

tude of the Government. Rather than condemnation the Government should receive commendation at the hands of our critics in that respect. The cry for economy goes round the State. Wherever hon. members go and address their electors or other meetings they talk economy. The Leader of the Opposition is always talking economy. Yet directly the effort is made in one direction we have wholesale condemnation.

Mr. Angwin: It is not economy; it is only another method of raising money; just removing the responsibility to another man.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is nothing but the business control the member for Cue advocated, which, as I said at the outset, is going to effect economy without impairing efficiency, and surely the hon. member is in favour of that?

Mr. Angwin: No; it is only raising the money in another direction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I submit in conclusion that the Governor's Speech, which was read at the opening of this Parliament, contains briefly the outline of a continuation of the progressive policy which has characterised the Administration since their inception. I submit, with all due deference—

Mr. Holman: And humility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And with all humility, I submit that the efforts of the Government have been wisely directed in the development of the natural resources of the State with good effect. I submit, further, that the finances of the State have been held with a firm hand by every Minister controlling departments, that substantial economies have been effected in nearly every department, and that the lean moneys that have been raised have been wisely expended in the best interests of the people generally. I cannot say more than that. Of course if other members had been in our positions I have no doubt the Leader of the Opposition would have put the break on and cried "mark time" once more. I am thankful that the wisdom of a united people has decided that he shall remain where he is, as Leader of the Opposition,

in order that he may bring forth from time to time these harmless criticisms, so far as we are concerned, and, I venture to think, unwise deductions, so far as the credit of the State is concerned. I hope he will take a more optimistic view of the future of this great country; that he will realise there are unbounded resources, and that the matter of a small deficit, increasing perhaps rather unduly at the present time, is not one for alarm, and that with the recurrence of the good seasons, a plentiful rainfall, and the large export of wheat, which is bound to follow, he may take heart and that the land which he himself has taken up will bring him that measure of prosperity and wealth which I think is going to come to all those who have the faith and confidence to invest in the real estate of this portion of the Commonwealth.

On motion by Mr. Holman, debate adjourned.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council, and read a first time.

House adjourned at 10.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 2nd September, 1909.

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

QUESTION—MINING AND FOREIGN LABOUR.

North Star Mine.

Mr. GOURLEY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, What was the number of Britishers and foreigners employed at the North Star mine, Malcolm, as on the 31st July, 1909? 2, The amount of subsidy paid by the Government to the North Star mine at Malcolm?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No information available. 2, No subsidy has been paid to the North Star mine.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, LEONORA-LAWLERS.

Mr. GOURLEY asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this session for the construction of the Leonora to Lawlers Railway?

The PREMIER replied: The question has not yet been determined.

QUESTION—OPEN MARKETS.

Mr. JACOBY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Has the Minister received any reply to his communication to the Perth City Council on the subject of the establishment of open markets, and if so, will he please state its nature? 2, If the council are not prepared to proceed in this matter, and as the Minister has expressed the opinion that their provision is necessary in the interests of both producer and consumer, is it the intention of the Government to provide such markets?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, The department have been in frequent communication with the Town Clerk, in order to keep in touch with this question. 2, The council are still investigating the proposal, and have conferred with representative market gardeners. The latter have promised to furnish definite information to the council as to the extent of the support that will be extended to the proposed markets by the trade should they be provided. On receipt of this, the council will further consider the question.

QUESTION—RAILWAY, MUNDARING WEIR.

Mr. JACOBY asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has the attention of the Minister been drawn to the lack of adequate provision for holiday traffic on the Mundaring Weir line? 2, Has a proposal been made to the Railway Department that this line should be transferred to that department in order to secure an improvement in traffic conditions? 3, Has a decision yet been arrived at on the subject?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2 and 3, Arrangements for transferring the line are almost completed, and it is expected that the Railway Department will assume control at an early date.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.—Conclusion.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): I do not intend to delay the House for long as the session has started very late, and because so many important measures have been announced to come before us that an opportunity will be afforded before long for discussing the various matters referred to. It is a great pity that the sessions are started so late every year, as members are not given an opportunity to discuss various important matters as they should. In connection with this Address-in-Reply, I should not have spoken had it not been for the remarks made yesterday by the Minister for Works with regard to arbitration matters. As on every occasion when he speaks, he then endeavoured to draw inferences from remarks made by members on this side of the House, which were altogether unfounded, and to suggest ideas which had never originated with those members. He always attempts to misconstrue remarks made by members on the Opposition side of the House.

The Minister for Works: That is not fair.

