

Mr. S. STUBBS : There is no stinking fish about a straightforward fact like that. The State of Western Australia has immense possibilities and in the future, no matter what party might be in power, it will be proved to the world that this is one of the best States in the Commonwealth, but that will not be so under the present Administration.

Mr. Munsie : Bad luck that, for it will have the present Administration for another six years at least.

Mr. S. STUBBS : That remains to be seen. At all events, in conclusion, I desire to say that I hope the season that is coming will be a prosperous one for everybody, but until the present Administration attempt to make both ends meet with regard to revenue and expenditure, then so long will I from my place in the House and from every platform from which I speak point out that the Government are on wrong lines and I will endeavour, as long as I am able, to show that the sooner the country gets rid of them the better.

On motion by Mr. Underwood debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 6th August, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY : 1, Public Works Department—Municipal Corporations Act, 1906.—By-laws No. 122 of the Municipality of Coolgardie.

2, Public Service Act, 1904—Amendments to Public Service Regulations. 3, Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department.—Roebourne Water Supply By-laws. 4, Audit Act, 1904.—Orders-in-Council under Section 35.

URGENCY MOTION—ELECTION FOR WEST PROVINCE IN 1912.

The PRESIDENT : I have received the following letter from the Hon. M. L. Moss :—

I propose to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of urgency, namely, to call attention to a gross violation of the Electoral Act which is alleged to have occurred at the election of a member for the West Province of the Legislative Council in May, 1912, and which was for the first time made public in the speech of the Hon. Mr. Lynn on the Address-in-reply last evening.

Though the matter is of undoubted gravity, I fail to see that there is any colour of urgency in the proposal. Procedure by motion for adjournment should not be used except where there is a definite matter of urgent public importance. If, however, under Standing Order 58 four members rise in their places to support the mover, I will allow the motion to proceed.

Four members having risen in their places,

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West) : I was well aware of the circumstances which Mr. Lynn mentioned yesterday, because the statement he made as to having informed me of the occurrence when it took place is perfectly correct, but for many reasons it was impossible for me to make use of the information communicated to me last April 12 months. There can be no doubt that any interference with the well grounded principles set forth in the Electoral Act, and certainly anything to interfere with the secrecy of the ballot, is a matter of great importance to this House, to another place as well, and to the community at large, for if the ballot is to be a secret ballot the thing ought to be observed to the very letter. There

can be no doubt, I think, that a very serious infringement of the Electoral Act took place in connection with the election for the West Province of the Legislative Council last year. I want first of all to draw the attention of the House, and particularly the attention of the Government, to a few clauses of the Electoral Act, because the Government cannot be fully aware of the provisions of the Statute, and particularly the penal clauses contained in that Legislation for breaches of its important provisions. When an election is taking place and it becomes necessary, while the count is on, to adjourn the count, it is provided under Section 135 of the Electoral Act of 1897 as follows:—

(1) Before every adjournment of the count of the votes all ballot papers and other documents connected with such count shall be placed in one or more ballot boxes, and the returning officer shall then, in the presence of such scrutineers and officers as are present, seal the outer cover of such ballot box or boxes with his official seal, if any, or with his private seal, and any scrutineer, who shall desire so to do, shall be permitted by the Returning Officer to place his special seal upon the outer cover of such ballot box or boxes. (2) Before recommencing the count such seals shall be exhibited unbroken to the scrutineers and officers.

Under Section 150 there is a small code of law as to what is to take place after the count. The section states—

The Returning Officer shall also, as soon as practicable after the day of polling at any election (a) enclose in one packet all the used ballot papers, including the postal ballot papers, and in another packet all butts of ballot papers, accounts, books, or other papers or documents used at the election or in connection therewith (with the exception of the signed rolls), and all telegrams, letters, or other papers received from Deputy or Assistant Returning Officers and presiding officers in connection with the poll; (b) seal up the said several packets and indorse the same with a description and the

number of the contents thereof respectively, and the name of the Province or the District and the date of the polling, and shall sign the endorsement, and forthwith forward the same packets to the Clerk of the Council or the Clerk of the Assembly, as the case may be; (c) seal up, endorse, and transmit in a similar manner to the same Clerk a packet containing all ballot papers printed for the said election and not used by him or by Deputy or Assistant Returning Officers or presiding officers; (d) seal up, indorse, and transmit to the Chief Electoral Officer the marked rolls used at the election and all declarations in the form numbered (9) in the schedule received by himself and the presiding officers; (e) the clerk of the Council, the Clerk of the Assembly, or the Chief Electoral Officer, as the case may be, shall forthwith give or send to the Returning Officer a receipt under his hand for the said packets.

Under Section 151 it is provided—

The Clerk of the Council and the Clerk of the Assembly shall preserve and hold in custody all such ballot papers and other documents forwarded by the Returning Officers under the provisions of this part of the Act until the election concerned can in each case be no longer questioned, when such ballot papers shall be destroyed.

Section 153 provides—

Such ballot papers and other documents as may be required by the Court of Disputed Returns shall, upon an order of the Court, be produced by the Clerk of the Council or the Clerk of the Assembly, but shall not be available for any other purpose.

What occurred in the West Province election was this: there were three candidates, Mr. Lynn (the sitting member), Mr. Allen, who ran in the same interests as Mr. Lynn, and Mr. Healy, who ran in the Labour interest. Mr. Allen was counted out first. There was a very small number of votes (11) between Mr. Lynn and Mr. Allen and it was of paramount importance that the provisions of the Electoral Act should have been observed, particu-

larly in a close election like that, because if the ballot papers had been sealed up the possibility of anybody, other than the persons enumerated in the Electoral Act, being permitted to get the ballot papers would have been avoided, seeing that if there had been any dishonest inclination to interfere with the 11 ballot papers, the election of the hon. member could easily have been upset. When the hon. member knew that there had been some interference there were all kinds of ideas in his head and that did suggest itself to him. No doubt that was not the object of the interference, but what occurred was this: the ballot papers had been sealed up, the third votes or second preferential votes for Mr. Healy were counted. They had no right to be counted.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: By whom?

Hon. M. L. MOSS: So far as I know by two officers who came down from the office of Mr. Stenberg (the Chief Electoral Officer) in Perth, but what were the instructions given by Mr. Stenberg, or whoever was responsible for sending those two officers down, I am at a loss to understand. They were able to exercise sufficient influence with the returning officer for the West Province election and the seals were broken, not by an order of the Supreme Court but the sweet will of someone else to ascertain how Mr. Healy's papers had been distributed. When a deputation waited upon the Premier the other day on the question of proportional representation Mr. Scaddan said—

One objection to preferential voting, as had been evidenced at the election when Mr. R. J. Lynn, M.L.C., was returned, was that it forced an elector to give a vote to a man whose politics he did not agree with at all.

They knew that all the Labour tickets had voted for Mr. Healy and that in the case of Mr. Healy's papers all the Labour supporters were obliged to vote for one person who was nominated in the interests of the Liberal party, but they knew more than that, they knew exactly how the votes of Mr. Healy's paper had been distributed, for they knew that Mr. Lynn was in a large minority when those were counted. If the Colonial Secretary

has made inquiries he will be able to inform the House what those figures were, if he is so disposed. What hon. members of this Chamber ought to know are, (1) are these allegations true; (2) who is responsible for the breach of the Act; (3) why has the Act been contravened at all? Those are questions the House would like answered, and I think they are certainly questions which the people in the country would like answered, for if it were once established that in connection with what we believe is a secret ballot, even with officers charged with the responsible duty under the Statute of preserving those papers intact, and not to be interfered with except by order of the Supreme Court judge, that such secrecy was not actually the case, we would have half the people of the country afraid to vote on account of the possibility of discovery of how their votes were recorded. This is no great stretch of imagination. We know that postal voting papers have to be taken out of a book with numbers. What is reported to have taken place in connection with the West Province election is wrong. It is a gross violation of the provisions of the Statute, and I am surprised that any member of the Government, even if they are not responsible for what occurred through the sending of these officers down to make this inquiry, should be a party to anything at all of such gravity as interference with those ballot papers. Look how the Statute itself regards the matter. Under Section 178 it is provided that an offence is created through a breach or neglect of official duty, which includes—

(1) Any attempt by any officer to influence the vote of any elector, or, except by recording his vote, the result of any election: (2) The disclosure of any knowledge officially acquired by any officer or scrutineer touching the vote of any elector: (3) Any neglect or refusal by any officer to discharge any official duty, and any violation by any officer of any provision of this Act: (4) Any attempt by a postal vote officer or person authorised or required by this Act to witness the signature of an elector voting by means of a postal ballot paper to influence the vote of the elector.

Breach or neglect of official duty is punishable by a penalty not exceeding £200, or by imprisonment not exceeding one year. It is quite obvious that the official duty upon these people, upon Mr. Dowley, the returning officer at Fremantle, was to seal up the ballot papers and send them to the Clerk of the Legislative Council, whose duty it then was to keep them inviolate in his custody. And when the 40 days had elapsed during which it was possible for an election petition to be lodged against the correctness of the return, these ballot papers should have been destroyed in the manner required by the Statute. Any breach of this section is punishable by a fine not exceeding £200 or by imprisonment for one year. Section 188, dealing with minor breaches, provides a penalty not exceeding £50. Clearly the Legislature has regarded it as a very grave matter indeed, and I think not only this branch of the Legislature, but another place too, should speak in a very determined way against this interference; because if this is passed unnoticed more irregularities, and perhaps of a graver character, will take place at the next election. What we should endeavour to make the people understand is that when an election takes place, not only will the provisions of the Act be enforced, but the public men of this community will do their very best to make the thing a secret ballot in every respect. Now I desire to have three questions answered, namely, 1, Are the allegations made by the hon. member, Hon. R. J. Lynn, true? 2, Who was primarily responsible for having sent these two officers to Fremantle to make the investigation? and 3, Why was it done?

Hon. C. Sommers: By way of question No. 4, you might ask what they are going to do about it.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): The most extraordinary part of this business is that Mr. Lynn, who seems to be the one most concerned, has been lying low for 15 months and that he did not consider it necessary to take

any earlier action. If the Electoral Act was grossly violated I certainly could understand his silence for 40 days, although even that, in my opinion, does not redound to his credit; but I cannot at all understand his silence for 15 months. In the first instance there is no doubt self-preservation was the motive which inspired the hon. gentleman's silence; but to be a matter justifying the adjournment of the House it should be something that occurred recently, something which the hon. gentleman had had no previous opportunity of ventilating. But this matter occurred as far back as 15 months ago. In June, 1912, some members of the Government who take a great interest in electoral matters wished to ascertain the value of the preferential system of voting, and also to discover whether it could be relied upon to fully and correctly express the will of the people. The information was required for statistical as well as for legislative purposes. The Government contemplated the introduction of an Electoral Bill, and they desired to be in a position to explain to the House, if necessary, the effect of preferential voting. The Chief Electoral Officer was asked by the Attorney General to supply the information. If I read from the file I think I shall be able to correctly explain the position. On the 5th June, 1912, the Chief Electoral Officer wrote this minute to the Under Secretary for Law—

In compliance with verbal instructions received from the Attorney General I have the honour to submit herewith a return showing the result of an examination of the West Province ballot papers for the purpose of ascertaining the distribution of the second preferences in favour of each candidate, and also a summary showing the total number of first and second preferences thrown in favour of each candidate at said election.

The list was supplied some days afterwards. This morning the Attorney General addressed the following minute to the Chief Electoral Officer:—

I note that Mr. Lynn yesterday in the Legislative Council made certain

statements reflecting on the department over which you preside. They are reported in to-day's *West Australian*. Please peruse same and let me have file and your full statement of details of the event and circumstances to which the speaker drew attention, with what accuracy I desire you to inform me.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Did they obtain an order of the court to investigate these votes?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I will deal with that directly. The reply by the Chief Electoral Officer is as follows:—

I beg to submit the following particulars in reply to the Hon. the Attorney General's minute of even date. 1. On or about 5th June, 1912, I was notified by the Attorney General that the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin) desired particulars as to the second and third preference votes cast for the candidates in the West Province at the general election held on 14th May in that year, with a view to ascertaining the value of preference voting when all votes are counted. 2. I communicated with the returning officer, Mr. Dowley, who informed me that the second preferences only were available so far as Mr. Allen's votes were concerned, on account of these preferences having been examined in order to complete the count in compliance with the Act. No third preferences, he informed me, nor any second preferences for the two other candidates were available, as they had not been called into requisition for the completion of the count. 3. In view, however, of the fact that Mr. Dowley, the returning officer, had not at that time sealed the ballot papers, I despatched Mr. B. J. Smith, an officer of this department, to Fremantle to obtain the requisite particulars from Mr. Dowley. The action taken was that the statistical particulars required were extracted—

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Really, this is monstrous.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The report continues—

That the statistical particulars required were extracted by means of a re-examination of the ballot papers which was made by Mr. Smith in the presence of the returning officer.

Hon. M. L. Moss: But in the absence of the scrutineers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It goes on—

4. The result of such examination was tabulated and forwarded to the Hon. the Attorney General on 5th June 1912.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It is really monstrous.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The report concludes—

5. From the foregoing it will be observed that the extraction of the statistical particulars required by the hon. the Minister took place in the presence of the returning officer. No seals were broken, and no further use made of the ballot papers.

