

NOES.

Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. E. Dodd
Hon. J. M. Drew

Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. F. Davis
(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

Amendment (that the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted) put and a division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes	16
Noes	5
Majority for ..	11

AYES.

Hon. F. Connor
Hon. J. F. Cullen
Hon. D. G. Gawler
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. W. Kingmill
Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. R. D. McKenzie

Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. C. A. Plesse
Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. T. H. Wildlog
Hon. H. P. Colebatch
(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. J. E. Dodd
Hon. J. M. Drew

Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. F. Davis
(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is, that the Address-in-reply as amended be agreed to.

On motion by Hon. F. Connor, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.28 p.m.

PAIRS.

Hon. J. D. Connolly
Hon. W. Patrick

Hon. R. G. Ardagh
Hon. B. C. O'Brien

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 16th July, 1912.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Papers re petition of John Maher for compensation (order on motion by Mr. Dwyer). 2, Amendment of by-laws (schedule 1) of the Goldfields Water Supply Administration.

QUESTION — INSANE PATIENTS, APPLICATIONS FOR RELEASE.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Has a petition been received from a number of patients at the hospital for the insane, Claremont, asking that any inmate who considers himself (or herself) unlawfully detained in the institution should be enabled on application to have his (or her) case publicly investigated by a judge of the Supreme Court, provided the applicant shows cause to the satisfaction of the judge that such investigation should be held? 2, Is it true that patients in similar institutions in the State of Victoria have the privilege mentioned? 3, In view of the immense importance of this privilege to the unfortunate persons concerned, is it the intention of the Government to grant the request of the petitioners?

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. W. C. Angwin) replied: 1, A petition has been signed by three or four patients on this matter, and several patients have written to the judges of the Supreme Court asking for release. The letters have been sent on in each case, and the judges, after making full inquiry, considered it unnecessary to go any further in the matter. No attempt has been made by the Lunacy authorities to prevent any case being fully investigated by the judges. 2, Yes. 3, Provision already exists under Section 107 of The Lunacy Act. 1903.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Debate resumed from the 11th July.

Mr. TURVEY (Swan): Since the advent of the Labour Government some reforms have been effected in this Chamber which I venture to say meet with the approval, not only of hon. members on this side of the House, and also many members sitting on the Opposition benches, but with the approval of the people of Western Australia, who are advancing with modern times. Though reforms have been effected, and I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your efforts in this particular direction, I believe that further reforms still can be effected, and there is one that I personally, as one who is certainly young in political life, would like to see effected, and that is the curtailment of the speeches on the Address-in-reply. It may be said, perhaps, that I am somewhat inconsistent in advocating the curtailment of these speeches, and at the same time rising to speak in connection therewith, but I would point out that while the custom prevails I have just as much right to avail myself of the opportunity as any member. Further, I believe there are many members sitting on the Opposition benches who still intend to speak on the Address-in-reply; therefore, it is necessary for members on this side of the House also to rise and take up the cudgels on behalf of the Government. I desire to congratulate the leader of the Opposition on the common sense he showed in withdrawing the second amendment to the Address-in-reply after he had seen the hopeless bungle into which he had led his party. But it certainly seems to me that there is a concerted plan of action here and elsewhere in connection with the amendments moved to the Address-in-reply; certainly a most puerile and futile attack, but nevertheless it seems as though it was a premeditated plan of action, not to defeat the Government but certainly to harass them in every possible manner. Therefore, it is necessary that members on this side of the House should take the fullest opportunity in tearing aside the cloak of con-

stitutional authority that members on the opposite side cover themselves with, in a feigned patriotic appeal to the people of Western Australia. And when that cloak is removed what have we? Nothing but cant, humbug, and insincerity. Elsewhere the opening of the session was signalled by acrimonious hostility to the Labour party, no doubt a further part of a plan of action outlined to them by their Lord High Commissioner, Sir John Forrest. If so early in the session we find such partisanship and such hostility displayed towards the democratic measures outlined in his Excellency's Speech, we can realise what hope the Government have during the coming session of having placed on the statute-book of Western Australia the democratic measures which they have been authorised to place there by the people of this State. Is it any wonder that we find, under such circumstances, the people of Western Australia turning to seek justice from the Federal Legislature, when they find that their efforts in this State are thwarted by the Tory element that is dominating elsewhere, and is also represented to a considerable degree by some members sitting opposite? In fact, it has been said that the recent Upper House elections gave the latest mandate from the people of this State. Well, it was the latest mandate certainly; a mandate from the Liberal League, and it has been used by others, but I can only say that the brazen effrontery of individuals who would make such a statement is exceeded only by their asinine stupidity and their emulation of Ananias. The member for Beverley, in the course of his remarks, waxed warm at the very fact that the workers in the rural industries had decided to organise and form a union. He fell into the trap into which I think many of the farmers of Western Australia also have fallen. He evidently assumed that the log prepared by the rural workers' union was already an award of the court. I maintain that the workers in any branch of industry have a right to prepare a log and cite a case before the Arbitration Court, and then to produce evidence to