Mr. HOLMAN: The Minister tries to say, when there is any criticism from members on this side with regard to arbitration matters, an attack is being

made on the president of the Court or some other person. That is not the case. Yesterday the Minister endeavoured to misconstrue remarks made by a member, by suggesting that it was an attack on the president. We know well that so far as the workers are concerned, they have always loyally obeyed all the decisions of the Arbitration Court; but on the other hand the employers on every occasion, when an award has been made, have taken the opportunity to reduce all the workers down to the minimum rate awarded, instead of giving them a fair deal. It is not the intention of the court that the minimum rate should be made the maximum, for in their awards they set down the minimum rate to be paid to the least competent workers on the job. Immediately on obtaining an award the employers reduce all their men on the work to the lowest possible minimum. In such circumstances a man is justified in refusing to work for that rate when he knows that he is worth much more. Instead of the awards being dealt with in a fair and reasonable manner by the employers, every opportunity is taken to crush the men down by paying them the minimum. Had the employers been fairly considerate, or had they used any consideration at all towards their employees, there would have been nothing like the trouble which has occurred in the past. Time after time the employers, without citing the employees to the Court, have reduced the rate of wages. Now that the matter has been brought forward, and the defects in the present Act have been set out so clearly and strongly before Ministers, I hope the Government will take the earliest opportunity to allow an amending Arbitration Bill to come before the House, as by such means all the evils brought about by the present practically unworkable measure will be remedied. The Minister for Works said that on no occasion have the Government or any Minister treated the workers unfairly. We know well from the remarks made by a good many civil servants that it is doubtful whether the Minister could get one of those workers to come forward and say he had been treated fairly. Hundreds of

civil servants have attended special meetings, and unless there was something wrong such meetings would not have been held. There must be grievances to redress. In the face of this position of affairs the Minister said last night that on no occasion had the Ministers treated the workers unfairly. Then, again, as to the Minister for Mines, he knows well that a good many State batteries were hung up and the rate of wages was reduced. If that is not treating the workers unfairly, what is it? The Minister for Works' idea of fairness to the workers is shown by this, that some six years ago it was alleged he had said 6s. 6d. a day was as much as any man who did hard labour should receive.

Mr. Bath: It was 6s.

Mr. HOLMAN: Well, that makes it all the worse.

The Minister for Works: You know that such statements have been proved untrue. I have denied them on many occasions.

Mr. HOLMAN: From my knowledge of the Minister, from the dealings and the fights I have had with him, I am more inclined to believe that the statement was to some extent true. As to the pre-sessional speech, I do not intend to deal with that, because it is likely that if I were to speak for two or three hours on the Address-in-Reply now I would be using arguments which will have to be utilised again before very long. When the Budget comes along, unless the Premier can place a better aspect on the financial affairs than seems likely, I intend to leave no stone unturned to try and bring about a better condition of affairs. When we see this State drifting to the bad to the extent of over £1,000 a day, as it has done during the past two months, we realise that the financial question is one which should receive the serious consideration of every member of the Chamber. So far as members on the Opposition side are concerned, the financial aspect is so serious that I feel sure they will do everything possible to remedy the present state of affairs. In looking through the list of legislation forecasted in the Governor's Speech for this session, I see enough

work set down there to keep us going for the next two years without any recess. Most important matters are referred to in the Speech, and here we are now coming towards the end of the year and hope to rise before Christmas. Therefore we shall have seven or eight weeks to deal with the many matters forecasted. This is not giving members an opportunity to go thoroughly into these important matters; and I regret that the Premier, after the promise made last session, did not see fit to call Parliament together earlier in the year so as to allow members a proper opportunity of dealing with these matters, and giving them that serious consideration which they require and deserve. Practically the whole time that the present Ministry have been in office has been wasted. Very little good has been derived from the work they have accomplished, leaving the railways, of course, out of the question. We know well that all the Ministers are full of promises; they make these promises wherever they go, and I am sorry that the Minister for Mines especially has made so many which he has failed to keep. That kind of thing in itself has a detrimental effect on the mining industry. The present position of affairs in Western Australia is anything but satisfactory. I do not think there is any public man who can congratulate himself on the position of affairs at the present time. Instead of what, to my mind, is the best State in the Commonwealth, with greater opportunities, vaster areas of country rich in mineral wealth, we have a State which, in the place of making that progress which we should expect, is going back. There must be something radically wrong. During the time the Labour Ministers were in office, the responsibility for the depression which was existing in Western Australia was thrown upon their shoulders. The Ministers then took the blame to a great extent more than they should have done, but at the present time, instead of the Ministers shouldering the burdens, they turn around and attribute the stagnation in the State to Federation. We were fed up in those days when the Labour Government were in office just as we are

now, and the figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition go to prove that as far as the finances were concerned the Government to-day are in a better position than the Labour Government were. At the same time the Labour Government had to bear the whole of the burden of the condemnation. We have had changes in the various Ministerial offices since then. Now we have a new Treasurer, and it is to be hoped that he will make a better showing than the Minister who has just vacated the office. The same excuse is brought forward when a Minister is retired, and that as the newly appointed Minister is new to office, he should be given every consideration. We have heard that so often that I think the excuse is just about played out. With regard to the Minister for Works, he was criticised pretty freely last night, and the general opinion of that gentleman was stated so emphatically that I hope he will mend his ways in the future. With regard to the Mines Department, and that particular part of the State that I represent, I have not much to say at the present time, but I intend to deal with the subject more fully later on. The Minister for Mines has made many promises in the district I represent, and he has fulfilled very few of them. The Lands Department has been boosted up from time to time, but the position it occupies is one on which we cannot congratulate ourselves. In looking back to the various Ministers who have had control of this department in the past few years, we come to the time when Mr. Hopkins, the present member for Beverley, was Minister for Lands. At that time, according to Press reports, that gentleman had built the Lands Department up in such a way as to make it something wonderful; in fact, there was no more room for improvement. After some little time we had a change and the present Premier became Minister for Lands. He made reforms, and great progress followed, in fact, he did everything possible, and remained in office for several years before any change came about. Then it was found that another change was required, and the present occupant