Mr. Moss said this was a serious infringement of the Electoral Act. Nothing of the kind. If the ballot papers had been sealed and sent to the Clerk of the Legislative Council, and if afterwards the seal was broken or the ballot papers interfered with, it certainly would have been an offence against the Act. But the ballot papers had not been sealed. There is a provision for sealing before the count and another provision for sealing as soon as possible afterwards.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: The ballot boxes were sealed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They had not been sealed. No seals were broken, and it was impossible to discover how any person had voted. Consequently there was no violation. It has been insinuated that the votes could have been tampered with, that there is a foil attached to the postal votes and the returning officer could have examined those and compared them with the postal votes, and so discovered how certain votes were cast. If he could have done that then he could have done it before, seeing that the ballot papers had not been sealed. He had ample opportunity for investigating them. It has been clearly shown that the ballot papers were not sealed. No other use

was made of the ballot papers, except for statistical purposes, and I contend there is no reason at all why information of this kind should not be made public. It has been made public before. In connection with the election of Hon. W. Patrick I had a representative present at the count, and we got full information in connection with the manner in which votes had been cast.

Hon. W. Patrick: Then you had no right to do so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: And that information was published in, I think, both newspapers at Geraldton. It was very interesting indeed.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Was the Ministry of the day a party to that irregularity at the election of Mr. Patrick?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know, but the completion of the count took place nearly a week after the election.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: This was three weeks afterwards.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We had an analysis made of the distribution of the votes.

Hon. W. Patrick: But that was taken at the time of the poll.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. C. Sommers: A very different matter.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot see any difference between the examination of ballot papers at the time of the count for this purpose and the examination a fortnight afterwards.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: But the Act does.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, there is no prohibition at all under the Act. If the papers had been sent to the Clerk of the Legislative Council it would have been different. The information received was put on a file for the information of Parliament, and I have the file here, and I propose to leave it for examination by hon. members. I still contend there was no necessity for this motion for the adjournment. Mr. Moss knew perfectly well that I proposed to reply to-day, and he could well have waited and given me the opportunity of replying during the course of my speech. Certainly it is not a matter of urgency, and, if it

is, Mr. Lynn is to blame for having held it back for so long.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): It seems to me that the Minister's defence makes this matter tenfold worse than it appeared on Mr. Moss' statement. I understood Mr. Moss to explain that the immediate reason for bringing the matter up now was that attention had been drawn to it in a most public way by the Premier, when he used information which should never have been available, with regard, not simply to returns that were dealt with by the returning officer at the West Province election of May, 12 months ago, but with figures that the returning officer himself had no occasion to know at all.

Hon. W. Patrick: Had no right to know.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Had no right to know. And if this House is to understand from the Minister's explanation that he sees no abuse of the electoral law in this matter, well then he is not the Minister that I knew him to be. I cannot imagine that any Minister would condone the action that has apparently taken place. The position is this: The returning officer himself had only to deal with the second preference votes of the candidate who was declared defeated; he had nothing to do with the second preference votes on any other candidate's papers whatever. But after the count had closed and after the returning officer should have sealed up all the papers some politician, some friend of the defeated candidate—

Hon. M. L. Moss: Some blind partisan.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: An absolute partisan—at all events some friend of the defeated candidate, goes to the Chief Electoral Officer—

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Which defeated candidate?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: And says, "For some quite innocent, non-partisan object of mine—"

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Scientific research.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: "Scientific, philosophic inquiry I have on hand, I want you to ascertain, not how the second votes went to the candidate declared defeated in the count, but how the second votes for my friend, the Labour candidate,

went. I want to find out what would happen if by any means I could get the candidate who has been declared to be defeated into the leading position, and how it would affect my friend the Labour candidate." I cannot for the life of me imagine any chief electoral officer listening for a moment to any such thing. His duty clearly was to say, "You are asking me to commit a grave breach of the electoral law, I dare not do it; I would not do it; no honourable man could do it; I refuse to do it." Now the Minister reports to this House that the Chief Electoral Officer at the request of this partisan sent down an official to lead the returning officer to commit a grave breach of the electoral law by letting him see and overhaul ballot papers in that election.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Nineteen days after the election.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I can imagine that the count in the West Province election might not have been completed for a couple of weeks; that is quite possible, but this transaction occurred on the 5th June, and the election took place on the 11th May. If the returning officer had not sealed up the documents before parting with the scrutineers, he should have sealed them up in the presence of the scrutineers at the finish of the count. If he kept them open he was guilty of a grave breach of duty? Why did he keep them open? Perhaps the Minister can tell us whether he had had any notification that a member of Parliament was moving the Chief Electoral Officer to commit a grave breach of duty. Why did the returning officer keep these papers unsealed? If they were unsealed he committed a grave breach of his duty by keeping them open. On the other hand, if he had sealed them and if the seals were broken, of course the offence is still greater. It is only a matter of degree. It was a grave breach of duty to keep them open and supposing this official from the Chief Electoral Officer's department went down without unreasonable delay after the completion of the count, even then the returning officer had no right to open up these papers. This official from the Chief Electoral Officer's

department had no more right than I had to go in and ask to see those papers. He is not known under the law at all. It has been alleged by Mr. Moss, and apart from this all-sufficient charge, that the way was open to possible tampering with these ballot papers. There were only 11 votes difference between the two candidates. It would have been a simple matter to tamper with the return. I confess that when the Hon. Mr. Lynn mentioned this matter last night, I was in doubt as to whether it was wise to bring it up. When I learned that the immediate cause for bringing it up was the fact that the Premier of the country had dealt with these figures, and then when Mr. Moss notified us of the very grave circumstances he has alleged, I recognised that it was essential this matter should be dealt with. But all those reasons are small compared with the reason furnished by the leader of the House in his defence of the action of the Chief Electoral Officer. It is clear that after the count is completed ballot papers cannot be overhauled. They cannot be submitted to any investigation without an order of the Supreme Court. It is not possible under the law for any chief electoral officer to send down a clerk to interfere. A very serious breach of the law is confessed by the leader of the House and I say, if ever an adjournment of the House was justified, it is at the present time. I do hope that the Government will have some better explanation to give us and some better defence; if not, extra precautions will certainly have to be provided in the law for the protection of the purity of elections of Parliament.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I regret to have to say that the Minister's explanation is the sorriest excuse I have ever listened to in reply to a gross breach of the Electoral Act, or to any grave matter, since I have been a member of the House. For the Minister to stand up and attempt to justify a gross breach of trust perpetrated by a member of his Ministry and to do it unblushingly does not reflect any credit upon him. There was not one word of regret in the remarks of the Colonial Secretary, but simply a statement that the charges made by the

Hon. Mr. Lynn are absolutely true. I congratulate the Hon. Mr. Moss upon having moved the adjournment of the House, because I know of no more important matter on which the adjournment could have been moved than one to consider a question which affects every elector of the State. I would like to know why this particular election was picked upon. Why was it Mr. Angwin chose this election for the purpose of getting statistical information? Why was it that nineteen days after the election he thought it necessary to go to this extra trouble? Were there no other elections held about that time?

Hon. W. Patrick: That is why the papers have to be kept sealed.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Why was there this urgency nineteen days after the election, for which Mr. Angwin thought fit to so wrongfully instruct his officer? Perhaps the mere fact that the Act provides that appeals can be lodged within 40 days is the true explanation of the urgency of this matter. Probably some information was required that might have helped to upset this very close election in which only eleven votes intervened between the successful and the unsuccessful candidates. We want a great deal of information in regard to this. I do not know of there having been any particular need for or stir about proportional representation at that time. It is since that time that the matter has been brought forward, particularly in this House by the Hon. Mr. Gawler, who moved that in the opinion of this House the proportional representation system should be affirmed.

The Colonial Secretary: Preferential, you mean.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: We have heard for the first time that the ballot papers were not sealed. That discloses a grave breach of duty and neglect of duty on the part of the returning officer. If this sort of thing is to be permitted without punishment, where is it going to end? Mr. Dowley, who is the resident magistrate and returning officer at Fremantle, cannot plead ignorance. He has been performing these duties for many years and certainly should be called to book. I would

not excuse Mr. Dowley because he can have no excuse. If a man who was officiating as returning officer in some out-of-the-way polling place said, "It is the first time I have acted and I did not know," there might be some excuse for him, but for a man in Mr. Dowley's position to go scot-free without any penalty is a serious matter and an example should be made in this case. In regard to the remarks made by the Colonial Secretary in regard to the Hon. Mr. Lynn lying low all this time, it does not concern this House what the hon. member did. That is a matter between the Hon. Mr. Lynn and his electors. The House has to consider the fact that yesterday was the first time an accusation was made in this Chamber and I strongly resent the Colonial Secretary's remarks in this connection. In regard to the postal votes, the handwriting of the individual who casts the vote can be traced and what becomes of the secrecy of the ballot? The particular party with which the Colonial Secretary is identified are always crying out for purity and they say they are the people who can do no wrong; theirs is always the only party. In regard to my own election, what sort of charges were hurled about then, and I would remind hon. members how those who hurled the charges crawled back into their burrows subsequently. Where is the secrecy of the ballot to send at midnight, probably, to count these votes at an election when only eleven votes separated the successful and unsuccessful candidates?

The Colonial Secretary: How is the question of secrecy affected?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Why go there at all?

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): You had a lot to say about jobbery at the last elections and crawled down.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I got home on some of the hon. member's friends who tried to prove their charges and failed lamentably. We know that Labour advisers strongly urged electors to give their second preference votes to Mr. Allen. That requires a little explanation. Why should this particular election be picked upon to find out all this information nineteen days

after the ballot? I have little more to say but if I am in order I would like to move an amendment that a select committee be appointed to inquire into this matter.

The PRESIDENT: There cannot be any amendment to a motion for an adjournment on account of urgency.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I understand that an amendment will not be in order.

The PRESIDENT: There can be no amendment except as regards the time of the adjournment.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Then I will conclude by saying that I regret very much the occurrence and I am sorry the Minister has expressed no regret at this serious breach of confidence and trust imposed upon the officials.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): There are two things which to my mind the law guards very jealously, the will of a dead man and the secrecy of the ballot. I am sorry to have to say that it seems to me as if something serious has been done, and the only way to get right at the truth of it is to make known the particulars to the public. I have seen sketches of a ring of fat men and of thin men pointing over their shoulders to someone else and making an inquiry as to who have the people's money, and who did this and that. These things are put around and one blames the other. The duty of the electoral authorities is to know the Act and as soon as the votes have been counted to take possession of the papers and seal them up, and not to divulge this information or let any one know anything further except under an order from the Supreme Court. The Colonial Secretary has told us that the papers were not sealed up and it appears to me that the Minister should take a portion of the blame, but how comes it that the person responsible for this inquiry got possession of the knowledge that the papers were not sealed up. Evidently there is something behind it which makes it appear—I say it is open to this construction—as if the returning officer was instructed not to seal up these papers pending an investigation to see how the election went. It is open to suspicion. I cannot sit in my seat here and

listen to such an offence without regarding it as one of the gravest breaches of the Electoral Act I have ever heard of. The position is this that it was the duty of those who were in charge to see that the Act was carried out and they should not have been parties to one of the greatest breaches of the Act that could have been committed, and it should also be the duty of Mr. Stenberg to censure the person or persons for not having sealed up the ballot papers. The paltry excuse given might do for certain purposes, but I say that there was nothing whatever to justify an examination of the papers until an order had been obtained from the Supreme Court.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West): I must be prepared to express regret for not having brought this matter before the House at an earlier date. All I desire to say in that regard is that the election was contested on the 17th May, the count took place on the 18th May and the declaration of the poll on the 19th May. Seventeen days afterwards, these ballot papers, if they were not sealed, surely should have been sealed. Can it be said that a returning officer is fulfilling his duties if he permits the ballot papers to remain there for no less than 17 days unsealed.

The Colonial Secretary: Why did you not see that they were sealed?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: My knowledge of the proceedings when the count was over was that the papers were put into the ballot box and sealed. I can only regret that my inexperience was responsible for not seeing that the papers were wrapped up and sealed. Had I thought for one moment that this was not done I should have demanded to have seen the seal placed on them even after they were wrapped up in paper.

