as we obtained it and took up the best part of the land. If we have done that, let me tell the leader of the Opposition that we would have been guilty of a most improper action for which we ought to be hurled from the Treasury bench, but I want to tell the leader of the Opposition that all the information which was available to us was available to everyone for two years prior to the application for that land being lodged by myself. It was so much known to the leader of the Opposition that his Government brought down a Bill reducing the rent for the Eucla land to encourage people to take it up, but that was not successful. We took it up, on the information which was available to others openly and above board, and I might say that we went to the Lands Department, asked for plans, put in an application and paid the money so that everyone could see it, in such a way that everyone would know what had been done, and the Lands Department advertised the fact that we had taken up the land. The result then was that there was a general rush. The position to-day is that those who have taken up land in the Eucla district can do nothing with it until they discover water by boring. To say that we should have increased the rents when only two years before the Government of which the leader of the Opposition was the head deliberately brought down a Bill to reduce the rents, knowing the difficulties that the people who would settle there would have to contend with, and in order to give them an opportunity of making a start without being called upon to pay heavy rentals, and also knowing full well that unless the Government did something of the kind the land would never be settled, is altogether absurd. If the hon. member knows of anything wrong in that transaction I challenge him to state it deliber-

ately and not continually throw innuendoes about, and not make it appear that we were guilty of some action that was wrong and improper. If he knows of any information which was available to us, but which was not available to the general public, he has my permission to go to the Lands Department, and if he can ascertain that the information which was available to us, was not available twelve months before we selected that land I will resign my position from public life altogether. The hon. member sees something improper in anything that is done for the working man. We know full well that he considers it improper for the working man to have a home of his own. He wants to pay a tribute to his friends the landlords.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was a part of my policy.

The PREMIER: Certainly, to keep the landlord in possession always.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, the workers' homes.

The PREMIER: The hon. member never had any such intention.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You stole the policy.

The PREMIER: It was also part of the policy of the hon. member's party to procure steamships to trade in the North-West.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes.

The PREMIER: The hon. member says "yes," but when it was done by this Government of course it was wrong. It was all right when the hon. member made it a part of his policy. The hon. member said our action was improper. May I draw attention to some of the actions of our friends opposite and throw the light of the day on them to let the people see how they compare with what is called "the Eucla land grab."

Hon. Frank Wilson: They cannot clear you.

The PREMIER: We do not want clearing.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, you do.

The PREMIER: I would like the hon. member to say what he means. At one time his Government were responsible for the establishment of a smelter at Ravensthorpe, but before they put it into

use they sold it for less than it cost to build. That is scrapping. They asked for the money from the public to put it up and then handed it over to private enterprise, and what did private enterprise do?

Hon. Frank Wilson: I was not connected with that Government.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has been connected with all past Liberal Administrations, and he knows it. What did that Government do? They closed the smelter down and to-day we are faced with the position that the field can only live by this Government asking the public to give us the money to build a new smelter to assist the prospectors. That is the sort of action our friends opposite have been responsible for.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I was not in Parliament then.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You were a member of the Government.

The PREMIER: After selling that smelter for less than it cost they even went so far as to build a railway, the most unprofitable that we have to control. I might again ask the question, what prompted our friends to build that railway?

Mr. Underwood: And what did they do with the money?

The PREMIER: Yes, that might be asked. Then we know what happened with regard to the Bullfinch field. The hon. member was then occupying a high position, and he gave utterance to a boom speech which brought discredit to this State among mining investors in the old world. You cannot go to London now without hearing a reference made to that boom speech by the then Treasurer, which the people at Home consider a disgraceful performance, and which did this State considerable harm. The then Government rushed through a railway for the purpose of going to a field where there was not yet a mine, but where there was a bit of a pot hole 100 feet deep, and the hon. member by some means became possessed of some of the shares in the Bullfinch mine.

Hon. Frank Wilson: On a point of explanation—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can explain with the permission of the Premier.

The PREMIER: I have no objection.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I explained fully at the time that before I introduced the Bill for the railway to Bullfinch, I purchased 100 shares at £1 each. Hon. members will bear me out in that.

Mr. Underwood: You got in on the ground floor.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I got in on the ground floor, at par. The shares to-day are worth 14s., and I hold them still.

The PREMIER: I am just as wise after the explanation and so is the House. I said, and I repeat, that the hon. member and his Government made boom speeches in connection with the Bullfinch Field, and made statements that were not in accordance with fact, that the hon. member then pushed through a railway, and that he became possessed of shares in the Bullfinch mine.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You said I became possessed of them by some means or other.

The PREMIER: And I leave it to the public to draw their own conclusions.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Dirt!

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not like his own medicine. He talks about throwing mud, but when some of it comes back and sticks, he does not like it. I made reference by interjection this evening to the known friendliness of the leader of the Opposition with Bartram & Co., of Melbourne, and I further interjected that I had no knowledge of his visit to them before he admitted it, but I chanced my aim. I also said he was responsible for entering into an agreement with Bartram & Co., or the same people here, which meant an expenditure of a large sum of public money which would only interest Bartram & Co.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows where, but he needs to refresh his memory somewhat. Bartram & Co. are the people who received all the advantage, and the State none, and that was by the expenditure of a large sum of money in the hon. member's own district.

Hon. Frank Wilson: In Busselton?

The PREMIER : Yes. I notice that the hon. members occupying the front opposition benches all lose their memories, particularly when promissory notes are taken.

Hon. Frank Wilson : The agreement was a justification for the expenditure, and the Minister for Works said that it was absolutely justified.

The PREMIER : I do not care whether it was justified or not, but I am just saying that the hon. member entered into that agreement. The leader of the Opposition can see nothing but wrong and something of a suspicious nature, to quote his own words, in the agreement that we entered into for utilising our karri forests. But, of course, there is nothing suspicious in his entering into an agreement with some of his best friends, which meant an advantage to them.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I brought the agreement to Parliament and you approved of it.

The Minister for Works : We will give you the agreement you brought to Parliament and the one you eventually fixed up.

Hon. Frank Wilson : And you said it was justified.

The PREMIER : Let me say further that the leader of the Opposition was a member of the Government who repurchased an estate from one of their own supporters, and one of the gentlemen who recommended the purchase was none other than the brother of the member for Northam.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I do not know anything about that.

The PREMIER : Oh, no! Of course, everybody else is responsible for suspicious actions, but the hon. member throws up his hands in horror when it is suggested that anything of a suspicious nature could come from him or his friends. At the time when the estate was repurchased, the Federal Land Tax was pressing fairly heavily on the owner, and he received from the State something like £50,000, but although it was advertised from one end of the State to the other, the department received only two applications for blocks, and one was from

Sir Newton Moore. Yet the hon. member says that we have withheld the estate from settlement.

Hon. Frank Wilson : So you have.

The PREMIER : Can we settle 2,000 acres of rock ? We are not road-making to the extent of being able to afford to pay £5 per acre for the rock. Speaking of land, the hon. member will not be forgetful of the fact that the people of this State found money for the purpose of repurchasing the Narratarra Estate, and the hon. member for Northam, then Minister for Lands, and his family, practically encumbered the whole of the estate, and are repaying the money to the State over a number of years.

Hon. Frank Wilson : That is not true.

The PREMIER : I say it is correct. I made the statement before and I repeat it.

Hon. Frank Wilson : The hon. member for Northam only bought for his son after everybody else had had the opportunity.

Mr. SPEAKER : The Leader of the Opposition must not make the statement that something said by the Premier is not true.

Hon. Frank Wilson : But the Premier made that same statement to me, before tea.

Mr. SPEAKER : I do not care what statement the Premier made before tea.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that you called him to order for it.

Mr. SPEAKER : No, I objected to the statement of the Leader of the Opposition that the Premier had made a false statement.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I know that, but you must remember, Sir, the statement he made to me.

Mr. SPEAKER : I should be sorry to do any injustice to either one side or the other, but I think it better that members should not use the expression that a statement made by another member is untrue.

The PREMIER : Nothing hurts like the truth, and the hon. member can appreciate the truth when he hears it; he is appreciating it to its full to-night.

Let me tell the House that it does not give me pleasure to be obliged to be continually referring to these subjects, but one would expect that a gentleman with the experience of the Leader of the Opposition would be able to get beyond this tittle-tattle that one hears in the street, this talk of something suspicious, and make a genuine criticism of the actions of the Government, legislative and administrative. I ask, has he done so to-night?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes.

The PREMIER: I say the hon. member has not: he has not referred to anything worthy of consideration as an indictment of the Government. What he has said is mere scandal. He was evidently four weeks in Melbourne trying to find something in the form of a job on the Interstate Commission from his friends in order to keep going their policy of spoils to the victors, and he obtained the support of the Chamber of Commerce. Then he busied himself for one day after his return in doing the block, and parading St. George's Terrace picking up every bit of gossip, and then calling in at the Liberal Club to hear what the women had to tell him.

Hon. Frank Wilson: May I explain that I have not been in the Liberal Club since I returned.

The PREMIER: I propose, now, to endeavour to reply to some of what the hon. member may consider criticism of the Government, but my remarks will be more in the nature of putting the hon. member right rather than in replying to genuine criticism. The hon. member was quite at sea on almost every subject he touched. First of all, let me deal with what is termed the vain-glorious boast on the part of myself at McCallum's social. Let me tell the hon. member that if I said what the hon. member alleges I said, then of course his criticism would be worth something.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Here is the report in the newspaper.

