

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 26th June, 1913.

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MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

The Legislative Assembly met at 3 p.m., pursuant to proclamation by His Excellency the Governor, which proclamation was read by the Clerk (Mr. A. R. Grant).

Mr. Speaker and hon. members, in response to summons, proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Governor's Speech in formally opening the session of Parliament (*vide* Council report *ante*), and having returned to the Legislative Assembly Chamber Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Report of the Royal Commission on uniform standards for food and drugs in the Commonwealth of Australia. 2, Annual Reports of (a) Fire Brigades Board, (b) Perth Observatory. 3, Proposed indenture between the Government of Western Australia and the Cape Leeuwin Whaling Coy., Ltd. 4, Regulations and amendment to regulations under (a) Fisheries Act, (b) Jetties Regulation Act, (c) Lunacy Act, (d) Geraldton Slip, (e) Inter-State Destitute Persons Act, (f) Fremantle Harbour Trust, (g) Bunbury Harbour Board, (h) Workers Compensation Act, (i) Shark Bay Pearl Fisheries Act, (j) Pearling Act. 5, Amendment to Port Regulations (tonnage and light dues, tonnage dues, pilotage dues).

By the Minister for Mines and Railways: 1, Report of the Mines Department. 2, Reports and returns under Government Railways Act. 3, Regulations under Mines Development Act. 4, Alteration to by-laws 12, 13, 14 under the Railways Act.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Annual reports of (a) Public Works Department,

(b) Goldfields Water Supply Administration, (c) Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department. 2, Report of the Water Supply Department (Water Supply in Agricultural areas). 3, Regulations under (a) Land Act, (b) Cemeteries Act, (c) Parks and Reserves Act.

By the Attorney General: 1, Report of the Education Department. 2, Regulations and amendment to regulations under (a) Electoral Act, (b) Payment of Supreme Court fees and probate dues by means of adhesive stamps. 3, Rules of Court under the Workers Compensation Act, and Money Lenders Act.

By the Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): 1, Annual Report of (a) State Children's Department, (b) Aborigines Department. 2, By-laws and regulations of Health Boards of (a) Broad Arrow, (b) Broome, (c) Coolgardie, (d) Collie, (e) Meekatharra, (f) Victoria Park, (g) Yalgoo, (h) Roebourne, (i) Warren, (j) Davyhurst. 3, By-laws and amendment of by-laws of Municipal Councils of (a) Perth, (b) Coolgardie. 4, Model by-laws for mosquito eradication and reduction. 5, Regulations of the Central Board of Health. 6, Rules and regulations of hospitals (a) Perth, (b) Fremantle. 7, Amendment of Regulation 33 of Coolgardie Roads Board.

PAPER—FOOD AND DRUG REGULATIONS.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) moved—

That the Food and Drug regulations, 1913, under the Health Act, 1911-12 do lie on the Table of the House.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I am going to ask the Honorary Minister to refrain from putting the regulations in connection with the Health Act on the Table to-day. I understand that there is some arrangement whereby he will wait until he hears the result of the Pure Foods Conference sitting in Sydney, and also the result of a certain legal action that has been taken against firms in Perth. I understand that by an arrangement with the Crown Law officers these legal pro-

ceedings are to remain in abeyance pending the result of the conference at which representatives appointed by the Government of this State are attending at the present time.

The Attorney General: That is not correct.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is the information I have and there is a decided objection to these regulations being placed on the Table of the House at the present time, and in view of the fact that the Premier has intimated that it is his intention to adjourn the House for several weeks if he gets the Supply Bill through, it is only fair that we should refrain from taking any action which might make the regulations legal, that is, the action necessary under the Act, to place the regulations on the Table of the House at a certain time after the House has met. At any rate, we should refrain pending the result of the conference and the decisions that may be arrived at in regard to the legal action which is being taken. I have it on pretty good authority, on the authority of one of the firms now being prosecuted, that an equitable understanding has been arrived at that these regulations will not be tabled until, at any rate, the House reassembles after the adjournment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I hope no objection will be lodged against the laying of the papers on the Table for the reason that eight or nine months' notice has been given of the regulations coming into force and, as honourable members are aware, after the regulations were gazetted the last session of Parliament closed within a few weeks. I am not surprised at the leader of the Opposition raising the question, seeing that the person to whom he is referring has defied the department in regard to the regulations with a view of preventing the efforts of the Government to see that pure foods and drugs shall be supplied to the people of Western Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): When these regulations were drafted there was no suggestion of a conference being held. The conference has no bearing on the regulations which I now

propose shall be tabled. As a matter of fact, if anything should take place in connection with this conference, so far as the regulations are concerned, it will be that the conference will approve of the regulations which have been framed by us, and which are admitted to be the best in Australia at the present time, and there is not the least doubt, from the information that I have received, that there is a possibility of the conference almost entertaining the regulations which have been adopted by the Government in this State. I want to point out also that no undertaking has been given to my knowledge (a lot of statements have been made no doubt and the gentleman who has given information to the leader of the Opposition might have understood that there was some undertaking) but as far as I know there has been no undertaking given, that the regulations would not be placed on the Table when the first opportunity occurred. The present is the first opportunity and I have moved in the direction of tabling the papers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have they been gazetted?

The Premier: Yes, all is in order.

Question put and passed.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

The PREMIER, by leave, without notice (by way of asserting privilege), introduced a Bill for an Act for the Closing of certain Roads.

Bill read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon. members, I beg to announce that I have heard His Excellency's Speech, and that copies of the same have been distributed among members of this Chamber.

BILL—SUPPLY, £1,324,130.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER and TREASURER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary

to enable resolutions from the Committee of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day, and to enable the business aforesaid to be entered upon and be dealt with before the Address-in-reply is adopted.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker) : I second the motion.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) : Before we agree to suspend the Standing Orders for the purpose of granting supply to the Government, I wish to ask the Premier to make a statement to the House, to take the House and the country into his confidence with regard to a matter which has been agitating the public mind for weeks past; that is, in connection with the powellising contract that has been entered into, I am sorry to say, in secrecy, and to give reasons why this contract was held in secret for 14 long months before it passed Executive Council. I do not wish to labour the point beyond asking the Premier to take us into his confidence, and also to give us his promise that the papers in connection therewith will be placed on the Table for the information of hon. members and the public at the earliest possible moment. I ask for this undertaking from the Premier, believing that the country generally is anxious to have the information and to know how that matter stands. I do not wish to refer to it at any great length at this juncture. If the Premier will give us an explanation, we will be able to see whether it is necessary to take any further action.

The PREMIER : The time is not opportune for giving the information which the hon. member desires. I am accepting his own dictum on that point because he has given notice of a motion to be moved when the House next meets. That motion asks for certain information, and when it is moved I promise that I will give him and the country the fullest and most complete information in regard to the agreement entered into between the

Government and the powellising company. That information, when it is given, will be satisfactory, not only to the public, but also to the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER : This discussion is entirely irregular.

Hon. Frank Wilson : The question of supply covers this contract.

Mr. SPEAKER : We are discussing not the question of supply but the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Hon. Frank Wilson : That is true, but for the purpose of granting supply.

Mr. SPEAKER : That will come later on.

Question put and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	..	..	..	29
Noes	..	..	..	14
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	15
				—

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Bath	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Price
Mr. Dooley	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Holman	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lander	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. Lewis	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Monger
Mr. Broun	Mr. Moore
Mr. George	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Harper	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Male	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Layman
	(Teller).

Question thus passed.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with this Bill.

To go into Committee.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

That the House do now resolve into a Committee of Supply and also of Ways and Means for the purpose of considering His Excellency the Governor's Message recommending that an appropriation be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of £576,370, and from moneys to the credit of the General Loan Fund £647,760, and from the Loan Suspense Account £100,000 to the service of the year ending 30th June, 1914.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I intend to oppose this motion also because of the unsatisfactory reply that the Premier has thought fit to make to my request for certain information which I deemed to be essential in the interests of the public of this State. I am sorry that the Premier should be guilty of such an ill-mannered reply, such an ill-advised reply; a reply which must convey to my mind, and to the public, that the Premier is still disinclined to give them that information which they are undoubtedly entitled to. It is passing strange to me why this information was not given at the time.

The Minister for Works: You know perfectly well.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I know nothing about it. I should be sorry to be connected in the slightest degree with such a transaction. An important contract was in existence for 14 months and during the whole of the last session of Parliament. For six months we sat in this Chamber, and during that time on many occasions we asked for information and the information was not forthcoming—information that we were entitled to. I want to know why there should be this secrecy in public affairs. We have had to complain time after time because Ministers would not give us information, because we have been treated discourteously when we demanded, not from a personal point of view, but from a public point of view, certain information that we were undoubtedly entitled to. Here again we

are met with the retort that the time is inopportune, and because I have given notice of a certain motion to be moved when the House meets again I am told that the present time is not opportune for an explanation. There is no time like the present.