show that our demands are just and reasonable. The farmers and producers have just the same opportunity to bring evidence to prove that the demands are exorbitant and unreasonable, and the Supreme Court judge has to decide. Surely that is only just, and yet we find some producers saying that the workers in that particular branch of industry have no right to organise. If I remember rightly, the member for Beverley was recently taking a very active part in the formation of a union in the Beverley district, and I believe he had associated with him in his attempt to form that association or union, a prominent official of the Liberal League, and I may say he was an individual whose signature appeared at the end of many cheques circulated in my electorate during the campaign which I fought. I repeat that there can be no sound argument advanced as to why the workers in the rural industries should not organise and form a union. I was pleased to note in His Excellency's Speech that it is the intention of the Government to establish State open markets in the metropolitan area. So far as horticultural products are concerned, the establishment of open markets is urgently required, and I desire to impress upon the Minister for Agriculture, who, I believe, will have charge of that branch, the necessity of considering the desirability, when he is selecting a site, of securing one that will give ample accommodation, and also make ample provision for cold storage and for a railway siding into the market so that it would facilitate the handling of the produce or fruit and also lessen the handling generally to a considerable degree. So far as fruit is concerned I know that these are absolute essentials in connection with any open market, and further I believe when in operation, and the sooner the better, the State open markets will mean better conditions for the fruit-growers to place their produce on that market, and thus the producer, the consumer and the merchants interested in the trade will benefit in connection with the export of fruit. I trust that the Government will, until a State export

department is established, keep a watchful eye over the export of fruit from this State, so that the high reputation that Western Australian fruit has already obtained in the London and Continental markets may be maintained. I may be met with the reply that private enterprise has been able to do this. I agree that that is so, but the methods which have sufficed in the past will not be adequate when we consider the expansion of the horticultural industry which is taking place. We must remember also that a very small quantity of fruit has been exported in past years compared with what is likely to take place in the near future, especially when we take into consideration the rapid increase that is taking place in the industry, and I venture to say that Western Australia will before long outstrip all other States of the Commonwealth in horticulture. We have in various parts of this State some of the finest horticultural land to be found in Australasia, and I might perhaps say, in any part of the world. We are endowed by nature with a perfect climate for horticulture, and in proportion to its population, Western Australia stands second in importance amongst Australian States in fruit production, being excelled in this respect by Tasmania only, and there is every indication that in a very short time we shall hold pride of place. I would urge the Government to give earnest attention to this fast-expanding industry, and particularly is assistance required of the Government in fruit-growing centres in providing better roads for the orchardists. Hon. members will understand that the roads which might be considered passably good in an agricultural district are of little or no use in a fruit-growing centre, because where you might cart wheat and chaff and other products of the farm over the road without injury to those products, it is quite impossible to cart products of the orchard over similar roads where there may be considerable jolting. This would even render it impossible to bring the fruit to the local market in a good condition, let alone take it to the railway for transit to the London and Continental