Hon. W. Patrick: That should not be necessary; it is the duty of the returning officer to seal them.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: The position was that the House assembled on the 27th June and the Address-in-reply was completed before the expiration of the time permitted by the Act to lodge an appeal against my election, and when the leader

of the House refers to self-preservation I was undoubtedly thinking of myself to some extent, because I realised that had that election been fought over again, and with Mr. Allen as my opponent, supported by a block vote of the Labour constituents of the West Province, I should probably have been defeated, and I was not prepared to take that risk in view of the eleven votes between Mr. Allen and myself. It means that had just 11 votes been interfered with or tampered with and Mr. Allen had got to know of it, he could have appealed to have that election upset on the grounds that those ballot papers which had been previously scrutinised had been interfered with by the departmental officers. Why the Honorary Minister, Mr. Angwin, should be so anxious to know the result of the preferential voting in a constituency that he took a considerable amount of interest in, and in connection with which he was not anxious for the return of myself, why he should be so particularly anxious to discover the figures relating to this election, I am at a loss to understand, and why the Attorney General should permit such a grave breach of the Act makes it very difficult indeed for me to follow. The leader of the House said that Mr. Dowley, the returning officer, was present while these votes were being counted a second time. I submit that I had every right to appoint a deputy to be present when these votes were being re-counted, but I am also prepared to say that to the best of my knowledge when I went into the court house on the second morning that the count was taking place, Mr. Dowley was sitting on the bench, and the officers of the department were in another room and not in the presence of the returning officer. The statement of the leader of the House in that direction, so far as my knowledge is concerned, is, therefore, not correct. Why I refrained from introducing the matter at a late stage last session was simply this. After permitting the time to elapse when an appeal could be lodged, I had no opportunity of bringing the matter forward unless I moved the adjournment of the House, and my inexperience in that direc-

tion placed me in the position of not exactly knowing what to do. I was not anxious that this matter should be widely ventilated, and had it not been for the action of the Premier in openly stating to the Press, and through the Press to my constituents, that I am here not as a representative of the West Province, I think in defence of myself I had every right to mention it on the Address-in-reply, especially in answer to that statement made by the Premier. I regard the matter in this light that surely there are examples other than the West Province election which might have been quoted by the Premier when replying to the deputation on the question of proportional representation as against preferential voting. Surely the Premier could have cited the 60,000 Liberal electors who are not represented in the Senate of the Commonwealth, without getting down to the West Province election, where he said preferential voting returned a member against the will of the people. Although I regret the delay in bringing this matter forward I can only repeat that the delay was occasioned by inexperience.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): I think most people who will read the account of this debate will certainly be struck by the remarkable method in which the matter has been brought forward. Mr. Lynn has waited something like 15 months to bring the matter forward and during that time, this House has been sitting, and he has had ample opportunity, despite his inexperience, which I am sure no hon. member will credit him with, of ventilating his grievance here. We find that Mr. Lynn was quite willing to condone the offence until it was possible to use it for party purposes and party purposes only. Mr. Lynn, in condoning the offence, if it was an offence, is equally as guilty as the Chief Electoral Officer of dereliction of duty if there has been a dereliction of duty.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: I am not supposed to have the same experience as the Chief Electoral Officer.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): The hon. member is too old a cam-

paigner and has been too long in public life to come here and claim inexperience as his excuse for not bringing this matter forward. There is no doubt that Mr. Lyon was quite willing to condone this offence until, as I have said, it could be used as a party matter.

Hon. M. L. Moss: That is begging the question.

Hon. W. Patrick: This is a non-party House.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): I wish to refer to this non-party view especially when an hon. member like Mr. Sommers gets up and speaks as he has done of the party who happens to be in power at the present time. Mr. Sommers should be the last man to speak about purity of anything after what took place last session.

Hon. C. Sommers: What took place last session?

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): I am sorry, particularly sorry that the whole of the evidence taken by the select committee which investigated Mr. Sommers' case was not published in the Press.

Hon. C. Sommers: I, too, wish it had been published.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): Mr. Sommers came to this House with an abject apology and now he speaks about the purity of our actions. This kind of thing passes my comprehension.

Hon. C. Sommers: I wish you would be a little more definite.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): There has been mud slung at the party I represent and on that account I only wish that the whole of the evidence taken by that select committee could be published even now.

Hon. C. Sommers: As a matter of privilege may I say that, as far as the evidence taken by that select committee is concerned, I wish it could be published equally as the Minister wishes. The Minister has it at his command and he is able to publish it. He has the Government Printing Office available and I ask him, as a favour, to publish it. I have nothing to fear by the publication of the whole of that evidence, and he knows it.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has already spoken.

Hon. C. Sommers: That is my challenge to the Minister.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): I am not going to the expense of publishing that evidence in the newspapers for anyone. I say that Mr. Sommers has no right to make the statement he has made in regard to the party I represent.

Hon. C. Sommers: I have indeed.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): It is all very well for Mr. Sommers to talk about purity in party politics.

Hon. C. Sommers: You have nothing against my career. If you have, state it or hold your peace.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): There has been a good deal said recently about impersonation, but we have seen the result of that and we know the amount of impersonation that has taken place.

Hon. M. L. Moss: What has that to do with this question?

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): I want to refer to some of the tactics which are being adopted in this non-party chamber on behalf of the party in the other place. The matter so far as I am concerned is quite new to me. Almost all I know of it is in connection with a debate which has taken place to-day and the file I have perused, while sitting here. The insinuation which has been made was that the ballot papers were counted in the absence of the returning officer. The Colonial Secretary has disproved that and the file supports that. The papers were counted in the presence of the returning officer, so that there cannot be any allegation of tampering with them.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: I question that very much.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): I am quoting from the file of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Who demanded the second count?

Hon. A. G. Jenkins: Mr. Angwin.

Hon. W. Kingsmill : Oh !

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister) : The file says, "The action taken was that the statistical particulars required were extracted by means of a re-examination of the ballot papers which was made by Mr. Smith in the presence of the returning officer."

Hon. R. J. Lynn : Had the department previous statistical information to compare it with ?

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister) : I cannot say, I am only stating that these papers were counted in the presence of the returning officer, Mr. Dowley. An insinuation has been made here that two officers of the electoral department were sent down and that the papers were counted in the absence of the returning officer.

Hon. R. J. Lynn : I still maintain that.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister) : I am quoting from the file a minute issued by the Chief Electoral Officer to the Colonial Secretary, and even if a select committee is appointed all I can say is that Mr. Lynn condoned the offence by allowing so much time to elapse and he therefore has been equally guilty of a grave breach of privilege, of justice—or whatever it might be called—with the Chief Electoral Officer.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (in reply) : So far as I can see, the delay that has taken place and the personalities which some hon. members are inclined to indulge in when discussing this matter are all beside the question. The fact that Mr. Lynn was lying low for 15 months has nothing to do with the question. That he was guilty of an act of self-preservation is also beside the question, as is also the fact that Mr. Lynn condoned the offence, whatever that may mean; I do not know what it means, because the condonation of an offence implies that there was one committed, and it must have been committed by the electoral officers. I do not know that there was any obligation on the part of Mr. Lynn to turn common informer and lay an information against anybody in particular. Admitting that he did condone the offence, that is not

the matter at issue. We are not out to punish Mr. Lynn, we do not want to punish anybody. There has been an irregularity committed, and we want to prevent the repetition of such a thing in the future. Mr. Lynn has been honest and frank in his statement; in fact he was so frank as to admit that at the time these gentlemen went from the head office down to Fremantle the ballot papers had not been sealed. Section 150 of the Electoral Act provides that the returning officer shall "as soon as practicable after the day of polling at any election" enclose in one packet all the used ballot papers, etc., and seal them up and forward them forthwith to the Clerk of this House. As that election took place on the 17th May, and as it was on the 5th June that this private recount took place, 19 days having elapsed between the election and the recount, the returning officer did not seal these votes up "as soon as practicable after the day of polling." That is a very grave error indeed.

Hon. W. Kingsmill : If he had put them in the ballot boxes and sealed them up that would have been enough.

Hon. M. L. MOSS : Yes, that would have been enough, but we are asked to believe, according to the file, that these ballot papers were not sealed up for 19 days. I repeat that is a most serious matter. If they were not sealed up and sent to the Clerk of this House they were liable to be tampered with. I do not say that they were tampered with, or that anybody was so dishonest as to attempt to do that, but there was the liability to be tampered with, and the provisions of the Electoral Act aim at preventing anything of the sort being possible. It is not necessary to beg this question by indulging in personalities or referring to the question of delay. We want to call the attention of the responsible officers and the public at large to a grave irregularity, so that there may be no repetition of this offence in future. Mr. Sommers has drawn attention to the fact that this investigation was made for the West Province, and the West Province alone. I never in my life listened to such twaddle as to ask any body of men with powers of

thought about them to believe that this recount was done for statistical purposes. It is absolute moonshine to say anything of the sort. I have never seen the result of the investigation in any statistical publication, and we never will see it. There is certainly a wonderful honesty about the transaction in the way it appears on the file. It looks as if those who have been guilty of this grave irregularity never regarded it as such, because there it is openly and frankly placed on the file, which is a public document. But, however they may have regarded it, it is not an honest statement to put into the mouth of the Colonial Secretary, that this action was done for statistical purposes.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: For what other purpose?

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The other purpose has been suggested by other speakers. I do not wish to indulge in a single personality. I want to fight my politics without going into the gutter to deal in personalities, but I will say this, that we know that Mr. Angwin was a blind partisan of Mr. Healy as the first preference, and all the instructions on those labour papers circulated broadcast during the election were to induce the people to vote for Mr. Allen as their second preference. A number of things were mentioned to me by Mr. Lynn just after the election took place, but I have not bothered the House with them. We are not dealing in those trivialities. What we are aiming at is that the ballot papers, which should have been sealed up and never seen the light of day except by order of a judge of the Supreme Court, have been with the greatest facility handled by two electoral officers who were willing tools in the hands of others. This should not have happened, and it must not happen again. If after an election the votes may be examined in detail by any officers, men and women may become marked persons in the community for having voted in a particular direction. There is every excuse for having brought this matter forward, and the only regret I have is that Mr. Dodd did not discuss it in the same spirit as did the Colonial Secretary. The great question is not whether this is a party or a

non-party House or whether there were allegations of personation in connection with the Federal elections, but it is admitted all round the House that a grave irregularity has been committed.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Why not discuss it from that point?

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I am discussing it from that point.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): You are, but Mr. Sommers did not.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I am not responsible for Mr. Sommers or any other member sitting here. I have tried to make the debate such that there should be no personalities. It is admitted that a grave irregularity has taken place. Is it not so? The hon. member does not reply, and silence gives consent. It is as obvious as noon-day that such things should not be repeated in future. I repeat that there is every excuse for having occupied an hour of public time in showing that in regard to the elections for the West Province there was a grave irregularity committed. I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. W. KINGSMILL (for the Hon. D. G. Gawler) leave of absence for 12 consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. A. Sanderson on the ground of urgent private business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Sixth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I desire to express regret for my absence during the first week of this debate. I always look upon these discussions as desirable and instructive, in spite of the repetition that must creep in in connection with many matters touched upon in the Speech. At the outset I wish to congratulate the Government on the re-appointment of Sir Newton Moore. He is the right man in the right place, and it is a good thing to know that we have such a representative man

to look after our interests in the old country. I am glad that the Government have been more careful than previously in their reference in the Speech to agricultural matters. I refer to the separating of the older-settled districts from the newer-settled districts. Previously, the whole of the agricultural areas were bunched together in one reference, and the Premier was afterwards exercised considerably in trying to explain away the impression that he had made that agriculture throughout the State was somewhat of a failure. The older districts have never been a failure; at any rate in my knowledge, extending over 25 years, they have always shown a good return for their agricultural work. Experience has taught in this case, and I hope it always will. I am glad that the Government in the Speech before us have taken the trouble to separate the older-settled districts from the newer ones and that any shortcomings in connection with land settlement have been debited to the newer settled districts. Knowing as I do the pioneering difficulties of the older districts, I know that the newer ones cannot be expected to make the same return whilst they are yet in the making, and naturally the older ones resent being bunched together with the districts which are not yet able to make such a good showing. I cannot congratulate the Government on the land settlement operations. In my opinion these have been the reverse to what is said in the Speech, and one has only to turn to the *Statistical Abstract* to see that for himself. In 1910 there was 1,727,000 acres taken up under conditional purchase conditions, which is the best form of settlement I know of; in 1911, 1,349,000 acres; in 1912, 1,191,000 acres, and for the six months of this year only 271,000 acres. In face of these figures, can the Government say that land settlement is progressing satisfactorily? I say they cannot. It is just the reverse. How can it be otherwise, and how can the falling off be prevented when we remember that the Minister for Lands, with his dreamy and impracticable ideas, did by one act destroy the confidence of the financial institutions and the faith of the merchants in the agricultural industry?