The PREMIER: There are hon. members present who heard what I said that night. I do not go round to the newspapers asking them to correct reports of my speeches. I can hold my own on the

public platform and in this Chamber, and I am doing so to-night. Only the other day I drew the attention of the *West Australian* to a statement made by an independent member, who attended a deputation, in regard to the quality of the Esperance land, and they carefully cut out any reference to it. I pointed out that a statement made by a gentleman who was not interested ought to be published, particularly at this juncture, because if I were to make such a statement it would be accepted as being made merely for the purpose of getting the Esperance Railway Bill through, and so would be discounted; but when the statement came from a gentleman who is not interested in the railway, who has been a surveyor and knows a good deal of the remainder of the State, and who, in addition, has no party leanings, the *West Australian* carefully omitted it, and then politely told me that they are the best judges of what should appear, and they paid me the compliment of saying that my statement was of more value than that of the surveyor. However, to deal with the statement at Mr. McCallum's social, let me say that if the hon. member imagines that he can draw me into making an attack on the civil servants, he is very much wrong; he is misjudging his opponent.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you made it.

The PREMIER: I made no attack on the civil servants.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is that report all wrong?

The PREMIER: Could I justify an attack on the civil servants because they exercised the right which we gave them, because they exercised their full political rights? What I take exception to is public servants using Government time and Government offices to canvass for any party, and what I had in mind was a statement made to me by a person, whom I have no reason to disbelieve, as to what happened in one particular department. A circular was issued in connection with the preparation of the draft estimates. That circular went to a certain sub-department and the head called his staff together on the morning of the elections and read the circular, and undoubtedly

the great bulk of the officers who heard it read were led to imagine that we did not propose to give them any increases. Nothing of the kind is implied in the circular when read carefully. It merely stated that heads of sub-departments were not to show increases on the draft estimates, because the regulations provided that increases should be on the recommendation of the permanent head and with the approval of the Public Service Commissioner. And these increases could not be considered unless we held up the draft estimates for a number of months. This particular gentleman read the circular to the staff, and then said "This is election day; you know what to do." If that is what is meant by full political rights it is not what was intended by this Government. I contend that a public servant should first of all be loyal to the Ministry of the day, whether they be Labour or Liberal, and I say that this action was a disloyal action, and I take exception to public servants abusing the liberty we gave them in that direction. I do not claim that they should have voted for Mr. McCallum, I never urged that; they have a right to vote for whomever they please without let or hindrance from anybody, but they dared not, before the present Government came into power, express their political opinion or show a leaning towards the Government's opponents unless they placed their position in jeopardy. We have removed all that, and have given them the full right to express their opinions on all political questions, just as they choose. In connection with the civil service, may I say that I will take an opportunity on the Budget to show what we have done for the civil servants during our term of office; that is, what it means in hard cash. Any public servant who says that we have failed to keep our promises, and on such grounds openly canvassed in the corridors for a political candidate, was not fair, and I had a perfect right to say so publicly. Of course, the dear old *Argus* can hardly be expected to understand anything when it sees it. That newspaper is a real old Tory hack, and is recognised as such all over Australia. Its word on these

matters is generally recognised to be worth nothing. A public servant, while he may be dissatisfied with the actions of the Government, has a perfect right to ventilate it through his proper organisation, the Civil Service Association, which we officially recognise and which our friends opposite would not. The civil servant has a right to express his views there. When I find a public servant in a high place misleading others under him, or making misstatements, and in some cases untrue statements, with regard to the Government—

Hon. Frank Wilson: I should deal with him.

The PREMIER: We have given them perfect freedom in these matters, but I retain to myself the right to criticise them if I so desire.

Mr. Foley: It is a pity you have not the right to sack them; that would settle it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member referred to State steamships and supposes that because they showed a loss in the first place there must be something wrong, first with the administration, then with the steamers, and ultimately with the whole system; that the whole thing is wrong. If the whole thing is wrong the leader of the Opposition should share a part of the responsibility; because it was part of the policy of the Liberals at the last general elections.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What absurd stuff!

The PREMIER: The hon. member deliberately stated that his Government would go so far as to purchase a steamship to run to the North-West.

Hon. Frank Wilson: From Wyndham to freezing works at Fremantle.

The PREMIER: That was never mentioned. I am not going to say there is anything wrong with the State steamers; on the contrary they are all right. Many business men who are to-day on a firm financial footing had to start on a worse basis than the State steamships have started, but such things will always happen. No one could possibly anticipate that in the first year of the operations

such a steamship service as we introduced could possibly return a profit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have lost half the value of your steamers.

The PREMIER: The "Western Australia," the steamer which will bring us the greatest business, has been operating only about four months, and a great deal of the expenditure in connection with the "Western Australia" was in bringing her from the place of purchase to this State. Will the leader of the Opposition get his friend, Mr. Moxon, to give him the cost of bringing out the steamers of his company; do they make them show a profit at first? The hon. member shakes his head.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I shake my head at your foolish arguments.

The PREMIER: I have a statement prepared showing that the last two months' operations of the State Steamship Service shows a profit of £2,000, and, given a fair opportunity, I say these steamers will make good. They have undoubtedly had to contend with a great deal of opposition from the other shipping companies.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have not.

The PREMIER: A great many people have been trying to induce likely customers in the North-West not to use them. I say again that, given a fair run, these steamers are going to make good, and are going to be of considerable value to the North-West portion of this State. Every member of the North-West, except the hon. member for Kimberley—

Mr. Underwood: He is the agent for a steamship company.

The PREMIER: I say that all those members from the North-West already appreciate the value of these steamers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is more than the people do.

The PREMIER: The people appreciate them as well. We have had squatters come to Perth and say they are prepared to give evidence before the Royal Commission to that effect. That statement is absolutely correct. Unfortunately we have had strong opposition, and it has not only been from the shipping companies,

but we have also struck disaster in one or two directions.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you are trading under special facilities.

The PREMIER: No, we are operating just the same as others are. If there is anything in the argument of the leader of the Opposition we would not be owning State railways do-day, as State railways did not pay at the start. For the first five or six years, or even longer, they often do not pay even for axle grease, but is that any reason why we should sell them to private enterprise?

Mr. Male: Yes.

The PREMIER: Well, we are not selling them. Supposing we were to make a complete loss on the operations of these steamers and had to give them away, it would not be such a disaster as the dock, which was put in a certain place by our friends opposite for political purposes. The dock is £200,000 of the people's money sunk, because our friends insisted on putting it in a position to assist them politically. All this howl is about £100,000 worth of steamers that are doing good work. The statement of the hon. member that Mr. Sudholz was appointed in pursuance of the policy of "spoils to the victors" is only worthy of the hon. member. There is not a member of this Cabinet who knew Mr. Sudholz, or ever saw him, except the member for East Fremantle—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I only spoke to him once.

The PREMIER: Until he was manager of the State Steamship Service. I do not even know him now. Be that as it may, I want to know if all the virtues and capabilities are to be found amongst Liberal supporters. The greatest messers one can imagine are Liberals very often. In dealing with the steamers I would like to mention that the hon. member commenced his remarks by paying a great tribute to Sir Newton Moore and said the Government did a good thing in re-appointing him. But the hon. member forgot that we accepted Sir Newton Moore's advice in connection with the purchase of the steamer "Western Australia." We asked Sir Newton Moore to recommend the pur-

chase of a steamer suitable for the North-West trade.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He does not know anything about steamers.

The PREMIER: And the leader of the Opposition does not either. He eulogises Sir Newton Moore and complains about the scrap iron, "Western Australia," when Sir Newton Moore and his officers were responsible for the purchase of that boat. I believe, even now, that Sir Newton Moore knows more about a steamer suitable for that trade than the leader of the Opposition, and I think that the "Western Australia" is suitable.

Hon. Frank Wilson: She has proved disastrous up to the present.

The PREMIER: Only a few things require adjustment. What happened to the furnaces happens nearly every day in every part of the State. The leader of the Opposition must know very well that it is quite a common occurrence on the mines for the furnace crown of a boiler to come down.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are out of your depth.

The PREMIER: Exactly the same thing happened with regard to the furnace crown of the "Western Australia," and it was through using salt water. It is one of the things we have to contend with and are not yet satisfied how it happened, but that does not affect the boat in the slightest degree, and I claim that the "Western Australia" is the finest boat trading between Fremantle and Port Darwin. The hon. member referred to the sleeper contract and wanted to know why we commenced erecting these mills in the karri forest until we had that contract signed, sealed and delivered. It was because the members on these benches are not so suspicious as he is and are prepared to take the word of a Liberal, even if he is not. We have everything in the nature of a contract and have already made a part performance under it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why are you submitting it to the Crown Law authorities?

The PREMIER: We are not. It is your friend, the man who is hunting for a policy and has not found it yet. It seems to the leader of the Opposition a

wonderful business that we should enter into a contract to supply these sleepers until the contract had been signed, sealed, and delivered. May I inform the hon. member that the other parties to the contract, who have not yet signed the same, have commenced the construction of the railway on Western Australian lands for which the agreement in connection with the handing over of such lands has not been signed by the present Government. So the hon. members finds it cuts both ways; if one Government can repudiate so can the other.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But what about the Act?

The PREMIER: The Act does not give them anything, so if the one Government can repudiate their contract, so also can another.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, you cannot.

The PREMIER: Let me tell the hon. member we have no intention of repudiating, and that I have even a better opinion of Joe Cook than has the leader of the Opposition. I am convinced that the contract will be kept.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did he make the contract?

The PREMIER: No, the contract was made by his predecessors, but he will keep it, just as we have kept contracts made by our predecessors, notwithstanding that some of those contracts did not find favour in our eyes. No self-respecting Ministers would think of repudiating such a contract, and even if they felt disposed to do it, we have by telegram from the Prime Minister the following, "We accept your tender for the supply of 1,500,000 powdered sleepers." If that is not a contract good enough for us to go ahead with I do not know what is. It is not wise for the hon. member to try to take a fence before he meets it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How are you going to deliver them?