of the portfolio, Mr. Mitchell, was given charge of the department, and even in the short period he has been there, he too, has made such great progress that the department has been reformed out of all knowledge. That in itself utterly condemns the administration of the department by the present Premier when he was Minister for Lands, and when he had only that office to look after. Other matters in connection with various departments, such as hospitals, police and immigration, have been dealt with at length by other members, and there will be other opportunities later to deal with them again. The question of the hospitals and their administration has been referred to fully by the member for Cue, and I am sorry the present Ministry have made an endeavour to prevent people in the outback centres, where they so urgently require assistance in the way of hospitals, from receiving that attention that they should be entitled to, by having the expenditure cut down in such a way as to prevent medical comforts and assistance being given. In other matters of administration, such as compensation, cases have been brought under my notice of men employed by the Government being injured while following their occupations. In almost every case brought under my notice, various Ministers, or their departmental officers, have refused to grant proper compensation. I shall deal further with these matters, in order to see whether a man employed by the Government, when injured, cannot receive the compensation he is entitled to according to law. One matter which I am sorry to note, is that the position of Western Australia is not much better in regard to the finances, so that members might secure increases in their salaries and obtain better facilities for travelling and, in fact, be treated generally as members of Parliament ought to be treated. Even with the finances in the present condition I am satisfied that better work could be done if the salaries of members were increased say 50 per cent. Members representing distant electorates often have to travel as much as 1,000 miles by road, at least once a year, and this means an expendi-

ture of 25 per cent. of the salary. Look at the expense that a member is also put to in connection with telegrams and postage. These are items which I consider should be paid by the State. I regret very much that there are not a sufficient number of members here who are in favour of a decent salary being paid, and to enable a measure for an increase to be carried through the House. I would welcome at the earliest opportunity anything that might be done to treat members of this Chamber in a more liberal manner than they are being treated at the present time. The Government, instead of assisting those who should be assisted—I refer to pioneers—are at every turn giving their attention to assisting those who do not require assistance. We have it from the Minister for Mines, and the matter is now under consideration, that it is proposed to make an increase in our State battery charges. I trust, however, nothing further will be done to place any extra impost on the men who are in the back country. We know full well that all the Minister expects to save in that direction is between £6,000 and £7,000 a year, and he is trying to save that by increasing the charges for crushing at State batteries. In all probability a great deal more revenue will be lost in other directions if those increased charges are imposed. At the same time, we have the great Mines Water Trust in Kalgoorlie—a trust which comprises some 15 mines, almost all of which are rich dividend paying propositions, and most of which, during the last few years, have paid something like £16,000,000 in dividends—and we are going to charge the prospector more for crushing stone at the State battery in the hope of saving between £5,000 and £6,000 a year, while this trust are getting their water from the Government at charges which are 50 per cent. less than it costs to pump the water to the goldfields. That is a matter that should receive very serious consideration at the hands of the Government. Water that costs this country 7s. 6d. per thousand gallons to pump to Kalgoorlie is being sold to the Great Boulder Proprietary, a mine that has paid over three-

millions in dividends, for 1s. 6d. a thousand gallons, and the State is losing 6s. on every thousand gallons that the mine takes at that price. The trust are charged from 1s. 6d. to 5s. per 1,000 gallons. This, too, is a matter that should be dealt with more fully when the Budget is being discussed, and I trust that the Treasurer, when he delivers his financial statement, will tell us that he has made provision whereby £50,000 more revenue will be derived from the Mines Water Trust than we are getting at the present time. That is a question that should be dealt with at the earliest possible moment. An increase in the charge for water supplied to the Mines Water Trust will not affect more than one or two prospecting shows. The question of mining development has always been one that should be approached in a non-party spirit. It is for the benefit of the people of the State to see that the mines are developed so as to give the best return to the Government of the country and, as far as I am personally concerned, it has always been with me a question above party. To show how difficult it is to get reforms effected, there are many matters of great interest to the workers brought forward time after time which have not received consideration from the Minister in power. Take the suggestions brought forward for the better treatment of prospectors when crushing stone, for granting necessary facilities, and generally assisting all those men outback. As a matter of fact they receive very little assistance at all. When I first suggested the time system of crushing, it took the Minister some 15 or 18 months to adopt it, but since that time it has been the salvation of many low-grade propositions in the State. I was one of the first to advocate the introduction of producer gas engines, the most economical process known for giving power to machinery, and at present, instead of modernising the batteries and reducing the costs to the lowest minimum, we still go on in the old style, with broken down and half-dismantled batteries which cannot be expected to give a fair return. The sooner we deal with the position in a proper manner, and modernise every battery and