Mr. Lewis: Why, then, did you give notice?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Because I anticipated the refusal which I have been given, and I am going to see that the notice which I have given is dealt with at the earliest possible date. If Ministers opposite do not know their duty to the public I do. I know my duty, and it is to demand that these important matters shall be ventilated and made public at the earliest possible opportunity. It is no use the Premier trying to bluff me; he has bluffed football teams on many occasions but he cannot bluff the Opposition, I can assure him; neither can he bluff the public. He has been bluffing the public for 20 months, but in this matter his conduct will not deter me from doing what I consider to be my duty. That duty will be carried out regardless of whether it suits his convenience or the ideas of the Minister for Works. This secrecy is reprehensible and is condemned by all right thinking people, and there is no reason that I know of—and if there is a reason it should have been made public—why a document of this description should be kept secret so long. Why are they to-day having a heresy hunt in the department to find out the culprit who has made this agreement public? Someone has to suffer because the *Sunday Times* got hold of a document which Ministers were trying to keep secret, and which discloses the fact that a contract had been entered into some 16 months previously. I have never heard of such a thing in all my parliamentary experience.

The Premier: You are young yet.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: But I should be sorry to be as inexperienced as the Premier, notwithstanding my youth. If the publication is accurate—and I presume it is because the accuracy has never been denied—we have an agreement which has been entered into with a certain

company, and it provides for some of the most extraordinary conditions which I have ever heard of, and which demand justification at the hands of the Premier and his Ministers. We are denied this. The agreement has been made public in the Press; it has leaked out, in other words, and Ministers remain with their lips sealed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Why do you want it again if it is correct?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Honorary Minister must be rather dense this afternoon. I want his explanation. I want to know why he entered into this agreement; why he has given such extraordinary terms to a company, and why the Government kept the contract for 16 months when this House was entitled, and the people were entitled to know all the circumstances surrounding it? The action creates strong suspicion in the public mind. Hon. members opposite who support an action of this sort, and I may contend that there are few who do support it in their inmost hearts—they may support it here but certainly not in caucus—I say the hon. members who do support this agreement must feel uncomfortable and to some extent suspicious of the actions of Ministers in this connection.

The Minister for Mines: What do you mean by "strong suspicion"?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I repeat "strong suspicion." We have an agreement which provides, amongst other things, that there shall be a minimum annual payment for the use of the powellising system, and this minimum annual payment shall continue five years after the date of the expiration of the patent rights in 1918.

The Premier: What of that?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Would the Premier himself pay for something he was not getting? I do not think he would. He is not built that way. At any rate I have never known him to give away anything. But on behalf of the State he is prepared to give a five years' royalty on patent rights that will not then exist.

The Premier: Well, what about it?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then he has entered into a contract with these people

to supply a million sleepers. This House does not know the terms and conditions. Probably it will involve the expenditure of a quarter of a million of money. We know nothing at all of the conditions. All this has been done without tenders being called. Without any competition they sign a contract for a million powellised sleepers at what price no one knows, and yet Ministers have been fulminating right through last session, and recently in the country, about their State sawmills which are going to do away with private conditions, and that they are going to cut not only the sleepers they require for their own State departments and any other timber that may be required, but also compete in the open markets of the world.

The Minister for Works: So we are.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: At the time the Minister for Works was declaring they were going to cut all the timber here, he entered into a secret contract for the supply of a million sleepers from these people. Why is this, I ask him in the name of the public? Then we have them making a grant to these people of 15,000 acres of karri country. They will have the right to take up any karri land adjoining their existing permit to the extent of 15,000 acres, and I presume they can take it in any shape they like, and they can run it in strips if they like and take the best karri that exists. When the Government were denying other people the right to this country, why have they made this grant to this particular company only? Then we have the price and the Minister will not open his mouth in regard to that. He says he is not going to disclose a contract which has been in existence for four or five years, but that contract surely is the property of this Parliament, and it should be laid on the Table of the House.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Why did you not disclose it when you were in power?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We did disclose it. It was disclosed and Parliament knew all about it.

The Minister for Works: That is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I can swear this much, that our contract did not com-

mit the country to one penny of expenditure if it did not use the process, but the hon. member's contract provides for a 50 per cent. increased rate over the existing contract.

The Minister for Works: You did not publish your agreement.

The Premier: You do not know the contents of your own agreement.

The Minister for Works: You know why it was not published.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have an inkling why the Minister for Works has not published his contract. Now they enter into a contract and they are going to pay this company 9d. per 100 super feet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This discussion is going too far. The hon. member is not discussing a motion in respect to the powellising agreement, he is discussing a Message from the Governor to grant certain supplies.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, I am not discussing the Governor's Message, I am discussing the motion that we should go into Committee to grant supply, and I am giving reasons why we should not go into Committee, and very good reasons why we should not grant supplies on this occasion. If the Premier does not take us into his confidence he must not expect us to grant him supplies. There must be money in the supply he wants to cover various things included in this agreement during the next two months, and I object to money being expended in that direction.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not allow the hon. member to discuss any supposititious matter that may arise, and I will not allow the hon. member to enter into details of any matter at all which is not being discussed by the House. That is what the hon. member is doing now.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: With all due deference I dispute your ruling on this occasion. I am confining myself to giving reasons why we should not agree to the motion and go into Committee of Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must resume his seat. The hon. member disputes my ruling, and there is only one

course to take and that is he must move that my ruling be disagreed with. I have ruled that the hon. member's course of action in discussing the merits of any agreement is irregular. If the hon. member objects there is one course which must be taken without further discussion.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I will take that course. You did not rule actually; you said you would not allow me to proceed. If you give me your ruling I will object in the proper manner.

Mr. SPEAKER: I rule that the course of action adopted by the leader of the Opposition in referring to details of any process in discussing the motion before the House is irregular and, therefore, out of order.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Details of the contract?

Mr. SPEAKER: Details of any contract. The hon. member may refer to the principle but not details.

To dissent from Speaker's Ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The leader of the Opposition has handed up a motion that he disputes my ruling on the ground that he is not permitted to refer to the powellising contract on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. I want to notify the leader of the Opposition that I have not said that he cannot refer to the powellising contract. I have said definitely that he must not go into details of the contract. He can give reasons for his opposition to the measure by referring to a principle or to any other matter, but he must not go into the details of any matter. I cannot accept the motion as it has been handed up because it does not correctly state my ruling.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I do not desire to act contrary to the ruling of the Chair, but I fail to see how I can refer to the contract without mentioning the details. I must mention something to show why the contract is unreasonable, and why we should have an explanation from the Minister. That is all I am aiming at, and I do not want to go beyond that.

Mr. Speaker: I have no desire to burk discussion, but there are limits to

every discussion, and if the information is desired in respect to the powellising contract, then that information must be secured in some other manner than that now adopted by the leader of the Opposition. I cannot allow such discussion on this motion because I do not know where it is going to end. It is not a subject which should be discussed in detail on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. Neither can I allow the members on the Government side to give information or to discuss the matter.

Hon. Frank Wilson : So long as I do not digress from the subject matter before the House, I take it that I am in order, and I shall attempt, so far as my limited understanding of Mr. Speaker's ruling goes, to conform to it; but I submit with all due deference that this matter is of such serious moment at the present time that I am justified in opposing anything that will give the Government supply to carry on with until we get the explanation which I have already demanded. I think I can take up that attitude, especially when we know that supply must include money to be expended in that direction.

The Premier : That is not correct; you do not know how the supply I am asking for is to be expended.

Hon. Frank Wilson : The Premier is asking the House for a million of money.

Mr. Speaker : I regret that I have not made myself clear, or that the limited understanding of the leader of the Opposition is not able to grasp the meaning of my ruling, but I could not even allow the Minister, if he so desired, to give information in regard to the powellising contract, because that statement would be irregular.

Hon. Frank Wilson : But the House can allow it as a privilege.

Mr. Speaker : Order ! A Message from His Excellency the Governor is now being discussed and if the leader of the Opposition wants to oppose it, he can oppose it on certain grounds, for instance, that the Ministry have not given certain information, but I cannot allow him to go into details of any matter

which he holds to be an objection to passing the motion.

Hon. Frank Wilson : When can we discuss that matter ?

Mr. Speaker : When a specific motion dealing with the matter is before the House.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Do I understand that I cannot refer to anything now, but can only say that I object to going into Committee because Ministers have not given certain information ? I should think I could discuss matters generally. Now, I want to show briefly the state of the finances, and surely I can refer to them and show reasons why we should be careful about granting supply.

Mr. Speaker : I shall be entirely fair, and when I think the hon. member is going too far I will tell him. I think that he has gone too far on the powellising contract, and I have told him so. There is one course open to the hon. member, and if he chooses to follow that he may proceed. When I see that he is going too far I will tell him, and I hope he will obey the order of the Chair.