The PREMIER: That is a matter I can with confidence leave in the hands of the Minister for Works. He is giving sufficient attention to it, and he knows the position well enough to say whether we can deliver. The Commonwealth know that they can depend better on the State

Government than on any private contractor.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I would like to see the thing done.

The Minister for Works: Now you might be an expert on ship-building, but please do not talk saw-milling.

The PREMIER: The hon. member made some reference to the agreement obtained by the *Sunday Times* by tactics which, I suppose, in the point of view of journalism are all right; but the hon. member would never support the action of a public servant who would give away such an agreement.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did a public servant give it?

The PREMIER: It could only have come from a public servant; it was in a Government office.

Mr. Male: The other party had a copy.

The PREMIER: I say it came out of a Government office.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you found that out?

The PREMIER: I say it came from a Government office, and I say that only the hon. member could support the action of a public servant who would do anything of that sort. However, the hon. member has now the agreement, and evidently he cannot understand it. He is asking how are we going to pay only 1s. 3d. per hundred superficial feet royalty on sleepers supplied to the Commonwealth, in spite of that agreement.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I asked how you were going to supply 60,000 sleepers a month.

The PREMIER: We explained in another place last year that under that agreement the royalty was 1s. 3d. per hundred superficial feet. I have the record here. Mr. Colebatch—I think he is known to the hon. member—asked the Colonial Secretary what royalty was to be paid, and the Colonial Secretary in reply said the royalty was 1s. 3d. per hundred superficial feet. So it has not been such a great secret after all, for apparently it was easy enough to get the information in another place.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you another secret agreement that we do not yet know of?

The PREMIER: Then again, I believe the hon. member said that evidently we were attempting to unload the contract.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, I merely asked the question.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said we were trying to unload the contract; that evidently it was not a good thing and we wanted to unload it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I said you could not deliver, and were anxious that a private firm should take part of it off your hands.

The PREMIER: That is absolutely incorrect. Let me explain. At the time we entered into that contract to supply sleepers to the Commonwealth Government, the New South Wales Government wrote to us asking if we could supply them with a million powellised karri sleepers, side by side with the Commonwealth contract. We found that the Commonwealth contract was sufficient to keep us busy for the next three or four years, so, in order to benefit the State, instead of replying to the New South Wales Government, stating that we could not supply, we went along to the private firms to see whether they could fill the bill. Our sole desire was that the State should get the business, and to achieve this we were prepared to enter into the contract with the New South Wales Government and sub-let it to the local firms if the local firms could supply. Let it be distinctly understood that we were not attempting to unload the Commonwealth contract.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And you do not intend to?

The PREMIER: No, absolutely no.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Next year we will see how you execute your contract.

The PREMIER: The hon. member made reference to instructions from Congress.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I said Labour parliament.

The PREMIER: Well, they have a Liberal parliament as well. The Liberals went to the people without a policy and said, "We will have one when the Liberal parliament draws up one for us." They met Parliament with a majority of only one, and asked for supplies, and Parliament granted supply in order that the

Liberals might have an opportunity of framing a policy. How does that compare with the attitude of my friend? When I came down here, after holding control for something like 18 months with a definite policy from the people—when I asked for supplies for a period of two months in order to carry on the business of the country, he did his utmost to prevent me getting those supplies.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Because of the scandalous contract which you would not explain.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows something of scandalous contracts right enough, and he is in most of them. Compare the conduct of ex-Prime Minister Fisher, defeated by only one vote in the Representatives and having a thumping majority in the Senate, when asked to grant supplies to a Government that had no policy—compare that with the paltry attitude of my friend who attempted to stop public supply, not only by criticism in this Chamber, but also by trying to kill time in order that it might not reach another place before that other place adjourned.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: Let me also point out that the hon. member made reference to my recent visit to England, and in his usual sarcastic and rather clever manner said he thought it would be an education to me, and that from that point of view the money was well spent. I am exceedingly sorry I cannot return the compliment. The hon. member went Home, partly at the expense of the State, partly at the expense of the Imperial Government and partly by subscription, but unfortunately the trip did not assist his education very much.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the reference to the Imperial Government?

The PREMIER: The hon. member was the guest of the Imperial Government during the festivities.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I was not.

The PREMIER: The hon. member and his wife were invited as guests of the Imperial Government during the Coronation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not as guests; we paid our own expenses all the time.

The PREMIER: The same as I did, that is to say, the State paid them.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We paid our own.

The PREMIER: However, I am exceedingly sorry the hon. member did not benefit educationally by his trip. He made reference to my alleged statement that the working man of England has nothing to defend. I had previously denied having made that statement, and the hon. member must have read the denial. What I said I will repeat here. The paper that published the statement published my denial after I left. What I did say was this: At the time I was defending the Australian defence policy under which we are compelling all our able-bodied young men to submit to be trained to bear arms in order to defend this country against attack, if we are ever attacked, which it is to be hoped we will never be. I was defending that policy, and an endeavour was made on several occasions to get me to express an opinion as to the relative merits of our system and Lord Roberts' agitation for compulsory training. In effect I said, "You must work out your own destiny as we are doing in Australia. If you think it is a good thing, have it; if not, leave it alone. But do not judge from the success of the scheme in Australia, do not conclude that because it is a success in Australia it will be a success in England; "because," I said, "we have adult suffrage and if an attempt were made to introduce conscription and militarism in Australia it would quickly be squelched by the safety valve of adult suffrage." Then I pointed out that the working man of England had nothing to defend as compared with the working man in Australia, and I repeat it here. I told them that before they called upon the working man of England to bear arms, the same as the Australian working man, they must first give him the privileges enjoyed by the working man in Australia. Now let me also explain, for I omitted it when dealing with the civil service, that I have never claimed that

because we have given increases to public servants, and extended other privileges to them, we have a right to expect that they shall vote for our party. I have never claimed that. But I will tell the House what the hon. member did. He was fighting an election campaign and was sorely pressed, for I was well on his track, and he knew very well that, so far as the metropolitan area was concerned, the issue would largely depend on how the civil service voted. He wired from Donnybrook on the eve of the election to the Public Service Commissioner as follows :—

Want to know whether you cannot make increases to temporary clerks retrospective to July first. Wire me your approval.

The Public Service Commissioner wired it, and the hon. member used it on the public platform, and was careful to see that it appeared in the *West Australian* on the day of the election. That is not buying votes, of course. However, it came too late. Now let me deal with the question of finance. I did expect that the hon. member, having been in possession of the Treasury, would have made some severe criticisms on the handling of the finances during the last 12 months.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You will get it all right when we have the Budget Speech.

The PREMIER : And I will be here to answer it. All the hon. member dealt with was the action of the Treasurer in transferring, not £40,000, but something like £37,000 from a suspense account in connection with harbour improvements at Fremantle and paying it into revenue. And he points out and would make the people believe that that money was required for the purpose of meeting the interest and sinking fund charges on harbour improvements.

Hon. Frank Wilson : It was collected for that purpose.

The PREMIER : The improvements to the Fremantle harbour were made out of General Loan Fund and the first charge on

Consolidated Revenue is to meet the interest and sinking fund charges on our Loan expenditure. Every year we have been taking out of Consolidated Revenue Fund the money necessary for all the interest and sinking fund charges on the harbour improvements at Fremantle, yet we have another account for the purpose of meeting it. In view of the fact that the Consolidated Revenue Fund had found the money, I said that that fund should be reimbursed, with the result that we took the money from that Suspense Account that was no further required and paid it into Consolidated Revenue Fund. It could not be paid into any other. It could not be paid into Trust Fund or into Loan Fund, but perhaps the hon. member will assert that it should be paid into the Sale of Government Property Trust Account. I say that this was an absolutely genuine transaction, but the hon. member said that similarly I might have paid into Consolidated Revenue Fund a sum of £87,000 which I found to the credit of the Sale of Government Property Trust Account. I assert that in practice the hon. member did that.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I did not.

The PREMIER : The hon. member did. The only difference is that the hon. member covered up his tracks as usual. He never does anything openly if he can possibly find any means of covering up his tracks. What the hon. member did was that instead of finding the usual amount for the purpose of public works from Consolidated Revenue Fund, he reduced the amount to the extent of £80,000 and then put it on a schedule to the Estimates to be provided by the Government Property Trust Account, which was exactly the same from a practical point of view as paying into Consolidated Revenue Fund £87,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson : No.

The PREMIER : What is the difference? Instead of providing £87,000 from Revenue for building schools the hon. member transferred £87,000 from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account. Is that not the same as bringing the same amount into revenue?

Hon. Frank Wilson: No. You took it to pay your debts and I brought it to Parliament to be voted as usual.

The PREMIER: So will we.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, you have not.

The PREMIER: We did so last session. The hon. member made some references to the legislative proposals of the Government for the coming session. I know of no measure that is so necessary for the proper and safe working of our mines as an amendment of the Mines Regulation Act, and I do not care what the hon. member says, or what his friends in the Chamber of Mines say, I contend that it is the first duty of any Government to protect life and limb, even if it means making inroads on the profits of the companies; but we do not claim that. Moreover, I say it is the duty of an Australian Government above any other to keep our great mineral resources for the benefit of Britishers and Australians first of all. We are not going to allow the mines to be handed over to the Italian to work, the same as the firewood industry has been handed over by Mr. Hedges. So long as Britishers can be found, we are going to employ them in preference to Italians, and we are not going to allow the companies to put off Britishers and put on Italians. If the mines are any good to Australia they are good enough to employ Britishers and we are going to see that Britishers are employed, and moreover that they are properly protected against danger to life and limb. Of course that is no concern of my friend opposite, who is a typical Yank—"in God we trust," but it is the almighty dollar he is after all the time. Then the hon. member spoke of the Public Works Committee Bill, but this is part of the Liberal policy. I have here the party's official journal, the *Sunday Times*, with the words "the largest circulation in the State" on top of the page, and it contains this advertisement—

Federal Elections. To the Electors of Western Australia. A Liberal victory will adjust taxation to annual requirements, while a Public Works Committee and a Tender Board will see that the country gets a square deal and full value for its money.