give up-to-date appliances, and allow prospectors to crush at the lowest possible price, the better it will be for the mining community. Until that is done we cannot expect any satisfactory work from our present public battery system. The Minister is always slow in adopting suggestions in that direction, but he must realise that he cannot do anything with broken down batteries. To show how the charges are increased above all reason in some centres, it need only be stated that prospectors have to cart their stone nine or 10 miles, and then have to pay as high as 15s. per ton for having that stone carted. In one centre, that of Yaloginda, there are over 50 mines working at the present time. I had a somewhat peculiar proposition put to me a few days ago, when a man well known at Yaloginda said that if he were granted a hotel license for the district, he would be prepared to erect a public battery at his own expense. That should be accepted by the Government as a strong argument in favour of extending the principle of State hotels such as we have at Gwalia. That hotel is perhaps the best paying proposition the Government have at the present day, seeing that the returns of profit are anything from £2,000 to £3,000 a year. And if we can do that at Gwalia there are many other centres where it could be done equally well. Although I do not wish to advocate the extension of State hotels to increase drinking, yet I cannot help feeling that if we had more hotels like that at Gwalia, it would be better not only for the local people but for the State itself. It would, perhaps, be a good plan for the Minister for Mines to erect a State hotel at Yaloginda, together with a State battery. Then there is the question of the railway facilities promised to Meekatharra. After certain resolutions had been carried, and not until then, the measure was introduced into the House and passed, but up to the present time no start has been made with the construction of the line. There is, perhaps, no place in Western Australia to-day with a more promising future than has Meekatharra. It has the greatest belt of gold producing country known in

the State, and the values are lasting down, for some of the mines have 5 oz. stone at a depth of 500 feet. The line of reef along Paddy's Flat extends some 4 or 5 miles and the latest discovery would seem to indicate that the reef runs still another 2 miles. A year or so ago the district was producing only a few thousand ounces of gold per annum, whereas to-day it is producing 4,000 or 5,000 ounces per month. Moreover the whole of the properties, with two exceptions, are held by the prospectors themselves. That, I claim, is a place to which we should cheerfully give even greater facilities than are provided for a district held practically by one or two companies; for whereas the dividends from the bigger mines in other centres are paid out beyond the State, in Meekatharra where the properties are locally owned every penny of dividend is retained within the State, and spent in the State. This being so, I claim that £2,000 paid in dividends at Meekatharra is of more lasting advantage to the State than £50,000 sent to speculators in London. Where we have local propositions we should do all we possibly can to maintain these propositions in the hands of the people in the State. But how different has been the treatment extended to a place like Phillips River! Without any resolution moved in this House the question of a railway was taken up and a line constructed to assist practically one company. At Meekatharra with more than treble the population and more than three times the amount of gold turned out, and where the cost of cartage is quite as high as ever it was at Phillips River, we find that no movement is being made with the construction of the promised line. Yet this line would be revenue producing and self-supporting from the time the rails were laid. Unfortunately the country is held by our own prospectors and, in consequence, unnecessary delays are allowed to occur. I cannot help feeling surprised that more progress has not been made in the direction of giving those prospectors, some of whom are expending as much as £100 a month in prospecting greater facilities than are so readily afforded to the richer companies. But the same thing

occurs there as has been noticed in respect to the Mines Water Trust. We are selling the water at low prices ranging up to 5s. per 1,000 gallons, while the Railway Department has to pay 7s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons for every drop of water it uses. It is simply greasing the fat hog. At Phillips River we had a railway put down to assist one mining company, and I trust that before any speculators are allowed to get hold of the properties owned by the prospectors at Meekatharra, any enhanced value to be derived by the coming of the railway will be given to the prospectors who have opened up the country, and who are still spending their money in developing that district. The railway will not only benefit Meekatharra, but all the country right up to Peak Hill. The Peak Hill Company are producing ore valued at a little less than 2 dwts, and making it pay. This being so, a reduction of one shilling in their costs would provide employment for some hundreds of men. A State battery at Yaloginda and another at Quins would furnish employment for still another thousand men within twelve months. These are questions that should receive the earnest consideration of the Minister. We often hear that a member is bound to say all he can in favour of his own electorate; but it is not so in my case. I do not ask the Minister to accept my word as to what is going on up there. All I ask is that he should give due consideration to the reports of his own officers which have been sent in to the head office. At Wiluna and out in the Never Never country—the most remote mining centre in the southern portion of the State, and at the same time one of the most promising—we have the largest lodes ever discovered in this country. They are, perhaps, a little on the low-grade side, but if worked on a large scale they would provide employment for hundreds of men. The question of railway communication for that centre will have to be very seriously considered in the near future, for if these low grade propositions are going to be worked with any degree of success the question of affording them railway communication and cheap timber will have to be faced. I myself will make