Debate resumed.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Of course I shall endeavour to obey the ruling of the Chair, and to confine my remarks to certain things which come within your ruling. I took exception to granting supply to the Government because of the secrecy in connection with this contract, and because I think the country is entitled to information. I do so now on the further ground that the terms of that contract are unfavourable to the country.

The Premier : It is not secret; you have had the information; you admit that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : It was secret for 16 months, and the Minister is to-day hunting down a man for giving that information to the public.

The Premier : But it is out; what are you complaining about ?

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I am condemning the Premier for keeping this information from the public. Because money is going to be expended under

that agreement, I object to granting supply, and I hope the House will stand with me in demanding a proper explanation before we pass this motion. When we remember how the finances have drifted during the last 20 months, surely it is time that we should pause and ask Ministers to give us the fullest details, as they have always demanded and received at our hands when members on this side occupied the Treasury bench. Here we have the deficit creeping up until it has almost reached a total of half a million of money. We have an enormous revenue, such as was never collected before, and yet with it all we have a huge deficit and are running further into debt every month that we carry on. In 1910/11 the revenue was £3,850,000, and during the last 11 months the Premier has received something like £3,924,000. Our expenditure in 1910/11 was £3,734,000, and, of course, we showed a credit balance of £115,000. The expenditure of the present Treasurer during the last 11 months was £4,221,000, and shows a deficit of £297,000.

The Minister for Works : We have paid our bills.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The Auditor General in his report does not say so.

The Minister for Works : He states in his report what bills of yours we had to pay.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The Auditor General says that the hon. member did not pay his bills, and I would recommend the hon. member to turn up that report, and he will find that he has expended more money during the present financial year in paying bills left over from last year than was expended in paying bills left by the previous Government. Not only have we had an enormous revenue, but the Government have been handling huge sums of loan money. Nearly five millions of loan money has been expended in the last twenty months, and yet we have an unemployed problem. We have the unemployed marching up to Parliament House and parading in order that hon. members may have their sympathies aroused, and in order that the Premier may be forced into some recognition of

the position and make some effort to alleviate the distress that is largely due to his misrule. Those are the facts of the position as we find it to-day, and, I am sorry to say, we have the lamentable fact staring us in the face that wherever a State enterprise has been inaugurated by members on the Treasury bench to-day that State enterprise is drifting, drifting, and going from bad to worse. We have our State steamships, about which there has been so much controversy. They are running, presumably, to reduce the cost of food, but actually are helping to swell the deficit and increasing the cost of food. They are running at a loss according to the Treasury figures. Those figures show something like £13,900 as having been lost up to the 31st May. Yet, I suppose we are to grant supplies to run these steamers that cannot be run at a profit, and so increase the deficit and the liability of the people. We were told of a most alarming position the other day in connection with the vessel which is supposed to be the crack ship on our coast, the "Western Australia." The ship was to sail, and just prior to sailing her furnace crown came down, and she could not sail until repairs were effected. Then a calm interview with those responsible appeared in the Press to the effect that the coming down of a furnace crown was an everyday occurrence in steamers.

The Premier : You are very unfair in discussing that matter at this stage when a Royal Commission are trying the management.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : They are not trying this question, but the financial management of the department. I am pointing out the absurdity of these things, yet the Premier wants us to grant supply and he will give no information at all. I do not want to know anything about furnace crowns because I know enough already. I know it is not an everyday occurrence, or even an every year occurrence. The Premier knows, and the Minister knows, that it is a very exceptional occurrence, and that when it does happen it is in 99 cases out of 100 due to some neglect and, therefore, somebody must be responsible.

The Premier: Well, that is all right.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Then there are the State hotels. They actually show a loss.

The Premier: No.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes.

The Premier: You have been reading Colebatch's remarks.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If these hotels were charged up with the expenses that ordinary private hotels have to bear, a huge deficit in connection with them would be shown. At the present time they can only show a margin of something like £1,940 on the Treasury figures, which, of course, include inspection of liquors. Will hon. members tell me that these State hotels would not in ordinary circumstances as private hotels pay a greater rent than £3,000 and a greater ingoing?

The Minister for Works: Would you have us run our hotels on the same lines as private hotels?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I would have the Minister see that he gets his profits, and that he keeps his managers looking after their business instead of running round with labour candidates at election time.

The Minister for Works: Raking in the money for the Treasury; that is your policy.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Ministers appear to think that they have not to consider the country. The public purse is open to anybody to dip his hands into and the expenditure does not count. In other words we can let the deficit go on increasing *ad lib*; it does not matter. The State's credit is good enough. So long as we can borrow money at any rate of interest we can spend it as we like. We have another State enterprise running, the South Perth Ferry. Where is the wonderful improvement that was going to take place? The South Perth citizens are complaining that they have had no improved service and that there has been no reduction in the fares. All this is going on and the deficit is increasing by leaps and bounds and yet the Premier calmly comes here and says that he wants supply, to continue this sort of thing, and

then he proposes to adjourn the House for three or four weeks. I hope the House will support me in refusing to grant him this supply at the present time, at any rate until the Premier acts in a courteous manner to members of the Opposition, and not only members on this side of the House but members on both sides, and until he takes the country into his confidence and gives an explanation of the matters I have touched upon, more especially the powellising contract. That can be done in ten minutes if the Premier is as frank as he ought to be.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Seaddan): I must admit I am not surprised at the attitude of the leader of the Opposition. When we realise the fact that the leading Liberal journal of the State, the *West Australian*, has given so much prominence to a gentleman who has either been responsible, or who has seen to it himself that his name is kept prominently before the public, and who is aspiring to the position of leader of the Opposition, or leader of the Liberal party, the leader of the Opposition finds that the time has arrived to make a noise somewhere, irrespective whether he is on right ground or not. There have been quite a number of functions of late and this gentleman has been given more prominence than the leader of the Opposition. He too ran the leader of the Opposition very close for the position of President of the Liberal League of Western Australia. I understand that it was only by six votes that the leader of the Opposition was elected, and he is a gentleman who, it is rumoured, eventually proposes to retire from another place in order to contest a seat in this Chamber, so as to become the leader of the rabble now called the Liberal party.

Mr. George: What has that to do with the question?

The PREMIER: It has a lot to do with the question. I can assure the hon. member, because the attitude adopted by the leader of the Opposition on this occasion is almost unprecedented in the history of Parliamentary life in this State. I venture to assert that when the present Prime Minister, or the Federal Treasurer, asks for supplies to carry on until the Federal

Government can arrange their programme, which they have not yet submitted to the people—and it must be remembered they have only got a majority of one, and when the Speaker is elected they will have no majority at all—the present Opposition in the Federal Parliament, I can safely say, will not adopt the attitude which the leader of the Opposition in this State has taken and say, “We will not grant you supplies.” Hon. members will find that the Opposition in the Federal Parliament will act as others have done in the past in this State and, in fact, throughout the Commonwealth. When a Ministry has a majority and is responsible to the country and requires supplies—

Hon. Frank Wilson: They give the information the public wants.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not know how this money is to be expended. The hon. member knows full well that the public service cannot be carried on after the 30th June unless we are granted supplies. I am asking the House for supplies legally and constitutionally. We have met earlier than necessary so as to carry on the public service in a constitutional way. If the leader of the Opposition influences the result by his attitude to-day he must carry the responsibility. I am doing my part in asking for supplies and I again assert that the present is not the time for the purpose of discussing in detail an agreement which we have entered into with the powellising company.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Cannot you make a statement?

The PREMIER: I have told the hon. member that he will be given all the information he requires, or that the public require, when the time is opportune and that time is not now. Surely the hon. member knows well that an agreement entered into either by this Government or any other Government must be kept faith with, and whether the agreement be good or bad it cannot be altered if we discuss it from now until next week. Supply has to be granted and the agreement has to be kept faith with. I am in the position to be able to say that this agreement has conserved the interests of the taxpayers of this State, and when the time arrives

we will prove that to be correct, even to the satisfaction of the hon. member.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not now?

The PREMIER: The hon. member has been led by persons who parade St. George's-terrace and who are disappointed because they have been left themselves.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is dirt.

The PREMIER: The hon. member can call it anything he likes. There are certain gentlemen who have put their heads together, not only to injure the Government, but others in their private business and some of their actions in recent months are not to their credit, nor to the credit of the hon. member as leader of his party.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I object to the hon. member saying that I am supporting something that is not creditable. I have only asked for an explanation of this agreement.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the leader of the Opposition looks upon the Premier's remark as a reflection it must be withdrawn.

The PREMIER: I did not mean the remark as a reflection on the hon. member.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You said that I supported something that was not creditable.