It will take years to undo the mischief created on that occasion. Unfortunately, experience has not taught in this case, and it is regrettable that the Government have not made an attempt to right the wrong done to the agricultural industry when the Minister for Lands issued those regulations. The reference in the Speech to the striking increase in the export of wheat, flour, and fruit, is good reading, and this in spite of the drawback that resulted from the action of the Minister for Lands. I have no hesitation in saying, knowing as I do the immense possibilities of a large portion of the State—I refer to the Great Southern from Narrogin to Albany—that as far as wheat growing is concerned it has a great future. I say that 50 bags of wheat will be grown in the future for every one bag that is produced to-day. That is as far as the Great Southern portion of the State is concerned, and 50 cases of apples will be produced for export to every one case that is being sent away to-day. It is clearly to be seen that such will be the case, and it must be recognised that apples will be the by-product of the farmer. There are enormous possibilities in the district referred to for mixed farming, and this is staring us in the face every day. It is only a question of time and labour. We have the land, but we want sufficient time and more suitable labour. To-day we are not getting suitable labour. It is hopeless to expect that the export of apples will increase as it should do until we get more suitable labour. I am taking with a grain of salt the statement in the Speech that the Government are withholding large areas of land from settlement until their suitability for agriculture be proved. I do not like to make this statement but I do believe within myself that the land is being withheld for another purpose, that it is part and parcel of the Minister's dream to get it let out in the future on leasehold conditions. Congratulations are due to the Government for the attempt to manufacture agricultural implements. We know the farmers' market to-day is the market of the world. Our farmers are competing with growers in other parts of the world and we all know—those of us who are interested in the farmer's life—

that our farmers pay a higher price for agricultural implements to-day than is paid elsewhere. On harvesters alone no less than £12 can be saved in duty, therefore I am earnest when I say that the Government are to be congratulated in supplying this want. If this £12 of duty on the harvester can be cut down to £6 the Government will be doing a great deal of good to the farmers of the State. I trust the agricultural machinery works will turn out a success. The extension of the goldfields water supply to agricultural areas is good in principle but bad in practice; this is owing to the outrageous charges made for the water. The farmer will not be able to live and prosper if he has to continue to pay these charges. No doubt the surplus water from the Mundaring scheme could not be better used, but it is impossible under the conditions laid out. I mentioned this fact when the idea was first mooted and the price was so fixed that the farmers would be unable to pay the amounts. I wish to refer to that portion of the Speech in regard to the gold mining industry. I am glad the prospects are improving in this respect, as we notice by the returns. We all know the great part this industry has played in the past in this State. In regard to "the unprecedented activity in the construction of agricultural railways," this reads well; but is it true? Is it a correct statement? I have not been able to find out how many of these railways were introduced and passed by the previous Government and how many completed. The present Government have really carried out the works initiated by their predecessors and they have not done it as quickly as the railways should have been constructed, and the reason is to be found in the mode of procedure. The Government will stick to the day labour system, and those who have seen the lines constructed by day labour must acknowledge that they are not as good as those constructed under contract. I noticed on an extension eastward from the Great Southern that the cuttings were not nearly as wide as they should be and the timber was not cleared away. Under the day labour system we shall never know the actual cost of the railways, for I am sure that there is much

more expense in supervision. There may be a lot of inspection work done which should never be charged directly to the railways, therefore we shall never know what the railways cost. The Government no doubt can be within the figures stated but it is beyond doubt that officers may be employed in connection with the day labour system that would never be employed by a contractor. The construction is bad, and the organisation of the Government too small. The Government are practically trying to empty the ocean with a teaspoon. Yet the Government go on in this quiet way, boasting great activity in railway construction. Many lines have already been approved of by Parliament during the last two or three years, and these have not been put in hand.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Where is the money to come from?

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: The money was practically provided. Does Sir Edward Wittenoom think for one moment that we are going to develop this country without building railways? The money will come when it is wanted and if we have to pay more percentage we cannot ask the country to stand still.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: A lot of money went into the trams that should have gone into the railways.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: Yes, a lot of money went into the purchase of trams that should have gone into the building of railways. The Perth tram purchase was a good venture, but the Government should not have made the purchase at this time. In regard to the leasehold principle which has been referred to by Mr. Patrick, the Government are absolutely wrong. Without exception every man is looking forward, at any rate ninety-nine per cent. of them are, to the time when they will be able to demand the freehold for their leasehold. That happened in New Zealand, and in every country in the world where the system has been tried; it is only waste of time to introduce this new principle. Goodness knows there is every opportunity for the State benefiting. If the Government want the land afterwards they can always find means of taking it. The State can always get the value back

but let the man in occupation have the privilege of saying, "It is going to be mine some day, absolutely mine." I want to give the Government credit for their well doing in extending education facilities throughout the State. They have done wonders in this respect. The previous Government did well also. I was surprised to hear Mr. Ardagh yesterday stating that there were children 30 or 40 miles from a railway and they could not get educational facilities. But I know schools that have been erected 40 to 50 miles from a railway, some by the previous Government and some by the present Government. I do not think the Government are to blame in this matter, but that the parents of the children are to blame in not making application. I know of inspectors who are going 40 to 50 miles from the railways to schools that are erected there. I see we are to have a re-hash of our old enemy the Land and Income Tax Bill. I hope the Government will not attempt on this occasion to do away with the deduction that has always in the past been allowed to farmers of £250 as a reward for improving his land. It is not allowed in the case where improvement was not required but was given as a reward and was allowed under certain conditions. I hope this provision will not be struck out of the Bill as it was in the last one which came to this House. The farmers are entitled, if anyone in the State is entitled, to consideration. The State will lose nothing by it and it is a sort of reward to help the farmers to push on with their work. With regard to the income tax, I trust, too, that this will not be interfered with. I trust the Government will go further and allow a reduction of £25 for every child under 16 years of age instead of £10. In New Zealand this has been done and if the Government have a proper consideration for parents they should allow an extension in this direction. In large families it means a great deal. The principle has already been established and I trust the Government have not any intention of interfering with the £10 allowance, but will adopt the New Zealand system and make it £25 for each child. I promise the Government to give close at-

tention to the Traffic Bill when it comes to this House. Members will remember that we added 16 or 18 amendments to the Bill last year. We should grant a rebate to settlers who have paid a direct tax to the local body in the shape of a wheel tax. I was recently in South Australia, our sister State, and I took special care to inquire into the matter and I find there is no such thing as a wheel tax there, in the farming districts anyway, and a farmer I consulted there told me he paid his local rates and had as many vehicles as he liked. Mr. Moss of Narrogin was recently in New Zealand and made inquiries there, and I hear that the settlers in the Dominion know nothing of a wheel tax. The Western Australian Government have no right to tax the people twice. A man is taxed directly through his land for the upkeep of the road. The more he progresses the more vehicles he will require. Assuming that he has paid £10 in local land taxes, and £5 in the wheel tax, I say there should be a rebate to him, although I admit that we must have a wheel tax to get at those who pay no land tax, that is no local rate, yet use the roads. I trust that the Government will take notice of my remarks in this connection and make inquiries regarding the practice elsewhere. I believe that there is no wheel tax in Victoria. A feature of the Traffic Bill last session was that if a man took his harvester out of his field and went into his neighbour's he at once was to pay a tax on it. It was also provided that if he took his cart, already licensed, to carry his neighbour's wheat, he at once became a common carrier under the measure, and had to pay an additional license. This was a monstrous provision, and should not be embodied in any Bill. We all know that neighbours help one another, and I can give an example of what is done in this regard. Recently I happened to be taking an inventory of a man's machinery in connection with a will. His son told me that a certain machine did not belong to his father, but that the latter had only a quarter share in it with neighbours. This shows how they come together to assist one another, and it is a very commendable thing to do. I trust that there will be no

clause in the new Traffic Bill that will interfere with that. I can quite understand that an ordinary or common carrier is very necessary, and we all realise that he should pay a little extra, the more so if he is not paying anything directly through the local land tax. I have heard various terms applied to the Governor's Speech, but I think that it is the most important we have ever had if one has regard to the promises of Bills that are to be laid before us. Apart from the two I have already spoken of—amendments of the land tax and income tax and the Traffic Bill—we find the Government promise us constitutional and electoral reforms; I do not suppose a more important matter could be brought before this Chamber. They promise to deal with the liquor traffic, rights in natural waters, and the irrigation and drainage of land, the initiative and referendum, local government, and the valuation of land to provide uniformity in valuation. To deal thoroughly with those measures it would take us until Christmas, and they are of such importance that I say the blessing of divine Providence was never more needed in Western Australia than it is now. I see heaps of work before us, and I think if we deal properly with these matters we will be here until Christmas. With reference to the Esperance railway, I had fondly hoped some returns would come from that district to show the need of that line. Mr. Patrick quoted some figures regarding the returns from there last year, and I understand they were from the *Statistical Abstract*.

Hon. W. Patrick: That is so; they are correct.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: If so, this Chamber will have to hesitate, notwithstanding everything that has been said in favour of this railway, before it can be sanctioned. My strongest sympathy goes out to the farmer, but I cannot see how this State can afford that expense unless we have something more satisfactory than the figures produced by Mr. Patrick. The Colonial Secretary has given us a very glowing report of that district. Some years ago I had the pleasure of travelling with the Colonial Secretary; we discussed land questions nearly all the time, and at

the finish I came to the conclusion that the Colonial Secretary knew nothing about land settlement.

The Colonial Secretary: You agreed with my views on the trip, but not when you came back.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: I have no hesitation in saying that I would not give 5s. for the Colonial Secretary's report compared with the figures that Mr. Patrick quoted. I do not know that the Colonial Secretary has been a student at any of our agricultural farms, and I do not know on what he based his report. I trust it is true, as my fond hope has always been to see the wheat belt follow the coast right to Esperance and beyond. I am not going to say that I am going to oppose the Esperance railway. My mind is open, but I want some better returns than those produced by Mr. Patrick. I have not been able to see the figures myself, but the hon. member assures me they are such as were published in the *Statistical Abstract*. I want to say that I do not agree with my colleague, the Hon. J. F. Cullen, as to where this railway should run. There is no use talking of the east and west line. If it is to be built at all it must go into its nearest port. I strongly resent the charge the Government have been laying at the door of the farmers, and I trust that this Chamber will permit me to call for a return showing the actual expenditure that can be rightly charged to revenue in connection with helping the farmers. I know that certain help has been given and I know that if the country is any good at all the farmers will have to pay every penny of it. In my own business balance sheets I would show an amount of this kind as an asset, but in the annual returns of the Government there is no attempt to show this amount as an asset, but simply a bald statement that so much went out among the farmers. I want to urge upon the Government in connection with this help that they have given that where the farmer is individually responsible I trust they will do the proper thing and make a charge on his property, allow him to pay the interest until he is better established, and eventually collect the principal; but there is no

use in trying to collect this amount in the following year, as the farmers have various other bills to meet. Let the Government collect interest on the amount and give these men some encouragement to pay up at a later date. Before I leave the matter of the finances, I want to say I am thoroughly ashamed of the shortage in the revenue. The Government have no right to let that deficit accumulate. There is no cause for it that I can see, and I am thoroughly ashamed to read time after time of its growing proportions as compared with the reports I have seen from all the other States. In a general way I want to give the Government credit for having good intentions and honesty of purpose. To-day I received a shock at the charge which was laid, but as one swallow does not make a summer, I am not going to let that interfere with the good opinion I have had. We all know that the road to a certain place is paved with good intentions, and unless the Government leave these steamship and butcher's shop ventures alone, I think the road they will pave will be a very broad one. Each man in the community should stand on his own individuality. There again the Government are doing harm. Under a Government system of preference a man has only to become a unionist and he can get top pay.

Hon. F. Davis: What about the medical and legal unions?

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: That has nothing to do with this at all. Among the minor questions I would like the Government to deal with I want them to look into the question of the outrageous charges made at terminal stations when goods are consigned to a man but not prepaid. In some cases 25 to 50 per cent. is charged, and this should not be. In some instances 50 per cent. has to be contributed simply because the consignor has not paid at the other end. I trust that the Colonial Secretary will make a note of this, as the charge is an extortion and should not be allowed to exist. I trust that the Government will look into the question of reduction in rents. In fact, it means a big reclassification, notably on the Mer-

redin line, where the people thought they were going to be near a railway, and west of Katanning, where the lands have been overvalued. I want the Government to look into the question of giving relief to the settler, which I have heard again and again referred to by members of the Ministry in favourable terms, but yet no fruit has followed in that respect. Coming to the question of the unemployed, we know there has certainly been an agitation, although we have not heard so much of it as we did. The unemployed situation is principally due to the Government's Workers' Compensation Act. To-day the farmer does not dare to put workers on unless he insures them, or unless he is prepared to take a sporting chance, so the would-be worker has to drop off elsewhere, and you get the unemployed. The way out of this difficulty is through national insurance, but the present Act is the most one-eyed and lop-sided thing I have ever seen. Under it the worker never contributes one penny towards saving his own face, or establishing his own position. The whole thing wants going into again. Why should not the man be asked to take his own proportion of the risk, even if it is only a third? Unless hon. members are prepared to do this the only way out of the trouble is national insurance. In connection with harbour improvements, I trust that the Government will at last do justice to Albany, where the trade is increasing and it is about time the promise made by different Governments—the present Government are not singular in that respect—should be fulfilled.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I do not like the debate to close without saying a few words. Before proceeding to deal with the matters more directly mentioned in the Speech, I claim the privilege to deal with matters in general, and I would like to refer to what took place before the tea adjournment. A serious charge was made by Mr. Moss against the Government in connection with what appears to have been a very irregular