a move in that direction in the House as soon as ever I have the necessary data at hand. Unfortunately the mining industry in Western Australia, at the present time is in rather a languishing condition. We know that the total number of men engaged in the industry has been reduced by over 1,000 during the last 12 months or so. This would seem to indicate that there is something radically wrong with the existing condition of affairs. The worst feature of it is that we are losing the best prospectors we have, men who have opened up and developed many different districts. They are going to other States to-day. A number of them are going to Queensland. It may be that the same opportunities are not offering in that State; still the opinion exists among these men that the administration of our mining department is not sufficiently satisfactory to induce them to remain here. We know full well that the ordinary, struggling man cannot get the assistance he requires to enable him to open up and develop his property. As far as Western Australia is concerned we cannot disguise the fact that we are suffering under a very severe depression. Property owners in and about Perth know full well that their properties have depreciated from 30 to 40 per cent during the last four years. We go to any part of the City or suburbs and find scores of houses untenanted. The unemployed difficulty is in painful evidence in every part of the State. Revenue is vanishing and the means of raising it are becoming more difficult each year. At the present time we pay about 33 per cent. of our revenue in interest and sinking fund charges. We will have to look to something extraordinary in the near future to give us a filip which will assist us in tiding over the depression. Although agriculture seems likely to make such progress in Western Australia that towards the end of the next five or six years we shall have very little to fear, still in my opinion it behoves us to do everything possible to revive our mineral industry to the end that it may tide us over the few lean years which we must expect pending the full

development of our agricultural industry. Where there is a possibility of opening up a new goldfield no effort should be spared to push forward that district. Above all I would prefer to see those properties owned by people in the State freely assisted, that the profits derived from mining might be spent in the State instead of, as at present, being sent elsewhere. The sooner we realise the fact that practically all our dividends go out of the country, leaving us no benefit whatever, the better for all. In the Governor's Speech certain mining legislation is foreshadowed. I am sorry to say I do not know exactly what the Bill is going to be, or what part of our existing mining legislation it will amend. In recent speeches the Minister for Mines has intimated that he is going to introduce legislation to give greater security of tenure of mining property. If it be his intention to introduce legislation in that direction this session, I may tell him that I am going to give it all the opposition I possibly can. We want to make our mining laws more stringent than they are at present. We find mining properties of 300, 400, and even 600 acres—more like sheep stations—and if the companies were to continue working these properties at the rate at which they are being worked to-day they might operate on them for the next 1,500 years before working them out. What is really required is that we should endeavour to do away with the amalgamation and concentration of labour. This would be far better for the mining industry of Western Australia than any attempt at giving greater security of tenure. Already too great inducements are being offered for the locking up of the land; and I maintain that, if these mines are held and not worked, the sooner we place stringent conditions on them the better. Some of the companies are asking for security of tenure, and the Minister has foreshadowed his intention of giving the freehold of mining tenements to these people. It practically means giving them the fee simple of their properties.

The Minister for Mines: No, it does not.

Mr. HOLMAN: Practically it means the same thing. By the expenditure of a few pounds in January of one year, they would have the right to retain the property for the rest of the 12 months without doing a hand's turn on it.

The Minister for Mines: It depends upon the amount.

Mr. HOLMAN: Yes, and I can assure the Minister that it will depend upon the amount of support he will get in this Chamber in this direction. The experience we have had in the past and the information I can produce will be sufficient to convince members against granting greater security of tenure. I am satisfied that we have leases that require every assistance and consideration, and they should always be entitled to it; but now we have areas held by mining companies in my own district over 300 acres in extent, and in other districts I believe they amount to over 600 acres all told, and it is impossible to work these leases or prospect them. There are leases in my district that have been held for six years and not worked, and the sooner the Minister realises the position the better it will be for the State.

The Minister for Mines: I wish you would give me some instances.

Mr. HOLMAN: There is the Star of the East, an instance which the Minister has had time after time.

The Minister for Mines: I explained the position of that mine last year and I dealt with it.

Mr. HOLMAN: But they got the exemption all the same. They do not do any work on the lease. The Minister knows that there has been application after application for the forfeiture of the property, and that the people applying have not been able to get it, though I believe the company were fined a little while ago. At any rate that lease has not been worked in a legitimate manner for the last seven years. This is only one property. I merely mention it to show that this thing exists and I could mention other properties in the same condition. Instead of giving greater security of tenure, what we should do is to make these leaseholders work their properties