The PREMIER: I will withdraw it. Having said that much, may I again point out the seriousness of the position taken by the leader of the Opposition in attempting to refuse supplies, because he imagines that there is something in the agreement entered into by the Government on behalf of the people with the powellising company. Whatever there may be in the matter he will have a proper opportunity of discussing it in detail and the fullest possible information will be given to the people, but, as I have already said, the present is not the right time, and the hon. member cannot expect to receive the information, and no one knows it better than the leader of the Opposition. His is merely a party move.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What rubbish.

The PREMIER: One of the Liberal journals has outlined the policy that must be adopted by the Opposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What rot.

The PREMIER: The hon. member evidently does not read the *Sunday Times*.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: It is rather remarkable that exactly what the *Sunday Times* stated would happen to-day has occurred. Either the hon. member told them what it was proposed to do or else the *Sunday Times* directed the Opposition as to the course they should follow. Whether that be so or not the hon. member has taken up the attitude that the Government shall not be granted supply because of the agreement which he says is secret. But it is rather remarkable that the hon. member has been discussing that agreement in detail. He seems to know more about it than I do.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was published in the *West Australian*.

The PREMIER: And yet the hon. member calls it secret.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was secret and are you not now hunting someone for having made it public?

The PREMIER: If it was secret so was the agreement the hon. member had made previously with the company. I have given the hon. member an assurance that the matter will be discussed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There has never been any agreement like this entered into before.

The PREMIER: I am not going to discuss the question of the agreement, except to say that we are satisfied that we have entered into an agreement which has conserved the interests of the people of the State, and when the time arrives we will be able to defend our position. That is a fair statement to make, and I say that this is not an opportune time to give further information. There is one remark that I desire the leader of the Opposition to explain. The hon. member referred to the suspicious actions of Ministers. What does the hon. member mean by such a statement? The hon. member referred to the rather suspicious action on the part of Ministers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I said it caused suspicion.

The PREMIER: Well, the hon. member just got as near as he could get to implying that there was some underlying agreement which would not redound to the credit or honesty of Ministers responsible.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: Well, what does the hon. member mean by "suspicious action?"

Hon. Frank Wilson: Go on; if the cap fits, put it on.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is now attempting to cover up his tracks. I want him to say openly and courageously what he means by that statement. If my colleague, the Minister for Works, has done anything of a suspicious nature in this matter the leader of the Opposition might tell the House publicly or tell me privately and I will have an inquiry held as to the reasons why he acted in that manner, and allow the House to impeach him, if necessary. I will not defend any Minister if his actions are such as to justify suspicion. But I say with a knowledge of the facts that he has not acted in a suspicious manner, but with the full concurrence of the Ministry, and we have entered into an agreement that will prove of advantage to the State. Let the hon. member be careful about some of the utterances that he may be inclined to make in connection with this matter. I know he would like to make statements which will probably not be to his interests or the interests of those who are backing him up in the matter. I know just what is happening at the present time. Undoubtedly there is, not only an endeavour on the part of a few to injure the Government, but a deliberate attempt on the part of an interested number of individuals to damage the interests of a few persons in their private business, and the leader of the Opposition has evidently, by such utterances as he has made to-day, helped those people to damn others in their private life. Is that a proper attitude to adopt? If the hon. member is not satisfied with the terms of the agreement let us discuss it earnestly at the proper time.

Mr. George: Are you not attempting to damn somebody?

The PREMIER: I am not attempting to damn anybody. The leader of the Opposition objected to granting supply because there is a deficit and that deficit has been increasing. He also states that we have a much larger revenue to-day than we had in 1910-11. I suppose we naturally have. We always expect it to be on the increase because the country is growing, and also because as we spend loan money we expect such expenditure to provide interest and sinking fund, and it means that we must get an increased revenue to keep pace with that greater expenditure. From that point of view, at any rate, there is nothing in the hon. member's argument. But I would further point out that we have also included during the last 12 months the whole of the revenue and expenditure in connection with the water supplies which previously were not shown in our balance sheet, and also the earnings and expenditure in connection with the Boya quarries and the Fremantle harbour works. Naturally we have an increased total revenue and an increased total expenditure, but nobody knows better than the hon. member that the reason why we have increased the deficit is that the great bulk of the loan moneys expended in increasing our railway service throughout the country have been expended in districts which during the last two years have almost totally failed. Those railways have in consequence been run at a loss, even charging them with working expenses alone, and we have had to expend other moneys to operate them. That being the case, and there being other circumstances which I could mention but which I do not propose to go into now, we have clearly the reason why the deficit has been increased during the last two years. The hon. member has touched upon another subject which shows that he has centred his thoughts on the gentleman who, as I said before, is endeavouring to oust him from the leadership of his party. He referred to the State hotels, and the gentleman I have in mind is the only person who has done anything in the nature of a criticism of State hotels during recent months. The hon. member now

says that the State hotels do not show the profit they should show, and that if we debited them with the charges which private hotels have to bear they would probably show a loss. Now, the present Government have only been responsible for opening one State hotel during their term of office, and that is the State hotel at Dwellingup, which has paid a greater profit than any hotel previously opened by the State.

Mr. George: That is a political centre.

The PREMIER: I am giving facts to disprove the hon. member's statements. The hotels now included in our balance sheet, which were not previously included, are the Yallingup Cave house and the Rottneest hostel, the latter of which has not a license. These two are run at a loss and the people of the State, through their members, will have to ask themselves a question as to whether we are to carry on these particular institutions for the benefit of a few privileged individuals who can get away for a few months in the year and have accommodation provided, partly at the expense of the taxpayer.

Mr. George: They pay for it, do they not?

The PREMIER: Not altogether.

Mr. George: Well, they ought to.

The PREMIER: Then why did not the hon. member's party, when they were in power, make them pay for it? We have got nearer making them pay for what is provided than was ever done previously by regulating and controlling the operations of those two establishments. The leader of the Opposition is on weak ground when he attacks the State hotels, because in the first instance it was not part of the policy of this party to establish State hotels merely for profit. It was for the purpose of better controlling the liquor traffic. The hon. member will understand, of course, that we are not going to spend huge sums of money to establish State hotels to be run at a loss, but the intention of the Government is to run the hotels in accordance with the licensing laws, and to give proper convenience to travellers and the public generally. I again repeat that we have

opened only one State hotel since we have been in power, and that has shown a better profit than any other. I am not going to delay the House further than to explain that if the Opposition refuse the Government supply—the leader of the Opposition knows very well that he has not the numbers in this House to prevent the Government being granted supply, but that by delaying the passage of the Bill through this Chamber another place may have adjourned before the Bill is sent down to it—if we have not supplies with which to carry on after the 30th June, I want the people to understand the reason, and I want the hon. member to understand the significance of his action so that he may not be able to go to the people afterwards and say that he was not responsible for the action of another place.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You can meet on Tuesday.

The PREMIER: Of course. When the hon. member sat on this side he and his colleagues arranged the business of the House and decided when we should meet and when we should adjourn, and they always objected to members sitting in opposition interfering with the arrangement of the business. Surely the leader of the Opposition will allow those who are now on the Government benches to decide these questions.

Mr. George: Certainly.

The PREMIER: But the position now is that we are asking for supplies in accordance with the Constitution, and the hon. member is endeavouring to prevent us getting those supplies.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We are asking for information.

The PREMIER: On a subject that has nothing whatever to do with supply. We can only expend this money during the next two months in accordance with the authority previously granted by Parliament last session when they passed the Loan Estimates and Revenue Estimates. Such a discussion has never previously occurred in the history of this Parliament when the Government have asked for temporary supply. I hope the leader of the Opposition will even at this late hour

see the wisdom of allowing this matter to be taken to a conclusion.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I would just like to state to the Premier that the leader of the Opposition is quite justified in drawing attention to the condition of the State hotels. If the profits of any of these businesses fall below what they have been in the past members on both sides are entitled to know why. Now what is the position in regard to the State hotels? Last year the revenue was £11,000 and the expenditure £6,000, showing a profit of £5,000. Yet for the 11 months ended 31st May the revenue was £30,000 and the expenditure £28,000.

Mr. McDowall: You cannot tell the profit from the revenue and expenditure.

Mr. GEORGE: I am addressing my remarks to the Premier, and I ask him if he can explain these figures. If a revenue of £11,000 costs only £6,000 to produce, why should a revenue of nearly three times that amount cost nearly five times as much to produce? I am making no charges of dishonesty or anything of that sort, but plain business training will tell the Premier that we have a right to know why this expenditure has increased to such an extent. So far as the Supply Bill is concerned, the leader of the Opposition is quite within his rights in raising this discussion.

The Minister for Lands: It was never done when he was Treasurer.

Mr. GEORGE: Probably there never was an occasion like this so momentous to the State, and when the momentous occasion arose the leader of the Opposition endeavoured to rise to it.