The announcement is authorised by Clarke James, the gentleman who displaced the member for Murray-Wellington as general secretary. Now, that is all we are asking for. It was part of the policy of the Liberal Government during the Federal elections, according to the advertisement in their official journal, and now the hon. member accuses us of doing something wrong because we propose the same thing. Does the hon. member deny, as Peter did, his leader in the person of Mr. Clarke James, the man who makes his policy? Before I sit down I want to say that I would have liked to have dealt with other matters on this occasion, but I will have the opportunity when submitting the Budget to the House. There is one thing, however, that I cannot allow to pass without some reference, and that is the fact that we have in our midst an organisation that the leader of the Opposition brought over some little time ago, an organisation known as "The Independent Workers," and I believe in my own mind that the hon. member was largely responsible for its introduction in this State. I have here a copy of an address delivered in London by Mr. R. O. Blackwood, of Melbourne, President of the Victorian Employers' Federation, and I find in it these words—

The next step taken was the establishment of a labour bureau within the building, which employers were asked to patronise.

I understand they established one here, but it was not patronised well.

This is an essential feature of the movement, and has been the means of very largely increasing the membership. The men seem to go naturally to where they can secure work. Those that turn up, generally from sixty to seventy a day, are carefully scrutinised by the bureau secretary, when all obvious loafers are passed out.

That was a nice remark for an employer to make.

The respectable men's names are entered in the register, and employment found for them as soon as possible, but before taking up a job they must become members of the "Independent Workers" by paying 1s. down and

agreeing to pay the subscription of 6d. per man per week.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Their political views are not controlled.

The PREMIER: They have not a soul to call their own. When they once come under the domination of the Employers' Federation of Australia, who were assisted materially by members opposite, they have no soul of their own and they have no right to give expression to their political opinions.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Neither have the people in the Trades Hall.

The PREMIER: They have fought against the members on the Opposition side for the right to express their opinions freely on the public platform, and they are going to retain that right. The hon. member may rest assured that the workers of the State—when I say workers, I do not mean merely the manual workers—will remember that he was responsible for having introduced into this State an organisation purely and simply for the benefit of the Employers' Federation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I was not responsible.

The PREMIER: The hon. member issued an invitation to them in this Chamber.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I approve of it, but I was not responsible for their coming here.

The PREMIER: I have disposed of most of the statements made by the leader of the Opposition and have replied pretty effectively to his criticisms. I have certainly shown that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones, and that whilst he may be very good at scraping up mud and throwing it, he is also a decent target where mud will stick. I would advise the hon. member that in future he devote any little time he has to studying the political questions of the day and criticising the Government on their political actions and not on street scandal and tittle-tattle. Surely we can see the advisability of dealing with questions that will affect the interests of the State, not for to-day alone, but for the distant future, from the point of view of the policy of the two parties, and we might

with advantage, not only to the Chamber and to both parties but to the people as a whole, leave alone such questions as were introduced by the hon. member this evening. Whatever the hon. member may think of the actions of those sitting on the Treasury benches, let me say that whatever we have done has been done openly and with the one object in view, that of assisting the development of the State as a whole. I desire to say, furthermore, that if it were otherwise the hon. member would have good ground for asking for a public inquiry and impeaching members in their places, but he has not been prepared to do that; he has merely risen in his place and implied all sorts of things against the Government, suspicious actions on the part of Ministers, and endeavoured to leave in the minds of the people an impression that Ministers were responsible for something that was not fair and above board. Even the member for Northam last night could not discuss this question without making some innuendo in connection with the purchase of the tramways. He stated that a certain amount of the purchase money would be distributed on a certain basis, and then, looking across the Chamber said, "The rest, I suppose, will be distributed amongst the directors." Then again, when the same hon. member made some reference to the £30,000 paid to the Powellising Process Company for the right to use their process, the member for Murray-Wellington interjected across the Chamber, "I wonder what they are going to do with the £3,000." Remarks of that sort do not do hon. members opposite any credit. All Government from time to time must take the responsibility of transacting such agreements as we have entered into during recent months, and also such transactions as were made by members opposite, and if, on every occasion an agreement is entered into by the executive officers of the State we are going to have such accusations as were made to-day, the hon. member must recollect that he is only causing the public of the State to distrust their politicians more and more every year, and if he should ever remove his seat from its present position to the

Treasury benches he will have no ground for complaint if the people still continue to criticise him and his Ministers in exactly the same fashion. The hon. member in his own mind knows very well that there is absolutely no ground whatever for the statements he has made, or has implied with regard to the transactions of the Government and the Powell Wood Process, or with regard to the Eucla lands. In his own mind he knows very well there is no ground for those statements. If he has the slightest suspicion, he is in duty bound, as leader of a great party in this State, to stand up in his place and impeach a Minister, or the Ministry as a whole, and state deliberately what he knows, and until he does this he is doing something that does him discredit and not only himself but the members of his party, and it is also an injury to the State as a whole. I want to say, moreover, in conclusion, that so long as I remain on the Treasury benches I am going to continue to administer the departments in my charge without any concern as to the criticism that may be hurled against me by members of the Opposition, and I believe that my Ministers will do likewise. We have done things during our administration which might easily have been left alone from the point of view of our own comfort. We might easily have left many things for a future date, but we could see that they were in the best interests of the State and that they should be done, and done early, and we have done them, and I want to claim that almost without exception they have proved to be to the advantage of the State as a whole. With the one exception of the steamship service, all the Government concerns have been paying propositions. The State butcher's shop has not cost the Treasury a single penny; we have not taken a penny out of the Treasury for the Perth butcher's shop. The first transaction occurred when the butcher's shop was able to pay money into its account, and that account shows a profit of £800 in the last 12 months.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Do you charge interest on the Yandanooka estate?

The PREMIER: We were not using the Yandanooka estate at that time, and so

far as that estate is concerned I may say that it will be dealt with in a proper manner, and that is in accordance with law. But at the present time there is some little difficulty regarding the cutting up of the estate, which I cannot mention here, but which the hon. member will appreciate when I tell him privately, but until this is settled I cannot say anything more. But we will not allow that estate to lie idle if we can use it profitably in the interests of the country, and we are doing that and the people are getting the advantage of it. Under the circumstances the hon. member's criticism or indictment against the Government falls to the ground. During the 12 months, notwithstanding the criticism hurled against us by our friends opposite and by a great section of the Press, still we have done good work. We have attended closely to our duties in our respective offices and we have done it with the one object in view, and have attained that object, which is the continuance of the development of the various industries in the interests of the people as a whole and not in the interests of a few of the people. We are here as a Government in the interests of the mass of the people and not in the interests of a privileged few, and from that point of view I claim a development such as has not been retarded, notwithstanding the bad season, but that we have materially assisted the prosperity of the State and the prosperity of its people.

Mr. MALE: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I second the motion.

The Premier: It is early yet.

Motion negatived.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley): After the two vigorous speeches which have been put up this evening, I thought the Premier would most probably have given me an adjournment. I consider the leader of the Opposition put up a very able criticism of the Governor's Speech, and the general policy of the Government, but I can hardly say that the Premier has contributed to this debate in a particularly dignified manner. I myself think that there has been too much mud or

muck, or whatever hon. members like to call it, about the Premier's speech.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It was only thrown back.

Hon. Frank Wilson: My speech was good criticism.

Mr. MALE: It is not my intention to look for mud on either side of the Chamber. I do not think we are here for mud-throwing purposes, but to try to do good for the benefit of the country. In listening to His Excellency's Speech, and in reading it through quietly afterwards, I could not but be struck with the meagreness of the information which it contains. There is certainly some reference to the Premier's trip to the old country. There is the usual reference, which we find in each Governor's Speech, regarding the season, and it is certainly gratifying for us all to know, and to know truthfully I think, that we have had splendid rains throughout the agricultural districts, and that the prospect of a good season is assured. There are paragraphs referring to the great mining industry; there is also the usual paragraph referring to land settlement, and we find that in the eyes of the Government at least land settlement, so far as they are concerned, is proceeding satisfactorily. I am not quite so sure that we are all so satisfied about that. There is a reference to sundry other matters, and the Speech winds up with a short reference to new legislation which will be presented to us during the session, most of which, I think, we have already seen before. It is, perhaps, rather unusual on this occasion that there has been no pre-session speech from the Premier, nothing to guide us in connection with this new legislation, or to give us any information respecting the general policy of the Government. It appears to me rather on the surface as though, perhaps, the Premier was waiting for instructions from the Labour parliament, which has been referred to several times this evening.

The Attorney General: That is not new.

Mr. MALE: I know it is not new, but it is quite true and we all know that the Labour parliament did meet after this House was called together, and I have

not the slightest doubt in my own mind that the Premier has received his instructions from that body, and, as we all know, both the front benchers and the whole of the members of the Labour party are pledged absolutely, body and soul, to carry out that platform. We know they have no freedom of action or thought in the matter. They are not allowed to come back and draft their own policy, the same as Mr. Cook has been allowed to do, but they have to carry out absolutely the mandates and dictates of the Labour Congress. It appears to me that the country is no longer to be ruled by the men who are returned to Parliament by the electors, but that it is to be ruled by the Labour Congress and that the members on the Government side are merely the nominees of that body.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Absolute machinery.

The Premier: You are cooking the Liberal policy.