in a legitimate manner. I had a few suggestions to offer to push forward the mining industry, because this must be the industry we are to look to for the next few years, and it is one that should receive consideration from every member of the House. So far as the battery charges are concerned, I think the Minister should give the position a little more consideration and that he should not attempt to place any impost on the shoulders of those least able to bear it. He should bear in mind that if he increases the charges over what they are now it will discourage legitimate prospectors and probably may do a great deal more harm than the good the department will gain by saving a matter of about £5,000. Other matters I intend to deal with on the Budget, when I shall point out to the Minister where reforms can be made. I have always been accused of being a strong party man in mining matters, but the Minister knows that he is going to seriously consider some of the suggestions I have put forward, such as crushing by time, and the introduction of producer gas engines, a saving that will mean a reduction of a shilling or eighteenpence per ton on the crushing charge for prospectors. Many suggestions have been put forward from this side, but simply on this account do not seem to carry the effect they should have, and reforms are thus delayed to a great extent. There are many directions in which we could get a considerable amount of revenue for the State. Take for instance the question of our railway freights that have been reduced. These are matters that I intend to deal with in the near future, because they affect directly things in which I am interested. Fortunately we have now information that will guide us to a great extent and show us where we can gain a good many thousands of pounds in our railway revenue. I refer particularly to the great progress made in the timber industry. Labour members have always been criticised for taking a certain stand in connection with that industry; but when we find that these companies are prepared to spend thousands of pounds to prevent men going to the

Arbitration Court to have a settlement of labour troubles without a cessation of work, we see that they can pay the freights that should be charged for the carriage of their timber. But I intend to deal with this more fully perhaps on a direct motion in the near future. The question of our forests was dealt with very ably by the member for Forrest last evening. It is an important one and one that should receive consideration and should make us seek to devise some means of reserving our forests for the benefit of the people of the State. I intend to bring forward if possible this session, should I have the time, a measure relating to the various accidents on the mills. I consider that we should have an Act governing the inspection of these places, such as we have in the mines. I dare say the percentage of accidents at the mills is higher than on the mines, and we have a good many men killed in the mills. I have written to the Attorney General several times on the subject, but we cannot get an inquiry or an inquest on these men killed, and I say it is a standing disgrace and a scandal.

The Attorney General: I have given instructions for inquests to be held.

Mr. HOLMAN: You may have done so for the future, but men have been killed and some have been buried without inquiries or inquests, and that is a state of affairs that should not be tolerated in any civilised country. What we should do is to prevent these things by appointing inspectors to visit the mills as soon as accidents occur and to hold inquiries into them as is done on the mines. That will prevent a great many of these accidents.

The Minister for Mines: Is it not done already under the Machinery Act?

Mr. HOLMAN: They do not always happen in connection with machinery, and I am doubtful whether saws come under the machinery sections. In fact there has been no inquiry into accidents other than fatal on the mills to my knowledge. An inquest may not always be necessary, but an inquiry should always be held, because even if the inquiry does no good to the man injured it may bring about an improvement to the machinery or the con-

ditions of working so as to prevent similar accidents in the future. However, these are matters that can be dealt with later on, and it is my intention, as I have said, if time permits, to introduce legislation in that direction, because the lives and limbs of the workers of the State should be protected at all hazards. We should protect the people of the State from suffering injury or from death when following their occupations. We have been fortunate during the last year or two in not having many labour troubles and we hope that state of affairs will continue, though the position is not as satisfactory as we would like it. We are doing everything possible in that direction, but at the same time we desire a full measure of protection for the people following the different occupations, and we are going to get that if we possibly can. I would like to have had more time to deal with the question of our financial position. However, other opportunities will occur in the very near future, when I intend to point out that many thousands of pounds can be saved by placing the impost on the shoulders of those best able to bear it. I have been mild in my remarks to-day; even the Minister for Mines cannot say that I have said anything out of place; and he can be assured that while he continues in the right way and accepts the advice of those of us who are interested in the mining industry, he will always get the support and assistance of members on the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford): It is not my intention to prolong the debate in any way, because I intend to reserve any remarks I may have until the Budget is brought down, which I understand will be at an early date. My remarks at that time will be principally a criticism of the Government's financial methods and of the action of the Government in connection with the Medical Department and the hospitals. But seeing in the speech of the Minister for Works last night such an incorrect statement in connection with the finances and also an outrageously incorrect statement in connection with medical matters as applying to the Labour party,

I desire at this moment to give a flat contradiction to those statements, in order that the Minister's statement will not get too far ahead of us, and I shall go into further details when the Budget comes down. The portion I desire to refer to is where the Minister differed from the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition when the latter compared the loan indebtedness of the State in 1905 with that in 1909. The Leader of the Opposition said that in 1905 the loan indebtedness per head of the population was £62, whereas in 1909 it had increased to £72 per head of the population, making a difference of £10 per head of the population. The Minister in his reply deliberately contradicted that and went on to state that the figures quoted by the Leader of the Opposition did not include the loan floated by the Labour Government at the end of 1905. That is correct; but if hon. members will take the trouble to look through the financial returns issued from the Treasury, they will find that a special note is put in to the effect that the loan was raised so close to the 30th June of that year that it was not included in 1905. Consequently it is clear to everybody that the loan then raised by the Daglish Government was not included in those figures. But it is also on record that in September of 1905 the Government that followed the Daglish Government, namely the Rason Government, had a surplus of £961,000 to the credit of their loan account, which clearly shows that the Daglish Government had not used that money to pay off liabilities, and that the money was available for the Rason Government to carry out the works proposed; consequently it could not be included. The Minister then proceeded to say that in 1909 the loan raised by the present Government was included. I admit it was; but I challenge contradiction when I say that the greater portion of that loan was all eaten up by liabilities, a different thing to the loan of 1905. Be that as it may, that is not the point I desire to emphasise. The Minister in his statement said that as a matter of fact in exact figures the increase in loan indebtedness between 1905 and 1909 was £3 16s. 9d. per