Mr. Lander: Because it hurts his friends.

Mr. GEORGE: I hope we shall endeavour to keep away from personalities, and discuss this matter seriously. If the Premier had only given some slight intimation of the information desired by the leader of the Opposition there would have been none of this discussion. The agreement which has been referred to has been made for 16 months and it was never made public. Surely neither the Premier nor the Minister for Works has anything to be ashamed of.

The Premier: You have the agreement.

Mr. GEORGE: We have it published in the newspapers, but we desire to have stated here what the exact agreement is, and whether the version published in the Press is correct.

Mr. Turvey: Why are you so anxious?

Mr. GEORGE: Because we are conscious of our duty to the State, and because there are reasons which make us disquiet in our own minds as to the manner in which this contract was made. I do not wish to enter into any details now, but I think the Premier might have faced the situation and said that the Government had made a contract, but they had no desire to give the particulars to members. The very fact of keeping silent raised suspicion, and that is what is objected to. If a person has carried out a business transaction with which he is personally satisfied and which he believes is in the full interests of the State, why on earth is there any reason for keeping the fact concealed and holding it back? Why could not this powellising agreement have been placed before the House last session, why keep it back?

The Minister for Works: You know you did not publish your agreement.

Mr. GEORGE: I never had one. There was no agreement made with the powellising company when I was commissioner, and when it was made by the Railways I was not in Parliament.

The Minister for Works: The agreement then made was kept private for exactly the same reason as this has been.

Mr. GEORGE: In the case of an ordinary agreement made by the Commissioner for Railways or any other departmental head in connection with the business of the department there is not any necessity to lay it on the Table; but an agreement such as this made with the powellising company, an agreement which is part and parcel of the sawmilling and timber business the Government are entering upon should be placed on the Table for the information of members.

The Minister for Works: No more than any other agreement.

Mr. GEORGE: Ministers are administrative heads, certainly, but that does not

enable them to monopolise the whole of the business ability of the State, and we have a right as representatives of the State to be taken into the confidence of Ministers on matters which are not party matters, but which interest the whole of the members. Let the hon. gentleman take the responsibility to himself, and when the time comes let him put his shoulder under the burden.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I wish to enter my protest against the manner in which this agreement has been dealt with. I think it was the duty of the leader of the Opposition to bring up the matter this afternoon. There is unrest in the public mind, and the public are deeply concerned about the wisdom of this agreement. Ministers have endeavoured to make it appear that the agreement entered into by the Commissioner of Railways five years ago was identical with the present agreement. Nothing of the sort. The present agreement provides for a royalty, and provides a guarantee that means the payment of £3,750 a year by the State. I do not wish to discuss the terms of the agreement now, but the agreement which previously existed committed the country to pay 6d. per hundred feet for any timber actually powellised. There was no guarantee that any would be powellised; if we did not powellise any we should not have to pay. We desired to use Western Australian timber in the Port Hedland railway and so we powellised the jarrah sleepers for that work. Surely this was better in the interests of the country than to use steel sleepers. No objection was ever taken to that agreement.

Mr. Bolton: We never saw it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Had we been asked for it it would have been produced without a moment's delay, and that is the attitude Ministers should take up in regard to this agreement. We shall be permitted in the course of four or five weeks to discuss this agreement in detail, and I will be delighted if the Premier can then put up an explanation satisfactory to the people. The public is concerned, and Ministers should know it would be very wise to allay the fears

of the public at the earliest possible moment. There is one point Ministers seem to have overlooked: by this agreement they are committing this country to the use of karri timber for railway sleepers. That in itself is enough to give the country pause. Apart altogether from this agreement which we shall discuss at length very soon, I believe there are many other reasons why this motion should be opposed. Just at the present time we are troubled by the unemployed. It is no laughing matter at all. These men are out of work, and should be provided with work. I believe a solution of the difficulty can be found by allowing the Agricultural Bank to advance freely for improvement purposes. It is utterly impossible for Ministers to absorb the unemployed on the day labour Government jobs, or any work they may let by contract. I protest that the people of the State have the right to work. These men out of work have the right to approach the Government and ask them to do something to alleviate the situation. Some 1,500 people are about to land in this country, a country where there should be ample work for 150,000; but as a matter of fact, for obvious reasons, there is not enough work just now for the people already in the State. Is the Premier going to do nothing during the next three or four weeks to relieve the situation? The Premier is not doing his duty in this regard. I hope he will explain what he intends to do. The Premier says that Mr. Yarlett is encouraged by the Liberals. Why should not any man be encouraged to do his duty by the workless worker?

Mr. Bolton : That is another agreement, is it not ?

Hon. J. MITCHELL : No, not so far as I know. I certainly have not spoken to Mr. Yarlett since he had that encounter with the Premier.

The Premier : But you did before.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Ministers will do well to remember that the country expects them to be frank, and objects to their hiding anything that the public should know. They have successfully hidden for six months this powellising

agreement. It is of no use Ministers pretending that it is the usual practice, because that is not the case. I hope the Premier will realise in asking for supplies to-day that he has a deficit the amount of which he has not confided to the House; nor has he told us how he proposes to finance. Apparently he is going on with his expenditure. There is no appearance of economy; expenditure is to proceed, but the Premier has not told us where he is going to get the money. We have no information at all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) : He is getting the money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I do not think he is. I think he is using Loan monies to cover this deficit, Loan monies borrowed for reproductive public works. However, I have entered my protest and I shall have another opportunity of dealing with this agreement in a few weeks time. In the meantime I hope the country will realise what has happened to-day and that Ministers still desire to keep us in the dark.

Mr. MONGER (York) : I did hope that the Minister for Works would have attempted in his usual style some little explanation this afternoon. At this early stage in the session I can only regret that the Minister is going to treat these little matters that have been referred to this afternoon in the usual way in which he treated some bigger questions during last session.

The Minister for Works : What questions.

Mr. MONGER : Nobody knows better than the Minister for Works the question I am referring to. If we are going to have a big expenditure of money in regard to certain works under the control of the Minister for Works, I do hope that he will give us certain explanations as to the manner in which he intends to expend it, whether with the intention of assisting those directly interested in our cause, good friends of our party, or whether he is going to adopt the attitude and policy which he adopted in connection with a certain railway with which no person in Western Australia is better acquainted than he himself. But if he is

going to adopt the same attitude in regard to the expenditure on all these other public works, and in the same direction that he did in that regard, I am going to ask him now that when preparing the Loan Estimates he shall make proper provision for a reduction in the price of lands that were bought in all good faith from a previous Administration. I am going to ask him to see that a certain section who are practically blown out through his mal-administration are given fair and reasonable access to the nearest railway sidings along the various routes.

The Minister for Works: We will give them an aeroplane.

Mr. MONGER: And they will give you an aeroplane to carry you out of the locality. I had no intention of saying one word this afternoon, but I did expect that the Minister for Works would have given us some explanation of the splendid and statesmanlike attitude which he has adopted in regard to this powellising contract.

Question put and passed.

Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Holman in the Chair,

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

That there be granted to His Majesty on account of the service of the year ending 30th June, 1914, a sum not exceeding £1,324,130.

He said: This is based on one-sixth of the total expenditure so far as we can at present estimate it for the current financial year. It will be for the purpose of supplying us with necessary funds to carry on for a period of two months.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Holman in the Chair,

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

That towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty for the service

of the year ending 30th June, 1914, a sum not exceeding £576,370 be granted from Consolidated Revenue Fund, £647,760 from Moneys to Credit of the General Loan Fund, and from Loan Suspense Account £100,000.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

Bill introduced, etc.