markets. In conjunction with the export trade it might interest members of the House to know that during the year just ended 1,279 cases of fruit were shipped from this State to Batavia, 1,000 cases of which were grapes; and to Bombay and Colombo there were sent 3,474 cases, mostly grapes, while to Singapore and Sourabaya, 1,887 cases, again chiefly grapes, were sent. To London during the past twelve months the State exported no fewer than 43,614 cases, and to Hamburg 14,951 cases. The bulk of the fruit sent to the latter places consisted of apples. Altogether no fewer than 65,205 cases of fruit were exported during the twelve months just ended. Not many years ago little or no attention was paid to horticulture in Western Australia, and I am of opinion that at no distant date this State will lead all the other States in this branch of rural industry as surely as she will lead them in that greater branch—agriculture. I have previously drawn the attention of members of the House to the suitability of some of our local timbers for the manufacture of fruit cases, and in my advocacy of the use of the timbers in this direction I have met with considerable opposition, and opposition also from fruit-growers, but I would ask the Government to give the matter a fair trial under proper conditions, and if that be done I have not the slightest doubt that our local timbers will be largely used in the manufacture of fruit cases, and further I believe that these cases manufactured with our local timbers can be supplied to the growers at about half the cost that cases are obtained for at the present time. I was pleased recently to note that the suitability of the local timbers was endorsed by Sir Newton Moore, who referred to the matter in his report to the Government in connection with fruit exported to England. Sir Newton Moore stated that the fruit carried better in those cases, and further that the London and Continental buyers favoured them. It is not improbable that the jarrah used in these cases has a commercial value in London and on the Continent, probably as jarrah is rare in those places, and that it has some value as a veneering

wood in small cabinet work, but be this as it may the fact remains the use of local timbers in the manufacture of fruit cases is gaining ground considerably. One of our local orchardists, who is also one of the most practical men in Western Australia, recently assured me that he used no other than cases made of the local timbers provided he could get a sufficient supply. Before concluding my remarks in connection with the fruit industry, I would like to express the hope that every encouragement will be given towards assisting in the establishment of small factories for canning, preserving, and drying fruits. During the past twelve months we imported into this State no less than about £180,000 worth of fruits, jams, and jellies, and I hope the time is not far distant when the State instead of being an importer in this direction, will be an exporter. I desire to commend the work that is being done by our fruit commissioner, Mr. Moody, and his staff, and I trust that the Government will take the earliest opportunity of establishing in connection with one or more of our State farms, experimental orchards for the benefit of the fruit growers, and also devote their attention towards encouraging the establishment of nurseries, because at the present time most of the fruit trees planted in Western Australia are imported from the Eastern States. I believe if the Government gave attention to this matter they could assist considerably. I desire to congratulate the Government on their decision to create a water supply department. This must eventually mean a considerable saving in the cost of administration, and further it must mean a more efficient department. Reference is made in His Excellency's Speech to the wretched water supply in the metropolitan area. I believe the Government will take action. I know that they have already moved in the direction of making provision for a better supply for the metropolis. When this scheme is being considered, however, I would impress upon the Government the importance of hesitating before attempting to draw the metropolitan supply from the present Mundaring reservoir. I do not doubt for one moment that at the present

time there is an ample supply of water there to provide, not only the agricultural areas and goldfields, but also to give the metropolitan area a sufficient supply of pure water, but I believe that a still better supply can be obtained in the Canning Hills district. There is already a small reservoir established there, and my reason for advocating this is that I believe it would be absurd for the Government to, shall I say, put all their eggs in one basket, that is, if they depend upon this one source of supply for the goldfields, the farmers, and the city, they should remember that bigger dams than that at Mundaring have given way before to-day, and one can imagine what a fearful position this State of ours would be placed in, if, after the metropolitan area had been connected with the Mundaring reservoir, any disaster befell that particular reservoir, and left the farmers and the goldfields, who were dependent upon it without water. By the building of another weir at the suggested site at Canning, there would be provided not only a much greater storage of water than we have at the present time in the Mundaring catchment area, but it would also act for a time as a safeguard. I believe that if a reservoir were built at Canning, by linking it with a line of pipes to the Mundaring reservoir, with only one additional pumping station it would be possible to connect the Canning reservoir with the No. 1 pumping station at Mundaring, and if at any time any disaster by the breakage of valves or a breakage in the wall took place at Mundaring, in a very short time the water could be pumped from the Canning reservoir into the dam at the No. 1 pumping station. If anything should befall the Canning reservoir when the metropolitan area was dependent upon it for a water supply, then water could be obtained from Mundaring. This is a feature I hope the Government will take into consideration when they are considering the establishment of a reservoir to supply Perth. Incidentally in speaking of water supply, I would like to remind the Minister for Works, who has charge of this Department, that the settlers in the hills districts, Parkerville, Smith's Mill, Swan View, and Darlington,