proceeding in respect to the recent election for the West Province, and the Honorary Minister, Mr. Dodd, in replying, instead of endeavouring to justify the position taken up by the Government, to explain or apologise for it, endeavoured to obscure the issue by making an attack. This House and the country generally do not want an attack; they want an explanation of a very serious charge made in connection with one of our most sacred institutions. We have heard of the squid, and we know what he does directly he is touched. I am sorry the Honorary Minister is not in his place, because I desire to refer to the charge he threw out in connection with the select committee on the Wongan Hills railway. When the hon. member first came into this House we were all struck by his fair-mindedness; we congratulated him upon it, and the House thought that although representing the Labour party, he was a man able to listen to reason. Many times he came to the rescue of the Government, and with his spirit of compromise and fair play he gained the admiration of the House. I was among his many admirers. I am sorry the hon. gentleman is not improving. He said I should be the last to make a charge against the Government. I have a duty to my electors to perform. I heard for the first time a very serious charge against the Government, and because I have what, in his opinion, is the audacity to express my views of the reply given by the leader of the House, I offend Mr. Dodd, and he hurls charges which, for the life of me, I cannot understand. However, he said before tea that he only wished the whole of the evidence taken by the select committee on the Wongan Hills railway was given out to the public. I then interjected that I had nothing to fear from the publication of that evidence, and I asked that it might be made public. The hon. member is in charge, with his colleagues, of the public purse, and if he and they think it of sufficient importance, and think it would get rid of me out of the House, I challenge them to publish it. But the hon. member attempts to get out of it by whining that they have no money to spend on that sort of thing. He makes a

charge, and then runs away from it. I will make a fair proposition to the hon. member, or rather to the leader of the House, in the absence of the hon. member. If he can pick out from the evidence portions which he thinks will help him to my detriment, and will offer them to the Press of the State, then if the Press refuse to publish that evidence, I will pay for its publication out of my own pocket. If the hon. member will not do this, then if he be a fair-minded man, he will for ever hold his peace. The only charge I have made against the Government was made in June, 12 months ago, after my re-election. I then said the Wongan Hills railway line had been deviated to injure me and the members of my family. That was given to me by an official in the Railway Department, and was repeated more than once; and I was very much incensed to think that in order to vent a petty spleen on me they should injure my neighbours as well. I resented it, and said so in the House. I asked for a select committee. To the credit of the Government they threw no obstacle in the way of my getting that committee. Very soon after the committee started to take evidence I found that I had been misinformed, that there was no evidence whatever to substantiate the charge I had made against the Government. Thereupon I took the only honourable course which appeared open to me; I went immediately to the Premier and said "I have to apologise. I made a charge against you and your Government which I find is untrue, and I therefore tender you an apology, and I intend to-morrow, when the House meets, to state it publicly." The Premier acted like a man and said "Well, Mr. Sommers, I have to thank you for your apology. You have taken the right course, and I give you every credit for it." I felt that I had a duty to perform, and so I withdrew from the position I had taken up. Surely one would have thought that the incident would end there, bearing in mind that during the last elections I was scandalously and maliciously victimised, that insinuations were cast, and all sorts of charges made against me. However, the electors had made a proper answer—they elected me by a big majority, and we

heard no more from the Government. I was prepared to let it close, but on every occasion the Honorary Minister snarls that I should be the last one to level a charge. I want this ended. Therefore I challenge him—and I hope the Press will publish the challenge to-morrow—to pick out the spicy pieces of evidence which he regrets were not made public, and to give them to the Press. Then, in the event of the Press refusing to publish them as news, I will pay for their publication.

The PRESIDENT: And now we will have the Address-in-reply.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: All right, Sir, thank you. I am something like yourself, Sir, in that I do not like to sit down and allow these insinuations to pass. I have been 13 years in the House. It must be that the thirteenth year is an unlucky one. Perhaps that is the explanation of these charges made against me. I would like to be good friends with the Government. I have personal friends among the Ministry, and I would be the first to give them credit for good intentions. But to-day my few remarks will be mostly of a regretful nature, I am sorry to say.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: More in sorrow than in anger.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Yes. But before coming to those remarks of a regretful nature, I will voice my satisfaction at the reappointment of Sir Newton Moore as Agent General in London. Under a policy of spoils to the victors the Government could easily have given the post to one of their supporters; but to their credit they have given it to Sir Newton Moore, and I congratulate them. I fall in with the hope expressed in the Speech that the good season, though late, will restore a certain amount of lost confidence and serve to remove some of the distress which now exists amongst the farming community. I hope it will help the Government before the close of the year to put the finances in a better position than they are in at the present time. Like other hon. members, I regret that the deficit should have mounted up to such an enormous figure. I regret to see in the Speech that in the opinion of the Government further taxation is

necessary. To impose increased taxation at this juncture would be ill-advised indeed. As a business man I know the distress which exists in the country, and I sincerely hope the Government will reconsider the matter, and not impose extra burdens at this juncture. If, later on, it should be found unavoidable, then the people will bow to the necessity. But the Government, I think, are on the wrong track in regard to trading concerns. All of us in trade know that it takes the utmost skill and attention to make ends meet, let alone to make a profit. Yet we have the Government going into sawmills, implement works, butchers' shops, trading concerns, State steamers, and so on. It is of no use; time will only increase the deficit which will mount up over these concerns, and I feel sorry that the Government should have embarked upon them. We are only a small population, yet the Government are interfering with those already in trade. We are having a hard enough time, and it is almost impossible for private individuals to compete with the Government. It is not fair. If these people had been making a profit it would have been different, but now it is not possible for them to do so. A matter which intimately concerns the Metropolitan Province is the question of sewerage. It is not the Government's fault that the present system is not a success, because it was inaugurated before their time, but there are many reasons for believing that the system is a failure. We are trying to make this a beautiful city, yet it seems we are on the verge of turning our beautiful river into a sewer. It is a mistake. Maybe it is not too late to correct it. The cost cannot be taken into consideration. If it is proved to be a failure, let us face it right away. We will not blame the Government for it—let us throw away what we have got and take up something better.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: To follow the dock.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Yes, I take credit on the score that I opposed that dock to the utmost. I did not think it was an opportune time, nor that the position was right. We have lost the money, and in respect to this sewerage scheme let us

get the best of opinions from our departmental officers and see if we are on the right track. If we are wrong, let us face the loss and have a different system of sewerage. I would like to say a word or two about the cost of house connections. It seems to be ruinous almost; it is a very heavy burden, and I do not think the public get full value for the money they have spent. If the Government could relieve the pressure and do this for less money than it is costing now, they would be doing good work. It is no use taking the money from the people and squandering it. Then there is the matter of the construction of public works by day labour. It is the policy of the Government, but I think it is wrong. It is too costly. Under the day labour system the railways take longer to construct and we never know when they are going to be finished. Take the interest we lose through the money lying idle in consequence of the railway taking two or three years to construct where it could be constructed in one year. That difference is a very big item. I know that in the construction of these railways we are not getting a fair day's work from the men employed, because they are Government servants, and they will not work the same for the Government as they will for a private contractor. And even if the contractor makes a bit of profit, it would pay the Government better in the long run than the day labour system. We would do better under the contract system. We would get our railways finished much sooner, and the farmers and others would get the use of the railway, and we would earn money from the carriage of goods. I would like to know from the Minister, and I hope he will have the opportunity of finding out for me, some information in regard to this Wongan-Mullewa line. The work has been going on for a long time, and the gangs of men have been a very long way from their base, and goods, food, and water have had to be carted immense distances. If a contractor did things in that manner away from his base it would ruin him. I have been informed, and I believe creditably, that railway material has been carted on the backs of camels from stations on the Midland line eastward to

the proposed Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. I have been informed that even rails have been carried on camels. On the goldfields at one time a railway was built from Boulder to the Hampton Plains district. It was only a small affair for carrying firewood and the train used to run past a water standpipe to the terminus a few miles further on. One day a number of camels proceeded to the terminus carrying water which was emptied into the tank from which the boiler of the engine was replenished. The question was asked, "Why do you cart water with camels? Where do you get it from?" The answer was, "We get it from the standpipe, seven miles away." The question was asked, "Why do not you cart it down on the tanks on the train?" The reply given was, "I never thought of that. As a matter of fact we had nothing for the camels to do and so, as we were buying feed for them, we decided to use them to cart water." Possibly the Works Department have a number of camels with nothing to do, and as they are buying feed for them they may be utilising them to cart this material 30 or 40 miles to the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway rather than have them idle. I am not asserting from my own knowledge that this is true, but perhaps the Minister will inquire into it. In regard to the Esperance railway it is proper that I should say a word or two. I would like to believe that there is a vast area of splendid country in that district awaiting development, capable of growing crops in ordinary seasons and making the successful settlement, which we have been informed it will make, but I do not think the time is opportune even if the land is there.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: You supported the railway once.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Yes, that was when I was youthful like the hon. member, and as a goldfields resident, I was led to believe that it was wanted. It was a popular question and I think a lot of us wanted to open up a new port at Esperance.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: And you fell.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Yes, I was tempted, and I fell, but I have since seen the error of my ways, and now I want to

be thoroughly convinced that this railway will be in the best interests of the public. I do not care if we have the rainfall and the country as have been described, I say that it is not an opportune time to bring the Esperance Railway Bill in. Besides it is not fair. Many railways have been promised where settlers have gone out on the land and paid high prices for it, where they are living at the present time and are ready to produce the wheat, but cannot get railway facilities. We have been told by the Minister for Works that he will not be able to commence some of the railways for a considerable time. In view of that, why bring on the Esperance proposal? There are heaps of lines nearer home where the Government have been paid or are being paid for the land, and yet the Government want to give preference to a line which will serve at present only a few settlers, and ignore the claims of other people who have a far better and in fact, practically an assured rainfall. I admire the way in which the Hon. Mr. Kirwan is fighting for the line. I do not say that he deserves success, because I do not think the line will be in the best interests of the public at the present time. But I will promise that if I am in the House and if in the meantime we adopt Mr. Paterson's suggestion to start a small Government farm and cultivate an area to test the capabilities of the land and the rainfall, then if it is proved to be a success, every member will be glad that we have a new province in the State and will push it so that the line may be built in its turn. Had Mr. Paterson's proposal, which was made over three years ago, been carried out, we would have had the proof now. The Colonial Secretary need not have gone down and travelled through the Esperance district to estimate the height of the crops. We should have had it from one of the officials. We would have had particulars that a man put in certain crops, certain manures were used, a certain rainfall was registered, and he got certain results. Then when other lines were being promised the House would not be doing its duty if it did not vote for a railway from Norseman to Esperance. Even now, I hope that this measure will not be unduly

pressed, and I trust that the proposition made by Mr. Paterson will be carried out by the Government and that in due course the necessity for this line may be proved, and that it will accomplish all that is wished by its best supporters, and that the Hon. Mr. Kirwan may be made happy by seeing thousands of settlers living in the area prosperous and contented. That is all I have to say. I would not have said as much as I have, but I did not like to sit down under the insinuations and slurs thrown out by the Honorary Minister. He seemed to have lost his temper, but I have no animosity against him, and I hope that when he has had a sleep he will refrain from making these charges. I wish to live in peace with all mankind, and particularly with the Ministry. I desire to help them all I can, though I do not believe in their policy, but if they show an earnestness to do what is right I will be the first to help them.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE (North-East): I understand it is the wish of the leader of the House to finish the debate this evening, otherwise I should have preferred to leave my few remarks till the next sitting of the House.

The Colonial Secretary: I do not want to restrict the debate.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: The leader of the House says he does not want to restrict the debate, but I am prepared to go on to-night, and I daresay it will be possible to finish the debate. I would like to congratulate the country, and incidentally ourselves, and the residents of Western Australia on the magnificent rains we have had during the past few weeks. The season up to a certain stage looked as if it would not be very good, but the rains we have had quite recently have put the result of the season beyond doubt, and we may well congratulate ourselves on the prospect of a bounteous harvest. It is always refreshing to me to sit in my seat and listen to the Hon. Mr. Piessé. He is representing one of the great primary industries of Western Australia; he comes from a centre where wheat growing is carried on to a very large extent, and he has an intimate knowledge of the settlers right through the agricultural areas, and anything he has to say with regard to agri-

culture has an enormous weight in this House. Coming as I do from a different part of Western Australia altogether, where a different industry is carried on, it is more than pleasing to me to have the assurance from the experience and knowledge of the Hon. Mr. Piesse that things are going on very well in the agricultural districts. During the course of the debate the Administration which the present Government succeeded has been attacked. Comparisons have been made as to the manner in which they administered the affairs of Western Australia with the methods of the Administration of the present time. In the absence of the late leader of this Chamber, I think it is my duty to say a few words on this question and to put the position before members as it was when the previous Administration took office, or rather when the Rason Government took office, because the Rason Government was followed by the Moore Government, and the Moore Government by the Wilson Government. In 1904 the first Labour Administration took possession of the Treasury benches in Western Australia. Sir Walter James, who was Treasurer at the time, was defeated and handed in his resignation, and Mr. Daglish was invited to form a Ministry, which he did. At the time there was a surplus in the Treasury of £33,364. At the end of the following year, the first year during which the Labour Government held office, there was a deficiency of £46,521, which made a loss for that year of £129,885, not too bad a deficiency to mount up in one single year. However, they went out of office in 1905, and a Liberal Government took charge of the Treasury bench again. To such good purpose did they manage the affairs of the State that at the end of the financial year, in 1911, there was a surplus of £13,000. Shortly after that came their turn to relinquish office, and the present Labour Government took charge of the Treasury benches, and they at the end of the financial year, 1913, showed a deficiency of £311,515, and a month later, namely to the end of July of this year, they had increased this deficiency by a further amount of £75,744, bringing the deficiency on that date to £387,259, or as Mr. Scaddan told a goldfields depu-