Pursuant to the foregoing resolutions, Supply Bill introduced, carried through all its stages and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

First Day.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans): I rise with a considerable amount of pleasure to move the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, and in doing so may I be permitted to say a few words in connection with some of the past actions of the present Government. But before dealing with the actions of the Government I would like to say that I feel proud at this juncture that the policy of the Labour party has again been endorsed by a majority of the people of Western Australia. I say that with no small measure of pride, seeing that since the last occasion on which they were asked to express an opinion they have increased the majority in favour of the policy of the Labour party by some 6,000 votes. At the outset I would also like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Premier on his splendid efforts during his recent tour through England and the Continent, and on the good work which he has done in the interests of Western Australia. Further, I want to congratulate the Government on the many acts they have done to assist in the progress generally of this State. First of all, let me say that I appreciate thoroughly the attitude the Government have adopted in giving relief or support to the agricultural industry of the State. I want to say right here that I believe any Government that had been in power during the last two years would have given some con-

sideration and a measurable amount of support to the agricultural industry; but I believe that the present Government have exceeded the expectations even of the agriculturists themselves. During the term of the present Government they have practically assisted the agricultural industry to the extent of £190,000 from revenue. Not that this huge amount should be regarded as expenditure, inasmuch as a great proportion of it is represented by amounts such as rents that have been foregone by the Government and various other items, but that amount of £190,000 does not include the assistance rendered by supplying seed wheat and manures. I want to congratulate the Government on the attitude they have adopted in bringing into operation during the recess some more State enterprises. The air has been considerably confused this afternoon in this Chamber as regards some of the enterprises entered into by the Government during the early part of their term of office. I wish to compliment the Government on initiating agricultural implement works in this State. On expert evidence we are led to believe that the State can produce agricultural implements equal, if not superior, to any machines on the market at a reduction of 25 per cent. in the cost to the purchaser. That being the case, I would like to point out for the information of the agriculturists generally of this State and members of this House, that during the year 1912 £180,000 was sent out of this State for the purchase of agricultural implements. I think anybody will realise that if that sum of £180,000 had been expended within the State, it would have proved of considerable advantage to the State in respect to the amount of employment it would have afforded. It would have caused a greater circulation of money locally, and if the report of the expert is borne out and these implements can be produced at 25 per cent. less, it would mean in a year like the last twelve months a saving to farmers of no less than £45,000. When we find that the Government are initiating State enterprises of this kind it is a matter for which we should all feel grateful. All I hope is that the expectations of the

expert will be realised, for it will be to the advantage not only of the agriculturists but of the State as a whole. I am also pleased to say I believe it is the intention of the Government, so far as agricultural implements are concerned, to wipe out the middle-man altogether, and to deal direct with the farmer, thereby effecting a considerable saving to him.

Mr. Lander: Hear, hear! A proper thing to do.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am pleased that the Government have inaugurated State brickworks, also abattoirs at Midland Junction and North Fremantle. Leaving those enterprises I want to say a few words in praise of the present Government in regard to one of the measures introduced by them in the early portion of last year; I refer to the Workers' Homes Act. In reading His Excellency's Speech to the House to-day every member must be pleased indeed to find that the benefits of the workers' home provisions have been availed of so liberally by the people of Western Australia, and I trust that the people will give the Government credit for the generous manner in which they have supplied funds. When we come to realise that new buildings have been authorised to the number of 335, extensions and improvements numbering 48, that mortgages have been lifted from 56, and that they have purchased 150, including in the whole of this amount an expenditure of £362,000, it will be admitted that the Government have done well. I believe the inauguration of this system by the present Government is going to materially affect the cost of living in this State, not actually in the way of what people consume, but it is going to provide homes at reduced rents for those who are unfortunate enough not to be able to avail themselves of the workers' homes provisions. I believe the Government have gone on the right lines in going in for workers' homes. The greatest difficulty that the workers of this State have to put up with is the exorbitant rentals charged, particularly in the metropolitan area. I do not intend to deal exhaustively with other industries but I may say that I am pleased with the Governor's Speech and the fairly

full outline given of what the Government have done in the past and what they intend to do in the future. But there is one industry I shall have a good deal to say on and that is the mining industry. I am pleased that mining to-day in Western Australia is still the principal industry. When we realise that during 1912 this industry produced nearly one million pounds more wealth than the rest of the industries and manufactures in Western Australia put together, I think the people will admit that it is the principal industry still. I want also to point out that the mineral wealth produced in this State has amounted to the enormous sum of 113 million sterling, and of that sum the value of the gold produced has been 110 millions. Therefore, I think that hon. members will realise that when goldfields representatives are urging some measure which is going to be beneficial to the interests of the gold mining industry, that it will be of interest to the State as a whole, and that the House should foster the industry to the utmost. I want to give credit to the Government for the manner in which they have fostered the mining industry. During 1912 the output of gold from Western Australia amounted to 48 per cent. of the total gold yield of Australasia, including New Guinea and Papua, and those figures should prove conclusively to carping critics that the mining industry is still an industry worthy of the support of the State. I believe in assisting that industry by adopting the best methods, such as providing crushing facilities for leaseholders and prospectors, and water supplies. Those two in my opinion are the principal methods by which the Government can assist the gold mining industry, and I want to point out that in those particular matters the present Government have done all that could be desired. First of all the Government have, from the 3rd October, 1911, to the 13th April, 1913, assisted the mining industry to the extent of £140,000. In that expenditure is included water supplies, the erection of State batteries, diamond drilling loans to mining companies and proprietaries, and general loans to prospectors. As I have

stated, I believe the best method of assisting the mining industry is to provide crushing facilities and water supplies, and I want to point out how the present Government have assisted in that direction. During the last 12 months of the previous Minister's regime there was expended on water supplies £30,263. During the present Minister's term he has expended £60,232, just about double the amount spent by his predecessor, and I want to say that, although he undertook the expenditure of this enormous sum of money, as far as water supplies on the goldfields are concerned, I believe that the most pessimistic person in this State must realise that that expenditure has been warranted by the results obtained. As far as crushing facilities are concerned, I want to point out that the present Minister has authorised the erection of eight new State batteries, which I am pleased to say stands as a record for any similar period. I want also to point out in connection with the State battery system that the present Administration has altered to some extent the procedure that was put into operation by the former Minister for Mines. I think it is well known to most who take an interest in gold mining, that during Mr. Gregory's regime as Minister for Mines the attitude adopted by him with regard to State batteries was that, when an application was made from any particular district in the State of Western Australia for the erection of a State battery, if, after getting the necessary information from the heads of his department he was of the opinion that it was desirable that a State battery should be erected, he immediately looked around for the nearest battery in that locality that could be purchased, and he put it up on the site desired for the public battery. That being the case nearly the whole of the State battery system of Western Australia consisted of second-hand machinery.

Mr. LAUNDER: Scrap iron.

Mr. MUNSIE: Many of them, as my friend interjects, were scrap iron. We have it on record that the cost of the erection of a State battery was in the vicinity of £20,000, but I wish to point out that not only has that enormous amount been

expended in the erection of State batteries in the past, but it so increased the capitalisation of the battery system that the present Minister is suffering for it to-day. The attitude adopted by the present Minister has been that on every occasion where the erection of a State battery had been warranted, he has put up the most up-to-date plant it was possible to get, and supplied producer gas plants, so that the best possible results that could be obtained would be obtained for the leaseholders and prospectors. I want also to point out, even though he is installing absolutely new plants on every occasion and up-to-date machinery, the average cost of the battery erection now amounts to somewhere about £4,500, which is very low, compared as I said before with some of the batteries of the State which were practically second hand, and which cost nearly £20,000. I want to emphasise this point because I realise that the conditions under which the present Minister has to control the battery system are no more favourable to him to-day than they were while his predecessor was in office. Wages were no higher than they are to-day and if anything the present Minister has to pay higher wages, and therefore it redounds to the credit of the present Government that they have placed the battery system on the firm footing we find it. The result of the State battery system in Western Australia has been the means of producing gold to the prospectors and leaseholders to the amount of over four millions sterling. That being the case I am perfectly satisfied that the State battery system has practically justified its existence, and I am pleased to say that if the present Minister gets a renewal of office, of which I have every confidence, he will keep the battery system going on the splendid up-to-date lines he is adopting at present. I am perfectly satisfied that in the near future the Government will be able to further assist the prospectors by still reducing the cost of crushing. I want also to refer to the assistance given by the present Government in connection with diamond drilling. At Fraser's mine in the Southern Cross district the drilling there

resulted in the discovery of a new lode at a depth of 540 feet, some four feet wide, and giving values by assay up to one ounce. This is absolutely a new find so far as that particular property is concerned, and I want also to point out that when the Government undertook to subsidise boring on that particular property, they were prepared to do it on any other property that put up a claim for assistance. The Government are prepared to subsidise a company or a syndicate to the extent of two-thirds. I do not know the exact amount but many thousand ounces of gold were won from Frasers mine by the old company, and seeing the amount of gold that that company took out of the lease, it is rather surprising to find that the depth of the shaft was only 354 feet, and that from the bottom workings of the shaft they had sunk a winze to 480 feet. I have the assurance from the Minister for Mines that in no case during his term of office has he refused to assist any syndicate which has been prepared to put money into leases, or which has been prepared to take up leases in this State, and he has never refused a request for deep boring, and neither has he refused to give a subsidy to the extent of two-thirds of the cost. As far as the gold-mining industry is concerned, I am pleased that the Governor's Speech on this occasion is a little optimistic. I believe that the results of the past five years justify that optimism. Another reason why we should feel pleased as far the gold mining industry is concerned is that the range over which increases are being gained covers an enormous area. I will give some instances of the districts that have shown increases during the last 12 months. There was Black Range, 84,000 ounces, which constitutes a record for that district; Yilgarn, 30,000 ounces, which constitutes the best record for the last 11 years; and Coolgardie, a place that we are all told times out of number is absolutely done, although those of us who have lived any time on the goldfields realise that it is just beginning to come, 37,000 ounces, which is a record for the last five years. Meekatharra has also kept up its output,