Mr. MALE: In looking through His Excellency's Speech, representing as I do a big part of the northern portion of this State, I could not but be struck with the very short reference indeed which is made to that part of Western Australia. It is rather striking that in both this year's Speech and in last year's Speech, the references to the North-West are very short indeed. Last year we found one short reference something to the effect that the jetties and tramways of the North-West were to be put in a better state of repair, and that efforts would be made to provide additional jetty accommodation. This year we find reference to the fact that under the new organisation for carrying out the numerous works required in the north and north-west portion of the State, a substantial advance has been made in the construction and maintenance of jetties, tramways and public buildings. These references are indeed very short when we consider the importance and size of the North. Let me remind this House, and I do not think it is the first time I have told the House that in the North we have two of the most important industries of this State, namely, squatting and pearling. In our squatting industry it surely is not news

to any member that we have the second most important industry of the State. The export of wool from Western Australia represents a value of something over a million pounds sterling, and let me inform hon. members that pearling comes a good fourth.

The Premier: It is of no advantage to the State.

Mr. MALE: Yes, it is of advantage to the State, for it has an export value of over half a million and in both cases it is the same as picking up golden sovereigns; it is bringing money into this State. We grow the wool; it is not borrowed money on which we have to pay interest, and the same applies to the pearling industry.

Mr. McDonald: How long has the export been worth half a million?

Mr. MALE: Last year it amounted to over half a million; it has a fluctuating value.

Mr. McDonald: You told a different story before.

Mr. MALE: Past Governments have been condemned for their want of knowledge and their want of sympathy with our portion of the State, but the present Government came in like a new broom and in double quick time were going to put everything right. One of the first things was that the Minister for Works, accompanied by a Parliamentary party, visited the North for the purpose of gaining knowledge and information, and also, I take it, for the purpose of making promises. Some of those promises are being looked for yet.

Mr. Heitmann: A good many of them have been carried out.

Mr. MALE: Twelve months ago in His Excellency's Speech there was a reference to the effect that regulations were also being framed with the object of assisting, by a system of deferred payments, the extension of artesian boring so as to render further assistance in developing the industry in that portion of the State. I would like to ask where these regulations are. Why have these regulations not been published? The squatters in the North have been waiting for a long time for these regulations. They might have been published, but if

that is so, why have not the members for the northern portion of the State been advised of them? Why have the regulations not been circulated amongst the squatters who are waiting for them, and who want to make use of them. Is it a case of the powellising contract, something which the Government want to keep quiet and to put aside? Is the Treasury so short of money that it cannot advance the necessary amount to assist this object? The country in the North requires artesian bores. Our small squatters are not in a position to—

The Minister for Lands: You have had a copy of the regulations sent to you, and other members of the House also.

Mr. MALE: I have never received it and have not seen one.

Mr. Heitmann: It was published in the *West Australian*.

Mr. MALE: I doubt whether a copy has been forwarded to the squatters in the North, as they are waiting for these regulations.

Mr. Heitmann: It is not fair; it was published in the *West Australian*!

Mr. MALE: It is not fair, but it is true. If I did not believe what I say to be true I would not say so.

Mr. Heitmann: I believe that.

Mr. MALE: We understood from the Minister for Works when he took that trip to the North that our great cattle industry was to receive a lot of attention. On the Minister's return we had that exhaustive report which he submitted to the Government. The Minister made a flying trip from Fremantle to Wyndham and came back hursting with knowledge of the whole industry, and was quite certain in his own mind that he could put the whole thing right.

Mr. Lander: Why do not the squatters take some action with regard to diseased stuff?

Mr. MALE: He knew that the policy of freezing works was a wrong one, and advocated that preference should be given to building up the export trade. This is what the Minister for Works said on his return in the report published—

I claim in the first place that the class of stock is not suitable to market sne-

cessfully, even if the cost of freezing were cheap. The natural market for the Kimberley district is undoubtedly amongst the population to be found within a few days' sail of Derby and Wyndham. The market is unlimited and the price that can be obtained for the stock, considering the quality of the meat, is as much as could be paid for such stock for freezing or canning. I would recommend that no expenditure be incurred in connection with the establishment of freezing or canning works, but would strongly recommend that the Government take an early opportunity of having exhaustive inquiries made as to the possibility of extending the trade to the islands mentioned.

Can the Government tell me what special investigations have been made with reference to the export trade to those islands? Can they tell me one single thing they have done to benefit that industry. They have done worse than nothing; they have done much to bring about the opposite results. The matter is perhaps a more important one to me than to many hon. members of the House, representing as I do that portion of the State, and that being so I may be excused perhaps if I appear somewhat to labour the question. But in doing so, I am dealing with the general policy of the Government. We find laid down under the instructions the Government have to follow—

Mr. Lander: Who has to follow?

Mr. MALE: All of you. We find under Nos. 4, 6, and 9 of the general platform that your platform is one of socialism and nationalising the whole of the industries if possible, and the Government know quite well, faced with that, that they have no alternative but to carry it out. As a matter of fact they have already started. We have State butchers' shops and State steamers, and brickworks are to follow.

Mr. Lander: It is something new to you to find a Government carrying out its promises. is it not?

Mr. MALE: It has been proved by the leader of the Opposition that that policy is a bad one. The same thing has been proved in other States, and in my own

way I shall try to prove that it is bad because it is economically wrong and unworkable. Last session the Hon. Frank Connor in another place gave an exhaustive address on the meat and cattle question.

Mr. Underwood: Yes, and put a joint on the Table, did he not?

Mr. MALE: He put a joint on the Table that the Government could not swallow. In spite of the warning of that gentleman and the warnings of others who knew something about the business, the Government persisted in going on in the way in which they started. Last year the Address-in-reply debate both the Premier and the Minister for Lands made some reference to this question, and I would like to remind them of what they said in that connection. The Premier said—

Our object is to relieve the small grower from the grip of these few firms and, while giving him a fair deal, at the same time enable him to put his product on the market at a fair price to the consumer. I think we can do that if given an opportunity by Parliament. The leader of the Opposition attempted to make us believe that the price of meat was controlled by supply and demand. It would be so if the supply and demand were not controlled by a ring. When there is interference with free supply and demand, then we cannot say that the price is balanced or arranged by supply and demand. That is from the Premier's speech. The Minister for Lands also had a few words to say on this subject. He said—

We have no right to leave those people neglected, to refuse to do whatever we can, whatever is humanly possible to afford them facilities equally as good as those afforded to settlers in other areas of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then your boats are to benefit cattle growers?

The Minister for Lands: Our boats are to have all-round benefit. They are to benefit the producers in the North-West, and they are to benefit the consumers in the South, and, as a matter of fact, they are going to prove of more material benefit than any other

facilities which have been provided in recent years to any body of citizens in any portion of the State.

Mr. Lander: You are omitting about a dozen lines of the Minister's speech.

Mr. MALE: I am not going to read it all. In reply to an interjection by the Hon. Frank Wilson, who inquired, "are you going to benefit the cattle grower," the Minister for Lands remarked—

We are going to benefit them all; we are going to benefit the producers in that we are going to give them an outlet for their stock, which has previously been denied, and we are going to benefit the consumer in that we are going to give him an increased supply, and I hope and believe, a supply at a cheaper rate.

Those references read very nicely and sound very well. Are they true? Have they been carried out? Let us see what these promises amount to. The Minister for Lands says on the one hand that he is going to benefit the producer, but turns round and in the self-same breath says, "We are going to benefit the consumer." What is the result to the consumer? Only as recently as the end of June cattle were brought down from Wyndham in the State steamship "Kwinana" for some of our small squatters. I have a copy of the account sales here, and in looking through that copy I find that after paying £3 6s. for freight and wharfage both ends, fodder, attendance, and other necessary charges, the stock realised to the producer the handsome sum of £1 6s. 6d. per head.

Mr. Lander: That is £1 6s. 6d. more than they got before, because they could not sell them at all.

Mr. MALE: These accounts can be verified if required. I say it is a scandal and a disgrace that such things should happen, and I put the blame on the Government. It is absolutely a case of mismanagement and ignorance. That man could have received at Wyndham £4 per head for those stock for the export trade to Manilla. Doubtless those who know anything about the industry know that it is necessary to book cattle from the North to Fremantle months ahead.

Mr. Lander: The little man was asked months ago to do it. Why did you not tell the little man to take advantage of it?

Mr. MALE: He had to book months ahead to secure space in the Government steamship. At £4 per head, which he might have got at Wyndham, he would perhaps have got a small margin of profit on which to keep his family for twelve months, and it might have assisted him—

Mr. Lander interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for East Perth (Mr. Lander) must not interject so frequently. He will have an opportunity to speak later on.

Mr. MALE: They do not like to hear the truth, Mr. Speaker. They do not like to know that they induced this small squatter to book his cattle in this steamer to be sold at 26s. 6d. per head when he might have got £4 for them. It would have been far better for the man to have cut their throats at Wyndham, salted the hides, and sent the hides down. And that is not the worst of it. While this disgraceful state of affairs is continuing what do we find the Government doing? Buying stock outside of this State altogether, outside of our small squatters. They are probably buying from one of those big monopolies, one of those big English squatting firms whom they often denounce, paying perhaps £3 15s. or £4 per head, and are allowing our own squatters to have their cattle sacrificed at 26s. No attempt has been made by the Government to regulate the market. One week we have a short market and perhaps a week or two afterwards a glut. Before they entered on this business I pointed out to them that this local market can take only a limited supply, and if we bring down numbers in excess of that supply, even if we give the cattle away, the people could not consume them. This local market takes about 600 head of cattle per week, and if we are going to bring down 900 the market must fall. If the Government are going to conduct this business successfully they must first succeed in regulating the market, so that consistent prices may be realised.

Mr. Gill: Why did you not explain your leader's action when he stated that the price of meat had not dropped.