tation, who waited upon him some time ago, asking for financial assistance, that it was not possible to grant their request because the State was going behind at the rate of £1,000 a day. In addition to the state of the finances in 1905, when the first Labour Government were in power, things in Western Australia were in a very bad way. Employment was scarce, artisans were leaving the State, the population was decreasing, factories were closing up, wages were low, and stagnation was the order of the day in Western Australia. Fortunately for Western Australia that Administration did not remain in power very long. I think its term of office extended over a little more than 12 months. Then a Liberal Government by a policy of active development of the natural resources of the State, by capable and economic administration and economy in all the various departments, lifted the State out of the slough of despond, and, as I have said before, they handed over affairs to the gentlemen who now have possession of the Treasury bench in a very buoyant condition indeed. Employment had become plentiful by 1911, wages were high, the agricultural industry was progressing by leaps and bounds, land settlement was going on, railways were being built, the timber trade was good, building was going ahead satisfactorily in the city and in the principal towns of the State, factories were being established, and moreover a policy of immigration had been instituted by the Liberal Government, as a result of which the best class of settlers were being brought to Western Australia. I say that in handing over the reins of government to the Labour people the Wilson Government had nothing at all to regret. Rather they had cause to be proud of the work they had done during the time they were in office. They may have made mistakes, but what man who is worth his salt does not make mistakes? Their administration was clean and capable and they had something to be proud of in handing over the affairs of the State when the time came for them to do so. In all probability the present will be the last session of this Parliament. It may be that before the end of June the House will be called together again, but I take it that if it is

the object will be merely for the formal granting of supply. Parliament expires by effluxion of time in September or October of next year, and I do not think that the present Government will bring in any legislation during any session they may hold prior to the election next year. I consider that the Government were wise in not attempting very much new legislation in the present session. The Speech does not outline to any extent new legislation. We are to have a good many of our old friends put before us in the way of the Traffic Bill, the Public Works Committee Bill, and measures dealing with the Esperance railway, the amendment of the Mines Regulation Act, the liquor traffic, and taxation. Some of these measures were before us last session and some of them were thrown out by this Chamber and others were dropped by the Administration because of the adverse amendments which were inserted by this House. Some of these Bills I supported and some I did not. When they come before us again I shall be prepared to listen to the further arguments which may be brought forward in their favour and give them that consideration and broad-minded attention which most measures get when they come before this House. It is our duty to criticise and revise all measures that come before us, and I think this House can fairly claim they have done that to the fullest extent and they have always done it in the interests of the State as a whole. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that this House cannot influence the administration of the various Acts, but this must necessarily be left to the Ministers who are in control. They are responsible to Parliament and to the country, but it is usual, when speaking on the Address-in-reply to take the opportunity of criticising the administration of those who are in charge. I should like to say that in September and October, 1910, just prior to the last general elections, all those who were standing in the interests of the Labour party were going up and down the length and breadth of the country, and the burden of their song was that if they were returned to power they would pledge themselves to

reduce the cost of living. They made a strong point of this, that they intended to give preference to unionists, and the right to work was one of the planks of their platform. That meant that they were pledging themselves to find work for every man. Mind you, there was to be preference to unionists and the Government were to find work for everyone who wanted it. They also pledged themselves to increase the wages and salaries of Government servants and officials, and I think they said they would also pledge themselves to reduce the hours of labour. Their first effort to make a reduction in the cost of living was by the purchase of several steamers. The idea was that they might bring meat down from the North-West and, as an adjunct to the steamers, they decided to enter into the business of retailing the meat and they opened shops in the metropolitan area. In addition to that, the Government pledged themselves to become fishmongers. I believe it was the Colonial Secretary who in March of the following year stated that his first object would be to get a suitable steamer and he added that a number of vessels had been placed under offer to the State. Then he added—

“We shall have men in Shark Bay to catch the fish, which will be packed in ice, cleaned ready for delivery, placed in cold storage and delivered to the consumers in Government carts specially constructed for the purpose. The Government will retail fish at the householder's door for not more than five-pence a pound, and this desirable consummation might be confidently expected in two or three months.

The Colonial Secretary: Where was that said?

Hon R. D. McKENZIE: I am reading an extract from the *Sunday Times*. This then was the second method by which the Government were to bring about the reduced cost of living. We have not the cheap fish yet and I do not think we have cheap meat either. In connection with cheap meat the Government's intention was, and I believe they were honest in their intentions, to reduce the cost of living, but evidently it was their idea that only the

people of the metropolitan area should reap this benefit, because up to the present time the large centres of population on the goldfields have not benefited to the extent of having had butchers' shops established there. The ordinary retail cornish or garden variety of butcher is good enough for the goldfields.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: They are going to open some on the fields.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: I would not like to say that I am very glad to hear that. Another way by which they proposed to cheapen the cost of living was by the reduction of rents, which were very high, and the Government claimed that the landlords were getting far too great a return on the money they had invested, and the way to reduce that was by building workers' homes. We all give credit to the Government for bringing in the Workers' Homes Act, a measure which the previous Administration intended to place on the statute book. However, the Labour party came into power, passed the measure and received the credit. Again, the remarks I made with reference to the intended reduction of the price of meat, so far as the goldfields are concerned, apply to this question of workers' homes. It is evidently not the intention of the Government to give facilities to the goldfields people to take advantage of the Workers' Homes Act, because up to the present time, according to the reply given by the Colonial Secretary to a question asked by Mr. Kirwan yesterday, only £310 has been invested in workers' homes on the Eastern Goldfields. I asked the question myself last year as to whether the Government were going to give facilities to people making application from the goldfields but I got rather an evasive answer and allowed the matter to stand over till this year. I say now, unless the Government are going to give the same facilities to the Eastern Goldfields as they are giving to the people in the metropolitan area, then they are not true to their pledges to the people of Western Australia, when they promised to reduce the cost of living per medium of these homes. The Government probably realise now that experience in the

management and control of big affairs counts for a good deal. Most large businesses are controlled by men who have had life-long experience. When a man takes charge of a big department without having had experience, only one result can follow. There must be serious mistakes. It would not matter so much if these mistakes were not repeated and I hope the Government will seriously consider the position and benefit by the mistakes they have made and see that the errors will not be repeated in the immediate future. There is no doubt much good work has been done by the present Administration following on the lines of previous Governments. Their act in amalgamating the various water supply departments was undoubtedly good. The amalgamation stands for economy and better administration. One thing I am pleased to see that they have taken in hand, and that is the construction of the storage reservoir on the Eastern Goldfields. This is a matter I mentioned last year when speaking on the Address-in-reply. It is of great importance and had been under consideration by the previous Administration. There might be an accident at any time to the pipe line. It is public property that the pipes are corroded and a serious break may occur at any moment. There is storage capacity in Kalgoorlie for only two or three days' supply. Now the Government are putting down an immense storage reservoir in Kalgoorlie and during the winter months when the consumption is not so great, the purpose is to fill that reservoir so that instead of there being only a two or three days' supply, I understand there will be a three or four weeks' supply. Another good thing the Government have done is the passing of legislation of a humanitarian character. I refer to the scheme for the erection of a sanatorium in the hills. For some years we have had an institution in Coolgardie which has done a great deal of good work in the way of accommodating people who are unfortunately suffering from consumption. Now the Government are carrying out the idea which I believe emanated from the Health Department, of transferring this sanatorium to the hills. Regard-

ing the Education Department, I was glad to hear Mr. Piesse make some references to what was being done in the country. I have been through the country districts on several occasions lately and I have noted with pleasure the way in which the Government are building small schools; even where there are not sufficient children to warrant a school the department are providing a governess, who is boarded by one of the farmers, to undertake the education of, perhaps, half a dozen children in the immediate vicinity. They are also following the good lines laid down by their predecessors in the establishment of secondary schools and technical schools where domestic economy is taught; and the Government have also added the coping stone to the educational system of Western Australia by establishing the University. They had the honour and pleasure of appointing the first Senate and that is now engaged in its important work with the professors and lecturers. We have an educational system now from the kindergarten to the University which any State might well be proud of. The Government should also be given credit to a very large extent for having kept industrial peace on the goldfields. There was every danger during the last year or two of an industrial upheaval and naturally every one in Western Australia must be thankful that good counsels prevailed, and that moderate men such as the Honorary Minister in this House, and others, used their influence to such advantage, and so assured industrial peace for two years to come. This is of great importance to Western Australia, and the Government deserve every credit for the step they have taken in the matter. With other members, I desire to congratulate the Government on the reappointment of Sir Newton Moore as Agent General. I think when Mr. Scaddan was in London a few months ago, he found that Sir Newton Moore was of great assistance to him in connection with the flotation of the loan of two millions. The Government have also, I believe, issued instructions, if they have not already let contracts, for the establishment of abattoirs and saleyards in various parts

of the State. I am only sorry that I cannot congratulate them on being about to erect cool storage works in the north-west of the State. I believe if the Government had done that instead of going into the steamer business and the opening of butchers' shops, by this time there would have been a reduction in the cost of living in the way of cheap meat. Mistakes seem to have followed the Administration when they made any distinct departure from the previously laid down rules of administration, and when they went into socialistic ventures disasters overtook them in quick succession. I trust that the experience they have had in connection with the shipping business and butcher shops will teach them caution in the new ventures they are now going into. I understand that before long we shall have a large factory turning out agricultural machinery, and a large brick-making plant in operation; a contract is at present in hand for supplying sleepers, and the Government have also got the powellising contract, the terms of which were made such a secret and to which so much mystery has been attached. I am also pleased that the Government have not carried out their intention of putting the railways of Western Australia under Ministerial control. I am not quite sure that it was the intention of the Government to do that. I understand that it was cautious that expressed approval of having the railways under Ministerial control, but by the re-appointment of Mr. Short to the position of Commissioner of Railways for a term of years the question of Ministerial control of the railways is placed outside the scope of practical politics for the time being. The Perth trams have been mentioned this evening. When their purchase was before the House last session I opposed it with all my strength, but the Government were able to carry their measure through both Houses of Parliament, and bought the trams. My principal reason for objecting to the purchase was that in a country like this, which is crying out for agricultural railways and for the development of its natural resources, we wanted all the money it is possible to get, and it was a mistake to earmark half a million

of money to be handed over to the tramway shareholders in London. The company could well have carried on for a few more years, or, if the municipality wanted the trams they could have bought them on terms or the council could have raised the money, and the borrowing powers of the State would not have been interfered with. I believe that out of two million pounds raised by Mr. Scaddan in London recently £700,000 was required in London for interest on previous loans, and half a million was handed over to the tramway company, because, I am told, that instead of taking bonds as it was thought they would, they demanded cash.

The Colonial Secretary: The loans were raised by previous Governments.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: My argument is that if the Government had not purchased the trams they would have had half a million of money for necessary developmental works.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: The trams are a very good asset.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: I quite agree with the hon. member, but we might have a good asset and yet be starving, because an asset is not always realisable. With regard to the new legislation that is coming forward, I understand that it is the Government's intention to provide for a land valuation board. I think the House will need to be careful as to how this measure is allowed to go through. I hope it is not to have any confiscatory clauses in it. I hope the Government are not going to value the land in boom times, and then in a year or two, when there has been a big reduction in the price of land, come along and resume land at prices a great deal lower than the proprietors paid for it. A case in point was mentioned by Mr. Sommers, that of a corner block in Hay-street, Perth, which was purchased for between £60,000 and £70,000, but I do not think the block would realise that sum to-day. If it were valued by the Government valuer at a lower price than the proprietor paid for it, would the Government be able to come along and compel him to take that price? It would be a distinct injustice if they could, and I hope the House will be careful in connection

with that measure. A taxation measure is also to come forward again, and I, for one, shall be very cautious as to how I give permission to the Government to increase direct taxation. At all events, until we see on the part of the Government a desire for economy in all the departments, and until we have an assurance that the only way out of the difficulty is by direct taxation, we should be very careful what we do in that matter. Now, with regard to the mining industry, the report of the Mines Department was laid on the table the other day. It is not good reading by any means. The Speech of the Governor dismisses the industry with a few pious remarks, just as it did last year. I feel a great deal of regret that members who are representing the mining industry in this House and in another place have had little or nothing to say in connection with this great industry, because it is the primary industry of Western Australia. It is a grand industry which, in the course of the last 20 years has produced £111,000,000 sterling and paid dividends amounting to £23,000,000, or equal to 21 per cent. of the total production of gold.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Where do the dividends go?

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: It is not a question of where they go: it was British capital that came here to develop the mines.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: They earn the dividends do they not?