head of the population; but those figures are distinctly incorrect and the Minister must have known they were incorrect when he delivered them; because if we look at the *Statistical Abstract*, we find that the loan indebtedness per head of population in 1905 was £62, while if we leave 1909 out of the question altogether and take the figures for 1908 only, before the loan was raised to which the Minister referred, we find that the loan indebtedness per head of the population was then £69 per head, or an increase, comparing 1905 with 1908, of £7 per head of the population. Yet the Minister says distinctly and emphatically that the difference between the two years was only £3 16s. 9d. One reason for which I rose was to give a flat contradiction to these figures, and let the people of the State know that when the Leader of the Opposition quoted figures he quoted those which were absolutely correct, and not incorrect, as the Minister desires us to believe.

Mr. Underwood: It does not matter what he says.

Mr. JOHNSON: We know he is a pastmaster of misrepresentation and distortion. In all his speeches he omits to quote the exact figures used, or remarks made, by members, for he will twist the figures and remarks round, build up and create certain statements which he attributes to members, and then proceeds to knock them down. As we shall have an opportunity of giving considerable attention to the financial position when the Budget is under discussion, it is necessary that the figures used by the Minister for Works should be contradicted so that there will be no misapprehension in the minds of the people of the State. The next point I wish to refer to in connection with the Minister's statement is that he practically said the Government were forced into economies in connection with the hospitals on account of the continuous criticisms of members on the Opposition side of the administration of the Health Department. I give that a flat contradiction, and I say again that the Minister has completely misrepresented this side of the House

when he made that statement. I deny his power to find in *Hansard* an instance where we have criticised expenditure in connection with the protection of the lives of the people in the State. We know perfectly well that the action of the Government in this regard is distinctly unpopular, and the Minister for Works now tries to shield himself behind misstatements and by saying that the Government were forced to do an unpopular act, because they were pushed on to it by members of the Labour party. That contention is incorrect and wrong, and the Minister for Works in saying what he did in that connection was merely giving a fair bulk sample of the misrepresentations which were made in his speeches last session.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

BILL—SEA-CARRIAGE OF GOODS.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. J. L. Nanson), in moving the second reading, said: In the few words I shall say in commending this Bill to members I will not occupy the time of the House very long. As members are aware, where goods are entrusted to a shipowner for carriage by sea, and by the negligence of the shipowner, or his servant, or agent, these goods are either lost, damaged, or destroyed in the absence of any expressed stipulation to the contrary the shipowner is liable for the damage sustained. A practice has, however, sprung up among shipowners of embodying in the bills of lading exceptions so numerous as practically to leave the shipper or consignee without any legal redress in the event of the goods being lost. It has been said that in connection with these numerous exceptions practically the only obligation imposed upon the shipowner is to collect the freight which he may or may not earn. Some four years ago this matter was brought up in the Commonwealth Parliament, and an Act was passed providing that shipowners should not be allowed in this way to evade what the

Commonwealth Parliament regarded as a very just liability. The Act passed by the Commonwealth Parliament, however, only applied to ships carrying goods from any place in Australia to any place outside Australia, or from any port in one State of Australia to any port in another State. But in the case of vessels sailing from a port in one State to another port in the same State the Act does not apply, and instances have occurred in Western Australia where hardship has been caused to shippers or consignees, owing to the absence of this very legitimate provision adopted by the Commonwealth Parliament. The Bill I am bringing before the notice of members practically applies the provisions of the Commonwealth Bill to the carriage of goods between port and port in this State, so that protection will be extended to the consignee or shipper for goods shipped say at Fremantle and consigned to Broome.

Mr. Walker: Is not the shipping exclusively the province of the Commonwealth now?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We have full power to deal with such matters coming within our own territory. What members have to consider is, I think, whether this Bill will give a very necessary relief, and if we possess, as I submit we do, the power to give that relief, it would be regrettable indeed if it were not granted. I may point out that it is not the object of the Bill to make any alteration, or to establish any new law; all the Bill says is, that whatever common law rights, or statutory provisions are applicable to a bill of lading they are not to be evaded by the shipowner forcing the shipper to sign a document containing a number of exceptions which practically free him from all liability. It may be argued that there is no compulsion upon the shipper to send his goods by any particular vessel belonging to any particular shipowner, but an argument of that kind would not have weight with any member of this House, because we are all aware of the conditions under which the shipping business must necessarily be conducted in a small community like ours. We

know the shipper has virtually no option in the matter, that there are such things as uniform bills of lading, that the shipowners decide among themselves what conditions they will impose, and that if the shipper is not prepared to assent to those conditions he will have no other opportunity of sending his goods by another vessel.