Mr. MALE: Neither it has. The poor producer is sacrificing his cattle and the consumer is unfortunately paying the same price.

The Premier: Who is making money out of it?

Mr. MALE: I suppose the Government butchers' shop. As I was pointing out the Government have bought stock outside of this State. I would like to make a further reference to the report of the Minister for Works on his return from the North. In dealing with this question he said—

There is another question to be considered, and that is the fact that there are considerably more stock available in the north at the present time than it is possible to place on the southern market owing to the fact that shipping companies are not able to supply the space required.

Then the Minister goes on to point out the fact that there are more stock up there than are required here, and he tells us that the only hope we have of selling this stock is to build up our export trade. Yet what do we find? That the Minister had the knowledge the cattle men had, and yet the Government deliberately and with their eyes open make a contract with a firm for the supply of cattle from outside this State.

Mr. Underwood: Where did the cattle come from?

Mr. MALE: The Northern Territory and at the same time the Government leave our small squatters in the position to which I have referred.

Mr. McDonald: Do you know that pressure was brought to bear on the Government agents so that they could not buy stock?

Mr. MALE: I have asked for a copy of the contract. It is such an important question that even the Premier cannot give me an answer to it.

Mr. Underwood: Does Connor and Doherty's station extend into the Territory?

Mr. MALE: I want to see the copy of the contract for the reason that report

says that that contract has been drafted in the very best interests of that squatting firm, and the only logical conclusion I can come to is that, therefore, that it has been drafted in the very worst interests of the State. As a member representing the North, as a member representing the squatters, and I think I can also say as representing the consumers, if that report is correct, if the contract has been drafted in the best interests of that squatting company and in the worst interests of this State, then I say the Government should be indicted for daring to make such a contract. We want to see that contract, we want to know more about it, and we want to know why the Government have gone outside this State to buy their supplies of cattle when they knew there was more than sufficient stock in the State to supply our market, and when they knew that our squatters were not getting a fair price for their cattle, and when they also knew that in the last two years we have been seeking outside markets for our cattle. I repeat, what right have they to bring more cattle into the State to compete against our own growers who are not getting a fair price. What right have they to carry the cattle of big squatting firms when they have admitted there is not sufficient space available to bring down stock for our small men. Hon. members on the other side may laugh, but to me it is far too serious a question for jesting, and I say there is no language strong enough, which would come under Parliamentary etiquette, to enable me to express my indignation in this matter. The Government are collecting rents and taxes from our squatters, and yet they go outside the State and buy stock raised on similar country, but for which a rental is paid at the rate of 1s. 6d. a thousand acres against 5s. in our State.

Mr. Green: Is this a song or a speech?

Mr. MALE: I trust it will be a sermon, and that members opposite will appreciate some of it. We will be saved then at least from our socialistic friends who would rather help the man outside the State than lend a hand to the squatter within the State. I think I have to some extent shown that the policy of the Government has been of no consequence to

my friends the small squatters in the North.

Mr. Gill: What is the matter with them?

Mr. MALE: There will not be many of them left if the policy of the Government is carried on much longer. We have it that during the present year, not only record prices were realised for stock, but at some portion of the year we have also seen record high prices obtained.

Mr. Lander: That is because Gascoyne has been dry.

Mr. MALE: Why? Because the big squatters who had facilities and opportunities for bringing their stock into market early in this season were able to bring their stock into a short market and command their own prices, and the Government steamship "Kwinana" which was to come here and assist the small squatter, where was it? For a portion of the time the "Kwinana" was carrying timber for one of those big monopolies we hear about, not to mention the fact that the Minister for Works was also taking a trip on that boat. It was not available when it was required.

Mr. McDonald: The stock was not available then.

Mr. MALE: Well, it was available shortly after, and before the "Kwinana" was able to take up her running on this coast. The result was that the big squatters who were in the position to market their stock got record prices, and the effect on the consumers was that they had to pay more for their beef instead of less. I contend that the establishment of a Government butcher's shop in the Perth city markets has not resulted in any reduction in the price of meat to any consumer in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Lands: Thirty per cent. cheaper.

Mr. MALE: It had the other effect. When they were ready to open their shop they asked the others who were established in the city markets to pay a higher rent for their stalls. When we consider that the Government have been selling the enormous quantity of, I believe, 12 carcasses of beef per week, we can realise the absurdity of the sale of that quantity having any effect on the retail price.

The consumption of beef in the metropolitan market is something like 500 carcasses per week.

The Minister for Lands: Well, what are you growling at?

Mr. MALE: The Government have not carried out what they promised to do. The Government have not reduced the price of meat.

Mr. Heitmann: You were opposed to those promises; you ought to be satisfied now.

Mr. MALE: I am not satisfied. The Government tell us that the shipping ring was retarding progress, that it was keeping everything back by the excessive freights which were being charged and by not providing sufficient space and accommodation, and they told the small squatters that they were being squeezed out, and they could not get space to bring stock down, and, therefore, they were compelled to sell to the beef barons at any price they asked. The great election cry was that when they came into power everything would be all right. I say that they have miserably failed in every respect.

Mr. Underwood: Oh, no!

Mr. MALE: It is true that the Government have put two steamers on the coast.

Mr. Underwood: They are going to put on two more.

Mr. MALE: And what has been the result? The competition of those two steamers resulted in the Adelaide Steamship Company withdrawing two steamers. Therefore, I contend that the accommodation on the coast is no more than it was before, and the space available is no greater to-day than before, and we still have the same number of steamers we had before the Government came along. The Government were going to reduce the price of freights.

Mr. Underwood: So they have.

Mr. MALE: Let me tell the hon. member that freights have gone up and I have had the experience of that myself. At the beginning of the year I was advised by a private shipping agent at Fremantle that the freight on wool had been put up one-eighth of a penny in the coming season. I went to the State steamship agent at Broome,

and I asked him for freight. He said, "Yes, what do you want it for." I suppose he was suspicious. I said, "I have some wool here waiting to be shipped." He sent away an urgent wire and subsequently informed me that the freight had gone up one-eighth. Yet the Government were going to reduce freights and further than that they were going to assist the small squatters. The freight for bringing cattle from the northern ports is higher this year than it was last year. That is absolutely true. I say, therefore, that on this point the Government have failed.

Mr. Heitmann: The freight from Derby is 5s. less and from Port Hedland 10s. less.

Mr. MALE: It is higher than it was when they told us that the steamship companies were making exorbitant profits. Let me point out that the Government steamers have had no competition. They advertised cheaper passenger fares to the extent of 10 per cent., but unfortunately the people who travel up and down the coast prefer to patronise the other steamers rather than those of the State in spite of the 10 per cent. reduction. We have come to the logical conclusion that either the steamship companies are not making those exorbitant profits that they were credited with doing, or else the Government have shown their absolute unfitness to run steamers on business lines, for with the increased rates they cannot even show a margin of profit, but they show an enormous loss.

The Premier: We have decreased freights all round. Do you know that but for our steamers freights would have been about £3 10s. this year?

Mr. MALE: I know nothing of the sort.

The Premier: Then you want to be told.

Mr. MALE: Neither does the Premier know anything of the sort. I think I have shown that the policy of the Government has been of no assistance, of no use to the producer. The cattle of the small squatter have been selling down here at a lower price than shows him a margin of profit, and we have only to get our weekly butcher's bill to judge for ourselves

whether it has been of benefit to the consumer.

The Premier: You should buy at our stall.

Mr. MALE: Unfortunately your stall by no means supplies the metropolitan area. I would like to make reference to the question of freezing works. We had a few remarks on this from the Minister for Lands when speaking last year. He said—

Now we have heard a great deal of the fact that the leader of the Opposition and his followers are just as desirous as the Government of reducing the cost of living, but the hon. gentleman tells us his plan was to establish freezing works at Wyndham. Now, that appears to me to show a lack of business capacity on the part of the leader of the Opposition: certainly the Government in undertaking this scheme do not follow the desire of the hon. gentleman, which is to meet a certain loss for a considerable period of time until we can educate our consumers to take frozen meat.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Chilled meat.

The Minister for Lands: Or chilled meat in place of the fresh article.

Now, had I no knowledge whatever of this business I would still prefer to take the business judgment of my friend the leader of the Opposition than I would take the unsound judgment of the Minister for Lands on this particular matter; but with some little knowledge of the question I am quite certain the leader of the Opposition was in the right and the Minister for Lands in the wrong. This opinion was ably backed up by Mr. Frank Connor in another place last session when he delivered that admirable address of his.

The Premier: Is he a small squatter?

Mr. MALE: No, but like myself he can take an interest in the small squatter, which it is apparent to me the Government cannot do when they go to one of the biggest squatting firms in Australia to get their stock. And we find that opinion is not only backed up by the big squatters, but even to-day the small squatters still advocate and ask for it. Here is a reference from a small squatter who

only a week or two back said that as an alternative he would suggest freezing works at Wyndham; and he contended that freezing works are the only true solution of the problem. To me it appears that if we are to encourage small squatters in the North, if we are to obtain for them a market for their stock, we must provide the facilities to enable them to market their stock in the world's market. And we can only do that by providing freezing works. Our squatters are as much entitled to get the world's prices for their produce as are the wheat-growers or the wool-growers, and it is the duty of the Government to assist them in marketing their stock to the best advantage. We find that only a week or two ago a large station property in the Northern Territory was sold at a price per head far in advance of what my friend the small squatter in East Kimberley obtained for his fat stock. The Minister for Works, in his report, told us that our stock was not fit for export; yet we know as a fact that for years past we have had to overland tens of thousands of our stock into Queensland, there to be sold to the meat works. In connection with this matter it is quite certain that the small squatter is not in a position to help himself, and the large squatter or the large pastoralist has absolutely no security. What does he find? He finds that the Government are competing against men already engaged in business. Were he to put up the necessary capital, say £200,000, for the erection of freezing works, he would have absolutely no security whatever, and it would be quite on the cards that before he got the works properly established the Government would put up opposition works alongside of them. Whilst that feeling obtains, whilst we know that the Government are apt to do that kind of thing, we will not get men ready to launch their capital into this or any other industry.