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: Certainly. There is a nice golden egg being laid at Kalgoorlie every fortnight, and it is laid because of British capital coming here to open up our mines, and anyone who takes steps to kill the goose that lays that golden egg does not deserve to be in the public life of the State. The industry is employing 15,000 men—unfortunately 1,500 less than in the previous year, thus showing that the industry is not getting the support it should—and pays them a high rate of wages. I have no doubt that at least each of these men carries five of the population on his back, thus making a population of 75,000 directly dependent on the mining industry. Is this not an industry worth fostering? Hitherto the

system of fostering the industry has been by a system of State batteries throughout the mining districts, water supplies, loans under the Mining Development Act, boring by diamond drilling on the subsidy system, and by loans to prospectors of plant such as horses, camels, carts and tools suitable for prospecting. I am quite prepared to admit that the Minister in charge of the Mines Department at the present time has followed along these old lines. He has built new batteries; he has provided further water supplies; he has lent money to people who are trying to develop small leases, and has also subsidised people for boring by diamond drilling, but in spite of this, we find that from year to year the industry is declining. In a great country like this, where the auriferous belt is so vast and the possibilities are so immense this should not be. Surely more initiative should be shown. The prospector should be assisted more than he is at the present time. He is the backbone of the industry in its last resort. Unless we have the prospector going out and new finds being made the industry must gradually decline. A mine is not like a farm which improves with age and tillage; every ounce of gold that is taken out of a mine makes it so much the poorer. The Minister for Mines should have more initiative. He should keep himself more in touch with the prospectors. The associations on the goldfields have made certain recommendations to him from time to time, but up to the present they have not had a very great amount of success. One thing suggested was the institution of a system of mining boards. This is a system that has been tried in other parts of Australia. In some places it has proved a failure, but because it has been a failure elsewhere that is no reason why it should be a failure here. It should be given a trial, at any rate, and if it proves a failure it can be withdrawn afterwards. The trouble would be to get the proper men on the board. A proposal was made that a member of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council, a member of the Boulder council, and a member of the roads board should constitute the mining board for that district. In my

opinion that would be altogether wrong. If we are to have a mining board we must be careful of the kind of men we put on it. At the same time the proposal to establish these boards is worthy of the attention of the Minister, and I hope that he will look into it. We want to get away from the awful groove into which the Mines Department is getting. The Mines Department officials in Perth are entirely out of touch with the goldfields and their requirements. The Mines office in Kalgoorlie is simply a receiving office for fees. Very little information can be got up there, and the officials in the Perth office very rarely visit the goldfields. The State Mining Engineer, a gentleman who, I believe, has very high qualifications, sits in an office in Perth doing administrative work. He should be resident on the goldfields and live amongst the mining population so that he might know exactly what is going on. If the Government will galvanise life into the officials in Perth and shift the State Mining Engineer to Kalgoorlie or some other goldfields centre, I believe there will be a change for the better in the mining industry in the very near future. During the past few weeks there have been some very good developments in the larger mines at Kalgoorlie. Only the other day we received word that the Ivanhoe had passed through the poor zone and struck good ore below. That news is of the greatest importance to all people in Western Australia, but not only is that mine doing well; other mines have been looking very well during the past few months. But I would remind the House that these big mines do not constitute the mining industry. Unless new shows are being found continuously the industry must be a dying concern, and I do appeal to the Minister for Mines to throw his energies into the matter, and if he has no ideas of his own, to, at all events, offer an incentive to the officials under him to give him some ideas as to what would be the best method of galvanising the industry into life. When I was in America some years ago I was going through a large commercial establishment, a place of many storeys, and as we walked from floor to floor I noticed on the top of the

stairs on each floor a box labelled "ideas." I asked what the reason was, and it was stated that there was a prize of five dollars given by the directors of the concern every time the board met for the best idea put in by one of the employees. There was a box on every floor, and on the day that the board met they were brought down and the directors went through the ideas submitted. If something of that kind were introduced in the Mines Department I think it would be worth while. I notice that the eminent geologist, Dr. McLaren, has been paying another visit to the goldfields. Some years ago he made an examination of the country around Kalgoorlie on behalf of the companies. His report was not made public, but I believe that it could be if the Government paid a fee, and I think that the companies would give their permission; they could not make that report public without such permission as the companies are under a bond. At the same time the Government could get Dr. McLaren to bring the information right up to date. I do hope the Government are not going to try to hamper the industry by endeavouring to bring in a new Mines Regulation Bill during the present session. Many of the mines working in the Eastern goldfields have now got so low in the grade of ore that it is a question whether they are paying or not. I have heard that one large mine in Kalgoorlie during last year made a loss of £3,000 and the administration are endeavouring to see whether they can economise further so as perhaps to turn that £3,000 loss into a small profit. So long as they are paying working expenses they keep going, but once they begin to show a loss year after year the end is not far off, and such results would have the effect of throwing hundreds of men out of employment. In connection with the Early Closing Act, I would like to point out that in 1902 there was a measure placed on the statute-book which gave the privilege of early closing to the employees in the State of Western Australia. Provision was made in that Act for firms to bring their employees back after the ordinary closing hours for 12 nights in any one half-year for the purpose of stocktaking. It was termed

the stocktaking clause. That clause has never been repealed, although the Act has been amended on several occasions, the last occasion being 1912. That clause has rather been re-affirmed, and last year, when it was before the House, only a slight alteration was made in it; there was no change with regard to bringing back employees 12 nights in any half-year. Inspectors in Perth are well aware of the fact that firms in Perth bring their employees back, perhaps not for 12 nights in each half-year, but they do bring them back for stocktaking purposes, but there has never been any prosecution in Perth in the matter. Notice was, however, given quite recently on the goldfields that there were to be prosecutions there.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: There have been prosecutions in Perth.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: Not in connection with this clause. I have been making inquiries during the last few days. On the goldfields instructions have been issued for prosecutions to be made. The intention of the Legislature was very clear. The stocktaking clause has never been struck out of the Act. It is still there, and the Government know the fairness of it. In spite of that they have gone to the goldfields and prosecuted people there, although the firms on the goldfields who have been prosecuted are perhaps the fairest employers of labour in Western Australia. They do not work their employees as much as they are entitled to: they give them a fortnight's holiday every year on full pay, and also pay them while they are away ill. The employees know the necessity of going back for stocktaking. The only one conclusion I can come to is that because the goldfields are a Labour community the Government think they have a greater chance of winning there than in Perth. The same thing has been carried on in Perth for years, and the firms cannot do without it. The intention of the legislature was that the stocktaking clause should remain in the Act, and the Government know that, yet in spite of that they are making these prosecutions. I have just had a telegram from the gold-

fields saying that the magistrate has given his decision against the employers.

Hon. A. G. Jenkins: But they have the right to appeal.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: Appeals are costly. I hope the leader of the House will have that Act brought before us during the present session, and see that the matter is made clear at all events. If the Government are going to strike that clause out of the Bill let them strike it out, but let everyone know how the matter stands. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS (Metropolitan): Selom I think has there been a Speech before the House in which so little is stated about the new programme of the Government or rather the manner in which they intend to carry out that programme. I will refer to that, but before doing so I would like to answer some remarks that fell from the Hon. J. W. Kirwan. I much regret the hon. member is not in his place this evening, and that I was not able to speak when he was in the House. That gentleman gave us the other night what practically amounted to a lecture as to the hostile attitude some of the members of the Chamber had adopted towards the Government. To carry that hon. member's remarks to a logical conclusion is to say that this House should not in any way obstruct legislation which is brought forward by any Government, no matter whether a Liberal or a Labour Government. He seems to think that this House should simply sit here for the purpose of putting on the statute-book any legislation that is brought forward or comes from another place simply because another place is supposed to represent the will of the people. That expression "will of the people" is a very awe-inspiring term, and some members of this Chamber are never tired of using it. They seem to think that there is something magical in the words, and they hold them over this House something like the sword of Damocles. One sometimes reads of attacks made upon this House by irresponsible agitators who care very little for the welfare of the State as a whole and have very little interest in it.

These attacks, as a rule, are hardly worth taking notice of, but when we find that lately Ministers of the Crown—I do not say that in any offensive way, or with reference to any Ministers of the Crown in this Chamber—some Ministers think to carry out the old adage of abusing the other fellow if you cannot answer his case. When a Minister of the Crown sees fit to make such assertions it is necessary to reply to them, and when a member like the Hon. J. W. Kirwan, who seemed the other night to occupy the position of leader of the party in this House, attacks this House, and cannot find words severe enough in his condemnation, then I think it is time to take the hon. member to task and show him to some extent how he may let his little prejudices run away with his reason. The first matter he dealt with the other night was to take the House to task because it had passed the amendment moved by the Hon. M. L. Moss to the Governor's Speech last session. I would like to take the hon. member back to 1898, which was the year when I first had the honour to become a member of this Chamber. As the youngest member I was asked by the then Premier to move the Address-in-reply. I did so, and in reply to my speech a motion was submitted by the Hon. R. S. Haynes, then one of the members for the Central Province. This was the amendment the hon. member moved—

We, however, desire to express our disapproval of the proposal for re-appropriation contained in paragraph 26 of Your Excellency's Speech. This course is in our opinion one which should not be followed as it practically commits the Colony to an expenditure without previously having made due provision for payment, and we feel that it would be unwise at the present time directly or indirectly to increase the indebtedness of the Colony by raising further loans or doing anything that would necessitate so doing until we have at least exhausted the present authorisation.

That was a very far reaching amendment, and was very severe in its terms, as it practically instructed the Govern-

ment not to commence any new works at all. This amendment was adopted and carried.

The Colonial Secretary: Not that particular one?

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: That particular amendment was carried. It is in *Hansard*, and the Minister can see it. The Hon. J. W. Kirwan was at that time proprietor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and its editor. On the carrying of this amendment this paper published a leading article, and I think that extracts from that leading article should make very nice reading, in view of the remarks of the hon. member the other evening. The article was headed "The first check," and stated—

A general feeling of anxiety has been growing up . . . and if the gentlemen present, including the Upper House majority that lately defeated the Government on the same question remain true to the interests of the country, the power of the Ministry to do wrong will be seriously curtailed. The defeat of the Government by nine votes to seven in the Legislative Council on the motion of Mr. R. S. Haynes, who moved an amendment on the Address-in-reply, may be said to be the first serious check received by the Government during a long and hitherto almost unassailable tenure of office.

Then he goes on—

Although an adverse vote in the Legislative Council is not nearly of so much importance as the same would be in the Assembly, still as the Government must have a majority in both Houses to be able to carry on business, its present position cannot be said to be so cheery as its friends might desire.

He goes on—

It may be gathered, therefore, that the existing outlook is not so bright as might be wished for from a Ministerial point of view. Nothing is as a rule so disastrous to a country as the Government being so strong that it can do anything it pleases, more especially if the said Government be inclined to be extravagant or overbearing or not over much troubled by scruples. From

the aspect of affairs as they now stand in the Legislative Council it would seem that at the least a handsome check can be maintained over the ways and doings of our rulers who have hitherto gone on the uneven tenor of their journey unheeding of attempts at remonstrating. This is all as it should be. So much for the situation as far as the Upper House is concerned, which certainly makes the outlook for the country more cheerful than could formerly have been hoped for. It may reasonably be assumed that the adverse party in that Chamber will remain strong enough at least to prevent anything of a very flagrant nature from being perpetrated.

It is very interesting to see with what complacency the hon. member then viewed the passing of an amendment, a most conservative amendment, an invitation to a Government to stop all public works in the State—it is very interesting to see how that gentleman viewed the passing of that resolution in 1898 and how he views the passing of another amendment nothing like so serious as the first—

Hon. W. Kingsmill: How did he vote on that occasion?

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: He was not in the House then. He also said in another article referring to the passing of this earlier amendment—

It is a decided advance on the state of affairs existing formerly, and with this division taken in conjunction with the defeat of the Government in the Legislative Council, should prove a very salutary lesson to the Government.

And again on 4th July, 1898, he said—

A general feeling of anxiety has been growing up, and if the gentlemen present, including the Upper House majority which lately defeated the Government on the same question, remain true to the interests of the country, the power of the Ministry to do wrong will be seriously curtailed. I am sorry the hon. member is not here, but doubtless he will find an opportunity later on in the session of explaining

the difference in the attitude he adopted in respect to the amendment moved by Mr. Moss, which was quite a mild one. The amendment moved by Mr. Moss was to excise all the words after "sovereign" with a view of inserting the following words:—

And to protest against expenditure incurred by Your Excellency's Ministers without an Act of Appropriation, such procedure being derogatory to the privileges of Parliament and subversive of the Constitution, while in addition thereto the proposal contained in Your Excellency's Speech implying that a ratification by the Legislative Assembly of such unauthorised expenditure is sufficient in law ignores the constitutional rights of the Legislative Council.