and, of course, the whole of Western Australia realises the splendid production at Ora Banda. I want also to emphasise the fact that during the first five months of this year we had what we have not had for the last 10 years, an increase in the total output as compared with the corresponding period of last year. I am pleased indeed that His Excellency's Speech states that we are on the turn, so far as the decrease in the gold yield is concerned. I am perfectly satisfied, from the developments that are taking place almost throughout the State, that we are again on the eve of an increase and that the mining industry will prosper to a very great extent. Whilst dealing with the prosperity of the industry itself, I want also to point out some other matters in connection with it. I am pleased to see included in the Speech mention of a Bill for the amendment of the Mines Regulation Act. Whilst we have prosperity in this industry, this year at all events, it behoves us, as the persons controlling the destinies of the State, to, if possible, see if we cannot make the conditions under which the people work in the industry a little better than they are to-day. I realise that the mining industry is absolutely the most dangerous calling that any persons follow in this State. That being the case, I am pleased indeed to see that the Government have started the erection of a new sanatorium at Woorooloo at a cost of £70,000. Experts tell us that when that institution is completed it will be the finest in the Commonwealth. I applaud the Government for the assistance they have given to the industry, and knowing as I do that the industry has caused a considerable amount of the tuberculosis that exists, I am pleased also to find that they are providing one of the most up-to-date institutions that it is possible to obtain for the treatment of that disease.

Mr. McDonald: They ought to make the industry pay for it.

Mr. MUNSIE: If I had my way I would certainly make the industry bear a greater proportion of the burden than it bears to-day by a considerable amount. I believe that the profits gained from the industry have been sufficient to warrant

every member in endeavouring to place on the Statute Book some provision that will make the industry wholly and solely responsible for the results of the disease contracted by men when working in that industry. I have dealt with the prosperity of the industry itself, and also with the proposed re-introduction of the Mines Regulation Bill, and I want to now say a word in connection with the vo'tilization process that is being experimented with at Wiluna. Having had some experience in the mining industry I realise that if this process can be made a success it means a revival not only of Wiluna, but of many other districts in the back country. The experts' reports so far have been absolutely favourable, and I believe that this process will revolutionise the mining industry in this State. I would also congratulate the Government on sending one of the geologists in the department right throughout the North-West. From what I have read and from the returns of production I believe that there are great possibilities in that portion of the State, so far as mineral wealth is concerned, and the Government deserve well at the hands of the electors for the interest they have taken in the mining industry in that particular portion of Western Australia. I wish to refer to one or two other items in the Speech, first of all, to the Irrigation Bill. It is stated in the Speech that it is the intention of the Government to re-introduce a Bill on the lines of the measure rejected last session, and in the interests of Western Australia generally, I trust that this House and another place will see fit to pass it. Mention has been made this afternoon of the fact that we have unemployed in our midst, and I attribute a considerable amount of the unemployed difficulty that we have to-day to the attitude of certain persons in another place in defeating the Irrigation Bill last year. If we had had an opportunity of putting that Bill into operation I believe that the prosperity which would have resulted in the South-West would have absorbed not only the unemployed we have to-day but many more persons who may come into the State. Another measure that is promised

is the initiative and referendum, and I trust that the Government will succeed in carrying that particular measure through Parliament. I hope they will be successful for more reasons than one. During recent months we have heard a lot said on public platforms throughout the State about home rule, and we were told all sorts of tales in regard to this State being governed locally. Now, I would urge on members on both sides and also members in another place that if they are desirous of Western Australia having complete home rule and being governed by the people of Western Australia, they will pass into law the initiative and referendum, and have it placed on the statute-book. Before closing I desire to deal with a statement made in reference to the people of the goldfields. We have been told through the Press that the goldfields people pay no taxes. I do not know who is the gentleman responsible for that statement, but I would like him to point to any tax which is being paid by another portion of the community and is not being paid by the goldfields people. I am firmly of opinion that the goldfields people as a community are paying more in taxes than any other section of the people. I say that largely for this reason: First of all they have to pay the rent on the mining leases; they have to pay dividend duty, and land and income tax, the same as any other section of the community, they have to pay customs just the same, and unfortunately, seeing that they produce very little of their requirements on the goldfields, and receive all their supplies by transit over the railways they have an extra burden to bear in railway freights that many others in Western Australia have not to bear. Therefore, I am perfectly satisfied that the goldfields people do pay their fair share of taxation, and, representing a goldfields constituency, I am pleased to have the opportunity of moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, as I realise that the goldfields to-day are the home of democracy in Western Australia. In regard to the statement that has been made that there is a cleavage between the goldfields and the coastal people, I am

satisfied that if the coastal people will treat the goldfields people in reason and give them a certain amount of the consideration they are entitled to—including the Esperance railway, which will assist the fields to a considerable extent—the people on the goldfields will be content at all times to work in the interests of the whole of the people of Western Australia generally. I have very much pleasure in moving the following Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech:—

May it please Your Excellency—We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

Mr. LEWIS (Canning): In rising to second the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply, I desire also to congratulate the Government on the splendid efforts they have put forward in regard to attending to the work of administration. In the history of this State there has never been a Ministry who devoted their time to mastering the details of administration in the manner in which the present Government have. The work of the departments has been carefully scrutinised, and I venture to say that the Opposition cannot point the finger of scorn at Ministers in that regard. I desire also to make some reference to the Premier's visit to the Old Country. We are largely influenced by our environment, and it is a good thing to allow the leader of a powerful and progressive party to visit other countries in order to see what is being done away from our own State. The visit of the Premier to the old world has resulted in material advantage to this State, and the lessons he has learned and what he has seen will prove of considerable benefit to the people in the future. It enables him to take a broader outlook on the vast issues he is called upon to control. In our Premier we have one who possesses all the fire of an enthusiastic, earnest leader devoted to principles in which he thoroughly believes. He also possesses a robust constitution and a fine

temperament, necessary essentials in a leader of a progressive and powerful party actuated by one ideal and one motive, namely, the making of this great State the finest country on God's earth for a human being to live in. I also desire to congratulate the Government on the re-appointment of the Agent General. I realise that that gentleman has fulfilled the duties entrusted to him with ability and with due regard for the interests of this State. This is another evidence of spoils to the victors. We find that the bulk of the criticism directed against the present Administration has to do with what we might term the nightmare of the Opposition and the Liberals, namely, the deficit. Deficits have existed before in this State, but instead of those in Opposition pointing the way out, they are going round crying stagnation. We have the breezy optimist from Northam—who, when in office, painted all things in glowing colours—to-day we have that gentleman going about decrying the State and averring that we have undermined credit and destroyed confidence. Yet our Premier has just floated one of the most successful loans that have been floated in Australia for some time past. I realise that an explanation can be put up with regard to the deficit. The deficit has been largely brought about as the result of our district railways. At the present time we are losing large sums of money on every district railway with the exception of two. These railways have been built for developmental purposes, and during their developmental stages we must expect to suffer a loss on these proposals. The deficit has also been brought about through assistance given to farmers on the lines indicated by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), enabling them to tide over the two worst seasons this State has ever experienced. These men have gone out pioneering into the interior, and consequently they needed assistance, and the Government have come to their rescue by building railways, providing water supplies, providing seed wheat, and deferring their rents. In addition to that the Government have also established a minimum rate of wage in this State for the servants of the State, a wage which will enable them to live in

reasonable comfort. I venture to say that through the establishment of that minimum valuable service was rendered to these people, enabling them to live in reasonable and fair conditions. Now, with regard to that, since the establishment of that minimum, pressure has been brought to bear by civil servants who are on the higher rungs of the ladder; but the fact that the minimum has been established enables those who have skill and superior ability the better to put forth efforts which must in the future result in their benefit. I also desire to issue a note of warning to our civil servants to the effect that the Government have dealt generously and justly with them and the time has now arrived when pressure that has been brought to bear on the Government must be resisted, and I will support the Government in any action of that character.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You do not approve of the Premier's speech of yesterday, do you?