Mr. Green: Is that the reason why they do not go into this.

Mr. MALE: Apparently it is.

Mr. Green: Then why did not they go into it when the Liberal Ministry were in power?

Mr. MALE: The Minister for Lands pointed out that the people would refuse

to eat frozen meat. But the up-to-date method would be, not to bring down frozen meat, but chilled meat; and if the Minister for Lands would but consult the Minister who controls the butchers' shops he would find out that even to-day the people in the metropolitan area are consuming chilled meat, that it is impossible to keep meat fresh here during the summer months without chilling it. I understand that it was one of the pet schemes of the Government to erect abattoirs at North Fremantle and Midland Junction, and to hold the carcasses in cold storage until required by the small butcher or the consumer.

Mr. Green: Do you believe in that?

Mr. MALE: It is a policy that is adopted to-day. However, I do not believe in the Government doing everything. These abattoirs were to be established at once, but I have yet to learn that any start has been made with them. The Governor's Speech contained some reference to it, but although I have asked the question I can hear of no definite start having been made with the project. Before leaving the question of cattle I would like to draw the attention of the Minister for Agriculture to the serious matter of carrying tick cattle on the Government steamers. They allow these tick cattle to be loaded at Wyndham and brought down to our clean ports. That renders the ship an infected ship, and any cattle put on board that ship must be brought down in quarantine. The "Western Australia" has only two or three days at Fremantle, and most of that time is occupied in unloading and loading cargo. There is no doubt that whilst in port down here she cannot be properly disinfected. It may be possible under the regulations of the Agricultural Department for the ship to carry stock up the coast provided she is disinfected to the satisfaction of the department; but I cannot conceive how there can be sufficient time for her to be properly disinfected, and I have always maintained that where we have clean country, whether it be clean from small-pox, from codlin moth, from tick or from any other pest, it is our bounden duty to do all in our power to keep that country

clean at any price. I warn all shippers of stock up the coast not to ship stock to clean ports by any Government steamer, and I would ask the Minister for Agriculture to assist me in this respect; because I say that to do so would be a menace to the clean portion of the State and should not be allowed. I may be excused if I make a short reference to the question of finance. On the twelfth of July last we find in our daily paper the big headings "State Finance. The Result of the Year's Transactions. Large Surplus for June. Excess Revenue £107,000." All that for one month. Now, we need only take one item out of the revenue for June, that is, the revenue of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, to find that June alone contributes £53,394, a sum which is more than half the revenue collected from that same source during the year 1912. There is another item, namely that of Reimbursements in Aid, which has a credit balance of £75,000 odd. Given the full information we would find that the whole of that surplus revenue for June was contained in these two items, and therefore, it appears to me that the statement shown in the newspapers does not reveal the true position. It is not as rosy as it looks in the newspaper. We find on the year's operations that the revenue was £4,596,000 odd, with an expenditure of £4,787,000 odd, leaving a net deficit of £190,000. That is to say, we have a deficit for the twelve months of £22,000 in excess of what was estimated by the Treasurer. Now the Treasurer, when introducing his Estimates last year, ventured to predict, and he at the same time told us he did so with some degree of confidence, an extinction of the deficit within 24 months. Our accumulated deficit is now £311,000 odd. Of the 24 months, twelve have gone by, leaving only twelve in which to make up that loss. At that time, when speaking, I predicted that the deficit at the end of 24 months would be nearer half a million than the figure predicted by the Treasurer. And if we take the past year's operations as a criterion of what may be done during the coming year it will bring us to my figure of half a million, and not to the Treasurer's figure at all.

The Minister for Works: We will take the steamers off the coast and so save that loss. That, I think, is what you want.

Mr. MALE: That would assist, at all events. If we take the accumulated deficit of £311,000, and assume that the year's deficit will be the same as last year, namely, £190,000, we will just get the amount I predicted. We will leave my prediction aside, and ask ourselves how the Treasurer is going to balance his ledger. He must increase the revenue this year or spend less somewhere by £190,000, and, in addition, he has still to wipe out the deficit of £311,000.

The Minister for Works: It is all going into your constituency.

Mr. MALE: We fail to see it. Promises were left and nothing else. Is this adjustment of the finances to be effected by additional taxation, or, has the Labour Congress discovered a further method of bleeding the fat man? If so, I contend that neither the fat man nor the thin man can stand additional taxation to the tune of half a million pounds in 12 months. The country cannot stand it and, moreover, the country will not stand it, but that is what will require to be done if the Premier is to carry out his prediction to wipe out the deficit.

The Minister for Mines: You should sit down and not warn us.

Mr. MALE: I want to warn the Government. The Minister for Works at Beverley a short time ago, speaking in connection with the finances, said that the Government had the consolation of knowing that had it not been for the bad season they would have been on the right side of the ledger. After looking at these figures, it is apparent to me that the Minister had not made a careful study of the Treasury figures or he would not have made such a rash statement.

The Minister for Works: I was quoting the Treasury figures, not yours.

Mr. MALE: Mine are the Treasury figures.

The Minister for Works: Then you do not understand them.

Mr. MALE: The figures have been published, and it was as easy for me

as for the Minister for Works to understand them. The Minister blamed the season and told the farmers that it was owing to the deferred water rents and land rents that the Government had a deficit. I would like to point out to the members representing the agricultural districts that this is a charge against their districts which it would be well for them to refute at the earliest opportunity. I find in the *Statistical Register* figures which ought to explode the remarks of the Minister for Works. The bad season seems to have been made accountable for everything, but let us see what the bad season actually amounted to. We find that the production of wheat for the season ended February, 1913, was 4,385,000 bushels, whilst for the season February, 1912, it was 9,125,000 bushels, or more than double what it was in the previous year.

The Minister for Mines: But how much was the previous year below that of its predecessor?

Mr. MALE: I am taking the bad season that is being made accountable for this big deficit. The years before are surely not to be held accountable as well. We find, further, that the yield of oats for the year ended February, 1912, was 961,000 bushels, and for the last season 2,102,000 bushels, or more than double, and yet it was a bad season; indeed, a bad season.

Mr. Munsie: You would think it was when you hear the farmers complaining about it.

Mr. MALE: We therefore see that our total yield of wheat and oats was double last season what it was in the previous season.

The Minister for Lands: What is the comparison between the hay tonnage for the two years?

Mr. MALE: I have not the figures here but the hay yield was very little short of that in the previous year.

The Premier: That does not alter the fact that we had to carry them on after last year.

Mr. MALE: I am speaking of this year. Another striking fact about these figures is that the average yield per acre

has only been beaten once since 1906. Last session it was 11.61 bushels and that has been obtained only once in seven years. The yield of oats per acre was 16.50 bushels last year, which also has only been obtained once in the last seven years. The Minister for Agriculture interjected something about the hay tonnage. I find that the total yield of hay had only once been obtained, and that was in the 1912 season. Not such a bad record for hay either. It appears to me that Ministers to save their faces are libelling the farmers and the agricultural prospects when they make a song of bad seasons under such favourable conditions. When our yield of wheat and oats has more than doubled itself that must surely have meant increased freight and revenue for our railways. It must also have meant some degree of prosperity for our farmers, and yet they are blamed for the deficit.

Mr. Green: Let us pray.

Mr. MALE: It is time we prayed while that state of affairs continues. Let me dissect one or two items which should, according to the Minister for Works, affect the deficit. We find the difference between the estimated and actual revenue received from the lands, goldfields water scheme, and other water supplies, is nearly £10,000 in the Treasurer's favour. The expenditure on lands and agriculture shows a saving of £29,000, and on water supply of £21,000; and in these two items alone, which should be to a very great extent governed by a bad season, we find there is an error in the Treasurer's estimates of something like £60,000, and yet he says that these departments are responsible for the big deficit. Going further into the figures we can find the same results under the heading of public works, and the same applies also to the revenue received from the harbours. In fact, if we take the under-estimate on the items mentioned it would be almost sufficient to account for the whole of the estimated deficit which the Premier predicted. That being the case we must look to some other source for this deficit, and from a further look at these figures I think we shall find that it is to the indus-

trial undertakings of the Government that the deficit is principally due. If we take together the nett actual revenue and the increased actual expenditure we find that two items alone, railways and steamers, will be more than responsible for the deficit.

Mr. McDowall: Surely you are not complaining about the railways?

Mr. MALE: I am complaining about the railways, and I say from a purely business point of view, the falling off in profits on the railways is a serious item. We find that with an increased revenue we have decreased profits, and I say it is most essential that the Minister controlling that department and members of Parliament should make enquiries to find out what is wrong in connection with the system.

The Premier: We are carrying at unprofitable rates.

Mr. MALE: I am not satisfied with that bald statement, and I say it is time the Minister controlling the railways looked into these figures and told the House and the country what the position is. It is a serious position when we find that with increased revenue we have decreased profits. Something is wrong and it wants adjusting.

The Premier: We will adjust it.

Mr. MALE: I hope the Premier will. When we come to the returns from the steamship service the figures are appalling. This statement merely gives us a return of the cash receipts and the cash expenditure. It does not show the whole loss that has been incurred by these steamers. There are necessary book-keeping entries to be made for interest on capital, and depreciation, not on new steamers but on old steamers; but in connection with this service it is true that until the Treasurer gives us a balance sheet and a profit and loss account, which he has promised will be kept in connection with these undertakings—

The Premier: I did not promise anything of the kind; Parliament has instructed me to keep it.