Mr. Underwood: They also have secret rebates.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Bill does not go into that aspect of the matter. It is provided by Clause 5, that a shipowner cannot contract himself out of his liability for loss or damage of goods arising from the improper condition of the ship's hold, or from negligence on the part of the shipowner, or his servants or agents. There is a further provision in the following clause, that if conditions of that kind are inserted in the bill of lading the shipowner is liable to heavy penalty. Neither can the shipowner relieve himself of his liability to keep his ship sea-worthy, nor to handle the goods entrusted to him carefully. Clause 7 of the Bill provides that in every bill of lading a warranty shall be implied that the ship is sea-worthy, and also implies various conditions which are found in all bills of lading; for instance, that the vessel is properly equipped and manned. If this clause is passed it will not be necessary to insert the more usual provisions in a bill of lading, for they will be taken to be there. The shipowner is protected from liability for damage arising from a variety of causes, such as, acts of God or the King's enemies; the inherent defect, quality, or vice of the goods; the insufficiency of package of the goods; the seizure of the goods under legal process; any act of omission of the shipper or owner of the goods, his agent or representative; saving or attempting to save life or property at sea, or any deviation in saving or attempting to save life or property at sea. They are various stipulations with which no fault can be found. I do not anticipate that any objection will be taken to this Bill, because it is a measure which, so far as

the inter-State trade is concerned, has now been in operation for some four or five years and with excellent results. As I have already pointed out, there have been cases in Western Australia where hardship has been inflicted through the absence of a similar measure here, and I think I am justified in saying this measure meets with the approval, certainly of some of the Judges, and I think with the approval of the legal profession. I am not aware of any strong dissatisfaction being expressed towards it by the shipping community. It is necessary to have some form of legislation on the subject, and I beg to move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): I am not going to take any exception to the provisions of the measure, but I would like to point out to the Attorney General that provision is made here that ships shall be seaworthy in all respects, and properly manned, equipped, and supplied, whereas there is nothing in the Bill itself which gives us any idea as to the exact nature of equipment and of manning which will fulfil requirements. The Attorney General has said that the provisions have been taken from the Commonwealth measure, and it would seem to me that the clauses have been wrested from their context in the Commonwealth Act and, therefore, we have nothing in the measure by which we will know what those provisions are. I think we want something more definite than is contained in this Bill. Without knowing the exact provisions of the Commonwealth measure, I imagine something more is necessary to be taken from it, in order that we may know what these provisions regarding equipment and manning, etc., will be, otherwise the shipowners may have altogether different ideas on the question. What we want to know is what constitutes the standard on this point?

The Attorney General: We are not laying down any standard in this measure.

Mr. BATH: It seems to me that the omission will lead to injury. There ought to be, in fact I am sure there is, in the Navigation Acts expressed provisions with regard to equipment, the number of

life-boats, the number of other boats, the number of sailors, the tonnage, and in every other respect there are expressed provisions included in the Act. If the Commonwealth Act applies apart from this measure it will be sufficient; if it does not, we should have in this Bill a stipulation as to what the proper equipment and manning should be.

On motion by Mr. Angwin, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—BILLS NOT PRINTED.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): I regret that the Bill dealing with licensed surveyors, and, indeed, the three or four measures following, have not yet been printed. The same remark applies to the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Bill. The Minister for Works is quite ready to proceed with this measure, but it has not been printed and has not yet arrived at the House. The private Bills have not yet been printed, therefore, I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 5.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 7th September, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: Statement of expenditure under the Mining Development Act for the year ended 30th June, 1909.

By the Premier: 1, By-law passed by the Subiaco Local Board of Health. 2, Amended Regulation No. 22 passed by the Fremantle Hospital Board.

By the Minister for Lands: 1, Regulations under the Land Act, 1898. 2, Permits to construct timber tramways. 3, The Cemeteries Act, 1897—By-laws and statements of receipts and expenditure.

QUESTION—VACCINATION RETURNS.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Premier: What is the number of children in West Australia under the age of six months who were registered as having been vaccinated during the period, June 30th, 1908, to June 30th, 1909?

The PREMIER replied: 616.

QUESTION—PRINTING, FREMANTLE GAOL.

Mr. BOLTON (for Mr. Swan) asked the Premier: 1, What number of persons is engaged in the printing department at the Fremantle gaol? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to instal a type-casting machine in this printing department?

The PREMIER replied: 1, There are 11 printers, 1 bookbinder, and 4 driving the printing press (16 in all) in the shop. 2, No; it is not intended to extend the printing shop at all, as the only prisoners to be employed there are those who are physically unfit for heavy labour.

QUESTION—RAILWAY SIDINGS LEASED.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, How many sidings are let by the Railway Department to timber companies and others along the South-West lines? 2, What are the names of the lessees? 3, What rent is paid to the department for each siding?