Mr. LEWIS: In fact I consider it is wise for the civil servants to rest for the present. I realise that, in order to wipe out our deficit, strict economy and supervision are needed. No Government can exist unless they pay their way. We all realise the difficulty the Treasurer is faced with in regard to the deficit. With regard to our Railways, the greatest earning department we have, I notice that according to the figures for February of this year as compared with February of last year our railways earned £30,000 more revenue last February than they did in February of 1912. To earn that amount cost something like £26,000 additional expenditure. In my opinion there is something wrong in regard to that, and in an endeavour to find out where this leakage has taken place, I drew a comparison on the percentage in the different departments as contrasted with the returns from the Eastern States. Taking New South Wales, which is the nearest State to our own so far as working conditions are concerned, I find that in a comparison with the traffic department of New South Wales there is a difference of one per cent.; a comparison with the ways and works department discloses a difference of five per cent., and a

comparison in respect to the loco. department discloses a difference of 9 per cent. In my opinion this difference is too great, and I would like the Minister to inquire into the reason why a difference of 9 per cent. should exist in the loco. department as compared with the traffic department. This cannot be placed to the account of increase of wages, because a similar increase has taken place in the traffic department and in all the other departments. It seems to me there is a leakage taking place in regard to the loco. department and I would like the Minister to inquire into this, and in his reply point out why this occurs. Now, with regard to our deficit, we have outlined in the Governor's Speech the land tax and income tax as introduced last session. I consider this an equitable form of taxation. That those who are reaping the benefits from what the Government have done and those who are holding large tracts of country should be taxed on a graduated system is a fair and equitable proposition, and I regret that the Legislative Council rejected it last session. I will give my support to that proposal, namely, a graduated land tax and an income tax based on the principle introduced last session. With regard to the Rights in Water and Irrigation Bill, that is a most important proposal. We have too few rivers in the State, and it is necessary for the Government to pass legislation in order to store our supplies, dam our rivers and make provision so that we can develop our dairying industry, which, according to statistics, is more backward than is the case in any of the other States. As far as dairying production is concerned, we find that in 1911 New South Wales produced 83 million pounds of butter; Victoria, 86 million; Queensland, 27 million; South Australia 9 million, and Tasmania 4 million, while Western Australia produced only 498,000 lbs. of butter. We are a long way behind any other State in the Commonwealth, and the same thing exists in regard to the production of cheese, bacon and hams and other dairy produce. We have examples from California, Egypt and Victoria as to what water will

do as a fertilising agency applied to land, and with these examples before us it is essential that the Government should pass this Bill in order that we may preserve and utilise the too few water supplies we possess with a view to encouraging our dairying industry and enabling us to become a self-contained State so that, instead of sending large sums of money out of the State for dairy produce, we may spend that money in the direction of creating employment within the State. I should also like to see the Government encourage manufactures. We are a long way behind the other States in this regard. The Government have done good work inasmuch as they have given to local firms certain rolling stock that had to be constructed, and they are also providing at the present time facilities for producing steel castings, and the manufacture of steel in our own State. I would like to see them include in that the manufacture of machinery for our State batteries so that we would thus be able to open up a new avenue of employment. With regard to the Factories Act, this is a very important measure that should receive the support of all parties; in fact, employers who desire to deal justly by their employees are anxious to see legislation of this character, because at the present time they have to compete with employers who sweat their employees. We have had experience of this in other States, where girls are employed for a certain period at nothing at all, and at the conclusion of the stipulated period are dismissed to make room for others to be employed on the same basis. The same thing is going on in a lesser degree in this State, and it is absolutely necessary that such legislation should be introduced to prevent our workers being sweated by unscrupulous employers. I am also pleased to see on the programme submitted by His Excellency an amendment of the Local Government Act. In our roads boards elections we desire to see the principle introduced of one ratepayer one vote. In the past absentees have bought up land for speculative purposes in these roads board districts, and were thus able to swamp the residential

vote in the elections, with the result that the resident has been out-voted by the absentee who has no lasting interest in the district. I would also like to see included in the Municipalities Act a provision for taxing on the unimproved values. The argument applies here just as well as it does in regard to the roads board. Some people buy up land and allow it to lie idle for years, while other people who improve their allotments are called upon for the bulk of the taxation. I would like to see a provision in the Local Government Act that subdivisions should be based on a frontage of not less than 50 feet, in order to avoid in this young community the building up of slums. We have seen in older communities slum properties with frontages of 19 feet. It is the duty of Parliament to legislate against the possibility of such a thing occurring here. I also noticed in His Excellency's Speech a proposal to introduce a Traffic Bill. A similar measure was introduced by the Minister for Works last session, to enable the suburban municipal councils, which consist of men who devote a large amount of time to benefit their districts, to receive a certain amount of revenue from the licensing fees paid in respect to motors, cabs, etcetera, which are now collected by the Perth City Council, although the traffic passes over suburban roads and assists in wearing them out without contributing to their maintenance. The object of the measure is a good one, and the Bill should receive our hearty support. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, referred to the proposed introduction of the initiative and referendum. This is no new proposal. It has been tried in other parts of the world, and we all know that at an election time important issues are very often clouded by side issues. It is desirable that this measure should be introduced in order to give the people an opportunity of initiating legislation on the lines which they desire. By introducing measures such as this the Government are showing that they are alive to the best interests of the people of Western Australia. With regard to constitutional and electoral reform, we know

that the defeat of the previous Administration was largely brought about by the famous Redistribution of Seats Bill, and also by the famous Collie-Sussex shuffle. It is the duty of Parliament to appoint an independent commission to allot the electoral boundaries, and thus secure redistribution uninfluenced by any personal interests. It is the intention of the Government to bring down a Bill on these lines.

Mr. Taylor: Will they act on the commission's report?

Mr. LEWIS: If the commission do their duty, Parliament will do so. If the commission act consistently, Parliament should abide by the decision of the will of the people. As regards electoral reform, proportional representation has now reached the stage of practical politics, and I would be prepared to support a proportional system provided it applied to the Legislative Council, and provided also that adult suffrage was granted in regard to that Chamber. We have for years advocated that that Chamber should be brought into line with the wishes of the people, and on such lines I will be prepared to support a scheme of proportional representation. I should like also to refer to some remarks in which the leader of the Opposition has given a fine outline of the gospel preached by the *Sunday Times*. He poses as a public-spirited man, and he is endeavouring, as the Premier indicated, to outrival his opponent, who is ambitious to secure the leadership of the Opposition.

Mr. George: That is nonsense.

Mr. LEWIS: I congratulate the Government on their administration as regards workers' homes, which in my opinion will largely assist in the direction of reducing the cost of living. I know a number of workers who have been called upon to pay ten per cent. interest on the money borrowed on their homes.

Mr. Monger: Where?

Mr. LEWIS: In the metropolitan area and throughout the State. If the member for York (Mr. Monger) is not conversant with that he would do well to display a little more energy and arrive at the true facts of the case. The Government have

done good work in regard to the administration of the Workers' Homes Act, and that piece of legislation alone would justify their existence. Another important scheme consummated during their short term of office has been the nationalisation of the Perth trams. As soon as the Government take over the tramway system, I would like them to realise the necessity for providing additional power in order to make it more efficient. The outside municipalities are clamouring for extensions. I would like to see a proposal to connect up the north with the south side of the river by extending the Lord Street tram along Guildford-road across the river to connect Belmont, which would enable trams to cater for the race traffic. The Commissioner of Railways has experienced great difficulty on special race days in catering for that traffic, and he has recommended in years gone by that a loop line should be built from Burswood to Belmont, in order to enable race traffic to be worked from both ends. This loop from Burswood to Belmont would be unnecessary if the Government carried out the proposal to link the north side with the south side of the river. As far as the tramways are concerned, they are able to shift crush traffic quicker than any other system. I have seen a crowd of 30,000 people from a football match in Melbourne shifted in nine minutes. We know the Government receive a large amount of railway revenue from race traffic, but a large number of people who now travel by road would utilise the tramways if they were available. The connecting up of the north and south sides of the river also would shorten the journey. People on the south side of the river have to travel from Victoria Park right into town and then out again, making a detour of six miles, which occupies a considerable amount of time. This proposal would bring about a direct connection and would shorten the journey from Kalamunda and Darling Range, and would be a payable proposition from the outset. The crush traffic would result in sufficient revenue to provide interest and sinking fund on the cost of construction. I would like to see the ferry system brought under the

Railway Department, insofar as the traffic working portion of it is concerned. We desire to link up the services so that there will be one department which will be able to provide a transfer from one system to another, and also arrange a time-table which will bring about a connection between the ferry and tramway service, so that when a ferry boat arrives trams would be waiting for it, and *vice versa*. This connecting up of the different services is essential, and it can only be achieved by placing them all under the management of one department. Many improvements might be effected in connection with the ferries. The leader of the Opposition ridiculed the present ferry system, but I venture to say that the people of South Perth appreciate it. A large number of people have gone to live in that locality since the system was nationalised; the Government have installed electric light on the ferry boats; a better time-table has been provided, and fares have been reduced, and concessions have been made to apprentices and others, which features did not exist while the ferry was under private control. I am pleased to hear that the system is paying, and I believe we should link up the whole of the services to Applecross and Coode-street so as to have a complete service and thus complete the policy of the nationalisation of our transport services under one control and one management. If this were done it would enable us to effect the reforms which I have indicated.

On motion by Hon. Frank Wilson, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath) moved—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 29th July, at 4.30 p.m.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 6.11 p.m.