Mr. MALE: I am thankful to know that Parliament has instructed the Premier to supply us with those figures, and

when we have them we shall be able to criticise more correctly and more carefully the result of the operations of the steamship service. But I am quite certain of this, that if we decide to close down our steamship service at the present time, and if we take into account the actual loss which we have made as shown by this cash return, and the book-keeping loss which would be put through, and the loss which would be shown if we tried to realise on our ships to-day, provided we obtained the true selling price of the steamers, we should find the loss to this State nearly £100,000, and not £20,000. I am certain of it.

The Premier: Oh, go on!

Mr. MALE: It would probably be useless to ask the Premier to discontinue this service. I believe as a matter of fact he has promised to increase it and to put on more steamers, but I would advise him if it is his intention to buy more steamers, then for goodness sake buy steamers and not scrap iron, for old ships are dear at any price.

The Premier: You would advise us to get some of your pearling luggers, I suppose?

Mr. MALE: I could sell the Premier some.

The Premier: You are selling them to the Japs, are you not?

Mr. MALE: I hope the lesson which should have been learned during the short time the State steamships have been running will guide the Premier and restrain him from rushing into these other industrial concerns which he has been instructed to enter upon. We have been promised brickworks—

The Premier: They are on the way.

Mr. MALE: Insurance business—

The Premier: That is on the way.

Mr. MALE: Flour mills, clothing factories, and even the departmental construction of our public works. I do trust that before recklessly carrying out these instructions the Premier will consider the financial position. The financial outlook to-day is none too cheerful, and we do not wish to find ourselves in the position of, say, New South Wales, where, with a big revenue and with an increased revenue on

previous years, they find themselves with a deficit of something like one million pounds sterling. We do not want to find ourselves in that position, and I would ask the Premier to be careful before rushing into too many of these industrial undertakings. In looking through His Excellency's Speech I find, among other matters, that we shall be asked to deal with a Bill for constitutional and electoral reform. It is rather a pity that the Premier did not give us a pre-sessional speech so that we might have had some idea as to what form this constitutional and electoral reform is to take.

Mr. Dwyer: Give us your ideas.

Mr. Munsie: You will get it in due course.

Mr. MALE: We will get it in due course. We have some of it in the Labour Congress platform. The only thing in this connection is in Item No. 1 of the Labour fighting platform, "the effective reform of the Legislative Council with a view to its ultimate abolition." I do not know, I am rather doubtful if this particular Bill refers to that, but I do say that any measure of electoral reform which comes from the Government benches will be viewed with the greatest suspicion by myself. I will tell hon. members why. We have had an example of electoral reform as understood by the Labour party in the Federal House. They gave us an Electoral Act—

Mr. Green: And it is not too bad either.

Mr. MALE: And it is common knowledge to all of us how that Electoral Act lent itself to abuse during the last general election.

Mr. McDowall: Do not speak too soon. Where is the proof of it?

Mr. MALE: When we find members of the Ministry and members of the Labour party going around the country and approving of that Act, and saying how much they appreciate it, I say I am justified in those first remarks of mine, when I said that any measure of electoral reform which comes from the Government benches will be viewed by myself with great suspicion. It will be viewed by the

country, as well as by myself, with great suspicion.

Mr. Munsie: And so was the Redistribution of Seats Bill viewed with very great suspicion by the country.

Mr. MALE: As regards the very much talked-of powellising contract, I am not going to deal with it. I am leaving that in better hands and in the hands of those who know more about the timber industry and powellising than I do.

The Premier: They are not on your side of the House.

Mr. MALE: There are such members on my side of the House. I have no fault to find with the powellising process. I believe there is some measure of good in it, but I do not go so far as to say it is absolutely effective. I believe that in the course of time a lot of its effect will pass off. It is not the process I am criticising, but the contract. If that be a copy of the contract which was printed in the *Sunday Times*, then I must say that on the face of it, it appears to me to be a most monstrous one.

The Premier: You do not understand it.

Mr. MALE: A contract which provides for the payment of a royalty for patent rights for five years after those patent rights have expired appeals to me as a most monstrous proposition.

The Premier: If we can show that there is nothing in that, will you consider it is all right?

Mr. MALE: I, as a business man—and I claim to be one—have endeavoured to find some plausible excuse which the Minister could bring forward when he arranged, fixed, and signed that contract, to account for it, but I have failed. If he says that that contract was made and signed in the best interests of the country, and was the best contract he could make, then I say it proves his absolute unfitness for the position he is holding, for no business man would sign a contract which agreed to pay away the State's money for nothing.

The Premier: If we can show there is nothing in that, you will be satisfied that the agreement is all right.

Mr. MALE: I do not profess to know anything about it, but on the face of it, it strikes me as being something monstrous.

The Premier: It is evident you know nothing about it, but if we show there is nothing in that point, will you be satisfied with the agreement?

Mr. MALE: I will not say that I am satisfied.

Mr. Dwyer: Nothing will satisfy some people.

Mr. MALE: I said that I did not intend to deal with this question beyond stating that this agreement does not appear to be a business-like and sound one, and I say so still. In looking through His Excellency's Speech I do find one ray of sunshine. I wish to congratulate the Premier on the re-appointment of our Agent General, Sir Newton Moore, for another term of three years. It does appear to me that it was fortunate that our Premier was able to take a trip to the old country, for he was able to see for himself there the good work which our Agent General is doing for this State. I think I will not be far short of the mark if I say it was through the efforts and knowledge of our Agent General that our Premier was able to borrow that two millions of money. I think it was greatly due to the efforts and knowledge of our Agent General, and I think our Premier saw sufficient of him while in England to appreciate the work he is doing there, and that he has shown his appreciation of Sir Newton's work by appointing him for another term of three years. The Premier could not have found in this State—I do not care whether on one side of the House or the other, or outside of the House—he could not have found a better man to fill the position in the interests of this State.

Mr. Munsie: If the Government had failed to get the £2,000,000 would you have blamed the Agent General for that?

Mr. MALE: I would not have blamed anybody.

Mr. Munsie: Oh, no.

Mr. MALE: I would not have blamed the English money lender for not advancing the money to throw away in steamers.

Mr. Munsie: We did not pitch it into the harbour at Fremantle.

Mr. MALE: It is also very gratifying to find that when the Premier was at Home, according to the reports sent out, he found time and opportunity to give publicity to the resources and requirements of this country. He pointed out the great need of population, but it was rather curious to us out here to find at the very same time that his friends out here were trying to block immigration, and not to encourage it. It was pleasing to find, however, that when the Premier was in England and away from the fetters of the Trades Hall council he was able to give expression to the principles he believed in.

The Premier: I want white population, not black population as you do.

Mr. MALE: We find under rule 8 of the Congress—members may laugh, but Congress has got them all by the wool—Congress is of opinion that no further financial assistance should be rendered by the Government in aiding people to emigrate to Western Australia. It will be interesting to watch the attitude of the Premier now that he has got back. Will he be man enough to give effect to the principles he advocated in the old country, or is he going to obey the dictates of the Labour party? We all recognise the need of population. If the State is to prosper and our lands are to be opened up we must have immigration promoted, and if necessary, give assistance to get the people here. If anything is done to stop that flow of immigration to our shores I say it would be a retrograde movement.

The Premier: You only want cheap black labour.

Mr. MALE: I find that our old friend, the non-alienation of Crown lands, is to the front again. I suppose we shall hear a lot about the greed of the land speculator waiting for the unearned increment. I would like to ask the members sitting on the front bench if they have faced the music themselves in this respect. The Premier resented, and in no quiet way, all references that were made in his absence to the Eucla land, but if my memory serves me rightly, the Premier in his remarks said they had been

offered a profit on those Eucla leases. If that be so, and if he is honest in his convictions, I say he should disgorge that unearned increment, and give it to the State, to which it belongs.

The Premier: We have a Bill coming down to tax us.

Mr. MALE: If the boot were on the other foot, and the leader of the Opposition held those leases—

The Premier: Refer to the member for Northam, and you are on good ground.

Mr. MALE: I do not care who it is—we would have found members on the front bench talking eloquently on the subject. I am reminded that there is some explanation required from the Attorney General in respect to the delay in deciding the case of Spargo. I contend that an explanation is due from a gentleman who at all times waxes eloquent on the claims of humanity, for keeping this man in suspense for so long a time. That man was condemned to be hanged and not to be tortured, and while Ministers were touring the country he was left in torture that was far worse than hanging.

The Minister for Mines: For how long?

Mr. MALE: For some considerable time.

The Minister for Mines: How long?

Mr. MALE: He should not have been kept in torture for one single day.

The Minister for Mines: How long was it? You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MALE: I say let us for mercy's sake deal mercifully even with our criminals. The affairs of party may wait, the affairs of State may wait, but when it comes to deciding the taking or not taking the life of a man it is a far more solemn obligation.

The Minister for Mines: You are hard up for something to talk about.

The Attorney General: There was no waiting for longer than could be helped. As soon as the reports of the judges could be got a meeting of Cabinet was held, and the man's fate was decided. He was told the same day.

Mr. MALE: It was absolutely scandalous.

On motion by Mr. Dwyer debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £1,324,130.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.49 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 31st July, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: L, By-law of the Yilgarn Roads Board to regulate hawking.

QUESTION—FOOD AND DRUGS REGULATION.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL asked the Colonial Secretary (without notice) is he prepared to make a statement regarding the action contemplated by the Government in respect to Regulation 62 under the Health Act, 1911, laid on the Table of the House on the 26th June, and in respect of which notice of motion of disallowance was given on the same day. If not, when will he be so prepared.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Yes. I will make a statement at the next sitting of the House.