There is nothing terrible in that. I think even the Government would accept it. It seeks to prevent the Government from incurring unauthorised expenditure without an Act of Parliament. I do not think even the Government themselves wish to do that. They explained the appropriation of that money in regard to the steamers, and declared that they had gone the right way about it. However, the Council thought differently, and passed Mr. Moss's amendment. In 1898 the amendment was to protest against reappropriation. What the hon. member thought was quite wrong in 1898 was quite right in 1913. He referred again to this House having dropped several measures which the majority of the people and, he said, public opinion, wanted to have passed. Seeing that they come from the hon. member, I say these things must be answered. First of all, take the Esperance railway. Do hon. members contend that a majority of the people of Western Australia desire that line now? If they do, I venture to join issue with them. Many years ago there was a great demand for it, and with others I myself, representing a goldfields constituency, supported that line, but on grounds not one of which exist to-day. Now the line is required as a purely agricultural line, and I say the facts and arguments put forward for the line as an agricultural

proposition do not justify its construction. But I will say that if additional facts are put forward in the House, and if I am satisfied with the correctness of these facts, I certainly will vote for the line; because like other members I would be only too pleased to see another great province of wheat bearing land added to the State. The hon. member referred to the Public Works Committee Bill, and said that the majority of the people desire it. A majority in his province may, but a majority of people in my province are most bitterly opposed to it, and, with the exception of one or two strong supporters of the Government, one can hardly find among his acquaintances a single person in favour of it. Personally I view it as other members do. I think this committee can do no good at all. We have at the present time gentlemen who can advise us, gentlemen who owe their positions to their ability in various departments, and who can give us all the advice we require when the question of a public work is being debated in Parliament. This Public Works Committee Bill can only be a sort of gift in the hands of the Government for the time being to a few supporters who may not attain the positions they want; it will afford a nice comfortable billet with very little work to do and a decent salary attached. Then there is the Public Works Bill. That was one the most confiscatory measures ever introduced in any Parliament. Could the hon. member stand on any platform in Western Australia before Legislative Council electors and justify that Bill? It simply meant that anybody fortunate enough to have any property could have that property taken away from him by the Government without fair compensation. Nobody desires that. I do not think the Government knew when they introduced the Bill what a far-reaching effect it would have. To a certain extent I am borne out in that because last session that Bill was not reintroduced by the Government. I do not know whether they intend to reintroduce it this session, but there is no mention of it in the Governor's Speech, and I hope the Government have decided not to reintroduce a

Bill the provisions of which were so unfair that nobody would be justified in passing it. And if they do reintroduce it I hope they will frame it in such a way that if a person is deprived of his land he will receive fair compensation. Under the Bill as it came to us he would receive no compensation at all. Then we have the Timber Lines Bill referred to by the hon. member. That Bill was introduced by a private member and not by the Government at all. There was no urgent demand for it. Mr. O'Loghlen introduced it, and its defeat was taken quietly: there was no outcry about it. Then the first State Hotels Bill was rejected because it gave power to the Government to build a State hotel anywhere and in any district without any authority whatever. The House thought that that was not a proper power to give to any Government, and they rejected it. Again there was no public outcry. The Government's own supporters, the Alliance, for the time being were rather glad of its defeat. Under a Bill of this description the Government could have built a State hotel wherever they wished, notwithstanding any adverse vote in the constituency and notwithstanding the opposition of the whole of the electors of the district. I do not suppose they would have done so, I do not suppose they would have been so foolish; still it gave them the power, and although the Government were not going to use that power, it was there. I think no such power should be given in any Act of Parliament. The second State Hotels Bill, which is said to have been rejected by this House, was not rejected. It was a Bill to provide a State hotel at Wongan Hills and another at Rottnest. The Premier said it gave power also to continue the Yallingup and Gwalia State hotels, which he said were being carried on without proper authority. The Council amended the Bill by striking out the reference to Rottnest hotel. The Bill went back to the Assembly, and the Premier, practically in a fit of pique, dropped the whole Bill because he could not get his Rottnest hotel. And, apparently, he is still continuing the policy of carrying

on the Gwalia and Yallingup hotels without proper authority. This House merely made a slight amendment, whereupon this Bill was dropped. In regard to the Land Act Amendment Bill, there was no great public outcry about the rejection of that measure, a measure which practically cancelled freeholds and would have everything leasehold. This, of course, could have only one ultimate end, that is to say, the entire abolition of all freeholds. Every bit of freehold would have to be resumed by the Government at some time or another and become a leasehold. Of course there is scarcely money enough in all Australia to carry out such a policy. The Government could never hope to obtain the money, and this House did a wise thing in rejecting the Bill. So far, in this present programme laid before the House there is no expressed intention of the Government to bring that Bill in again. I do not know whether the Government will be forced by Congress to re-introduce the Bill, but I hope they will not, for it would only be inviting the defeat of the measure in this place. Some of these extremists may think it is a good thing to have a cockshy at the Legislative Council. The Land and Income Tax Bills were rejected for good reasons. Mr. Moss showed how unjustly that sliding scale was drawn. I agree there should be a sliding scale, and that larger incomes should be made to pay more in proportion to the small ones: and I believe members of the House would see the justice of it if the Government were to bring in a fair Bill having a sliding scale, but one not displaying the unjust proportion that was so manifest in the measure referred to. There is one thing more which the hon. member is drilling into us in season and out of season, and that is the Redistribution of Seats Bill, which was passed by the Wilson Government. I agree with the hon. member that these Bills should always be sent to commissioners first to settle the boundaries, and it is a pity that the Wilson Government did not adopt that course. It was a matter, however, that affected the Legislative Assembly. It did not touch the boundaries of the Legislative Council pro-

vinces, and in common with several other members I thought that as it was a matter that affected another place only, they were the people best competent to deal with it. There seems to be no satisfying the hon. member, because the party he at present supports in Federal politics had a Redistribution of Seats Bill prepared by commissioners and the Senate altered it out of all recognition. An endeavour was made to alter it in the House of Representatives, but the Ministry stood by the greater portion of the Bill and would not tolerate any amendment, but the Senate altered the boundaries in response to circulars which were sent around by various members. It is all very well to say that the State Redistribution of Seats Bill was an iniquitous measure and that it was disgraceful of this House to pass it, but when a Bill is prepared by commissioners and the party which the hon. member supports alters it out of all recognition, the hon. member can see no vice in it at all. There is one thing I wish to refer to, and that is the extraordinary contract entered into by the Government with the Powell Wood Process Company. I wonder what would have been said if a Liberal Government had entered into such a contract. The whole country I think, is still waiting for an explanation of that contract—why it was entered into, why such extraordinarily good terms were given to the company, why the agreement was kept secret for this length of time, why the company were given a royalty beyond the duration of their patent, and why they were given 15,000 acres of timber country. As regards the timber concession, I know that timber country has been asked for by dozens of hewers and contractors, and they have been met, and perhaps rightly so, by refusal, but why should the Government who discountenance in the strongest terms all monopolies, try to create a greater monopoly by giving this Powell Wood Process Company 15,000 acres of land? The Government say that according to the terms of their contract they are not paying 2s. royalty, but only 1s. 3d. for timber for use outside the State. What is to prevent the company to-morrow, if

they raise their price to 2s. in the other States, from charging a royalty of 2s. to the Government here? There is nothing in the agreement to prevent it. Do the Government think it right to leave this matter in the hands of the company so that the company can dictate terms to them month by month or year by year as to what the Government shall pay as royalty on the timber. The agreement which was made with the Railway Department I understand—I have not seen it—fixed the royalty at 9d. Why could not the Government have fixed the royalty on this occasion and let the country know what it is instead of fixing a royalty that is liable to be altered from time to time at the will of the company.

The Colonial Secretary: How can it be altered?

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: The contract says the Government are to pay 2s. and the hon. member says they will pay 1s. 3d. as long as the company wishes. The hon. member gave the answer. I was hoping that he would make it 9d. but he stated 1s. 3d., and I presume if the company wish to make it 2s. the Government will have to agree to it.

The Colonial Secretary: I do not think that is in the agreement.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: I have been trying to ascertain exactly what is in the agreement, but perhaps the Minister will lay the agreement on the Table of the House, together with the file. If he does so he will perhaps disabuse our minds of a lot of suspicion which is at present lurking there, and it will give the people of the country a great feeling of relief if they know that the terms of the contract are not so strict as those published in the Press. I want to know the reason which induced the Government to enter into such a one-sided contract, and why the company should be so extraordinarily favoured. I hope that a satisfactory explanation will be forthcoming. So far no information has been given. One member of the Government who spoke in another place has not attempted in any way to justify this contract or to take the House into his confidence in regard to its terms, and I hope that before the session

closes at any rate, some member of the Government, and perhaps the Colonial Secretary, will take the country into his confidence and let us know the terms of the agreement, and what induced the Government to give the company such extraordinarily good terms. We cannot wonder that the people are asking if there are any more secret agreements which will be produced at an opportune time. We do not know, because the Government seem to keep these things locked up, as they have done this agreement, for fifteen months from the public gaze, and then when it comes to light Ministers talk about sacking civil servants and we hear talk of giving them the boot when it is thought that one of them has been responsible for divulging the contract. I hope that if there are any more contracts the Government will publish them on their own initiative and not allow them to be brought out perhaps by methods of which we all do not approve. I personally regret that the Civil Service Appeal Board has been abandoned. I realise that the Arbitration Court should sit as early as possible, because there are very special circumstances in regard to these awards which should be decided, but I think it is a pity that once the appeals of the civil servants were started they were not finished. I do not think it is fair to the civil servants to abandon them. They have been waiting long enough, and it is neither fair nor reasonable to expect them to remain silent for an indefinite time, while the Arbitration Court proceeds with work which will probably last for six months. The civil servants have rights the same as employers of labour or their employees have, and those rights should be respected by the Government. If the Government find that there is no judge available at present to undertake the work and it is work of great moment which means much to a large body of men, the Government should take special steps to ensure that the appeals will be heard at the earliest possible moment. I desire to congratulate the Government on the appointment of Sir Newton Moore as Agent General for a further term. I suppose, Sir Newton is one of the best Agents-

General we have ever had. The Government have realised that, and have risen above the arena of party politics and made an appointment which, I am sure, is most popular with all sections of the community. The visit of the Premier to England had a great deal to do with the State obtaining its loan, but without Sir Newton Moore's able assistance I am sure that the money could not have been obtained. In thinking over the Premier's journey, I wonder how he got on in regard to the celebrated speech of the Attorney General. I think that speech must have been hanging over the Premier's head like the celebrated sword wherever he went. I wonder what the fat man or the lean man in England would have said if that allusion of the Attorney General's had been distributed in pamphlet form when the Premier was applying for a loan of two millions. However, that was kept in the background, and I hope that it has been relegated to the background for all time. In regard to constitutional and electoral reform, I hope the Minister will tell us exactly what is involved in these proposals. So far we are quite in the dark. An amendment of the Mines Regulation Act I suppose will take the form of the Bill which came before this Chamber last session. I have not had much experience in the mining industry of late years, although I keep in touch with it to a certain extent, but I know that the Bill of last session would practically have stifled a good many of the mines in Kalgoorlie in their present stage of development. I am glad that the Great Boulder has done away with the night shift, but it does not follow that all the mines are so well developed. The Great Boulder is exceptionally well developed, and probably can find sufficient faces without decreasing the number of men in its employ, but there can be only one end to the passing of such a Bill as was presented last session, and that must be to throw thousands of men out of work if the abolition of the night shift was brought into operation at once. I think the Government and their supporters, particularly from the goldfields, must admit that, and I hope that when the Bill is introduced it will be a common-

sense one showing that the interests of the employers as well as the interests of the employees have been considered. I have no doubt that the Irrigation Bill will pass this House on this occasion. It was brought down very late last session, and the Minister in charge of the Bill did not even attend the conference. How, therefore, could he expect a reasonable compromise to be arrived at on the last night of the session. I suppose that other measures will be introduced by the Government since the parliament of Western Australia has finished its sittings at Fremantle, and whatever those other measures might be I hope they will be on moderate lines, and that the leader of the other party will not be too much upset if we fail to pass their measures.

On motion by Hon. T. H. Wilding, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 6th August, 1913.

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

QUESTIONS (3)—POWELLISED TIMBER.

Cost for Wagon Construction.

r. GEORGE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What has been the cost per 100 feet super—apart from royalty—to the Railway Department of powellising the timber for wagon and car construc-

tion? 2, What quantity of timber has been so treated?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Cost of powellising, 3s. 2d. per 100 super feet. 2, Quantity of timber treated to 30th June, 1913, 2,830,332 super feet.

Royalty Paid.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Minister for Works: What is the total amount to 30th June, 1913, paid to the holders of the powellising process for royalty on timber treated and used by the department in the construction of—(a.) the Port Hedland Railway; (b.) all other State railways.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: (a.) Royalty paid on timber treated for use in connection with Port Hedland Railway to the 30th June, 1913—£1,062 15s. 9d. (b.) Royalty paid on timber treated for use on all other State railways to the 30th June, 1913—£957 11s. 8d.

Cost and Number of Sleepers used.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the cost per sleeper apart from royalty of powellising the sleepers used in the construction of the Port Hedland Railway? 2, What number of sleepers were used in that railway—(a.) powellised; (b.) not treated.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, 8d. (eightpence) per sleeper. 2, (a.) 220,395; (b.) 2,539. In addition, 17,000 sleepers were treated with several other specifics against white ants.

QUESTION—HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS, ALBANY.

Mr. PRICE asked the Minister for Works: 1, Have plans and specifications providing for extensive harbour improvements at Albany been prepared? 2, Have such plans and specifications, if any, been considered by Cabinet? 3, In view of the fact that £5,000 was placed on the Estimates last year for harbour improvements for Albany, will he indicate when such work is likely to be commenced? 4, Has his attention been drawn to the fact that certain interstate steamers, including a new steamer arriving next month, cannot