places in close proximity to the reservoir and the 30-inch main, though they have been asking for a water supply for years have been denied it, and I would remind the Minister that these people went through very trying times indeed during the past summer, and may I express the hope that before next summer sets in these people will be given that water supply for which they have been so long clamouring. Whilst on the subject of water supply I would like to urge on the Minister for Works the necessity for the abolition of that grossly unfair and iniquitous charge for meter rent. I believe meter rent is abolished in the metropolitan area, but not throughout the State, but the time has arrived when this should be done, and I believe the Minister is sympathetic in this connection. But I think it is simply a case of the Minister looking on the Goldfields Water Supply—and rightly so—as a commercial concern, and he, at the present time, probably cannot see his way to allow this commercial concern to suffer this loss of revenue, still I believe that by the addition of, say, one penny, or even less than that, per thousand gallons, the Minister would be more than compensated by the abolition of meter rents. Just one other word in connection with water supply to which I would like to refer, and that is, to the wages staff in the Goldfields Water Supply Administration. I am aware that for some considerable time there has been discontent among the wages staff of this department. Whilst in almost every other department the workers have been given an advance in wages to meet the increased cost of living, I know that there are men in that particular department who have not received an increase in wages for the past eight, ten, or twelve years, and I hope the Minister will bear this in mind, and at the earliest opportunity give these men the increase to which they are entitled. I do not wish to go over any of the matters that have already occupied the attention of members of this House, but I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without briefly referring to the action of the Government in connection with the purchase of steamers, and I venture to say undoubtedly the people of Western

Australia heartily endorse the Government's action in this direction. I believe the result will mean that in the future the price of meat will be kept at a reasonable and fair price. I do not intend to go into the details in connection with this, or elaborating in any degree, because this matter has been placed before members in a clear and concise manner by the member for Bunbury. Whatever the result may be—and personally I hold no doubt on this score—the present Government are not merely promising, they do noble deeds, not dream them all day long, like the leader of the Opposition and his collaborator, the member for Northam, who admitted to the House that the result of his untiring efforts for a number of months, shall I say years, the net result of his untiring efforts was a letter to the under secretary which he read to this Chamber, showing that he therein hinted at some arrangements about a steamer. Truly the mountain had laboured and brought forth a mouse. That was the net result of the hon. member's efforts for a considerable number of years. The Government have only been in office for a short time and the steamers are here. It is not merely promises. The Government have certainly made promises and intend to fulfil them, and are fulfilling them already. I would advise members on the opposite side to remove from their eyes the scales of jealousy, and help to speed on, shall I say, the chariot of progress and prosperity, and not to sit still and sing, "We will all hang on behind," for so surely as they do they will get that dust in the eyes which was predicted by the member for Pilbara. It is no use decrying the action of the Government in this respect like members opposite, who should wake up from their state of lethargy. Let them shake off the shackles of envy and drop once for all their cry of sinking fish. The smallest actual good is much greater than the most magnificent promises. The Government, as I told members, have made promises, but have fulfilled those promises and done some good. I come now to another proposal of the Government, another of the State trading concerns that is looming on the horizon, and that is the establishment of

State brickworks, and in this connection one can fully appreciate the position in which the Government find themselves in connection with the Workers' Homes scheme. Most members I think are aware of the price of bricks in the market to-day and I have not the slightest doubt that members have interested themselves to such an extent by ascertaining what has been done in the Eastern States in this direction. I believe even the member for Northam expressed the opinion that this venture would prove a success. I do not know whether members in this House have any knowledge of the site of the proposed works, but as one who has been over this particular site—

Mr. George : It is in the wrong place, anyhow.

Mr. TURVEY : Perhaps it is not in the hon. member's electorate.

Mr. George : That is exactly what I meant. It is four or five miles away.

Mr. TURVEY : I believe that in the proposed site we have one of the finest deposits of shale to be obtained in any part of Australia. Already it has been tested to a considerable extent, and the deeper the tests have gone the quality of the shale has improved. Sample bricks have been made with very satisfactory results. Of course, the scheme meets with considerable opposition from members opposite because it is a State concern, but let me say the State brick works of New South Wales have already proved a huge success. They have shown a profit of 80 per cent. I know there are some who will say they should not show that profit, but it is the intention of the Government to extend these works, and the profits that they have been making in the past will be utilised in this direction. Already they are turning out over 500,000 bricks per week, and it has been proved conclusively that they are saving over £1 per thousand, and it is admitted that when the extension I have referred to takes place they will then be able to turn out a million bricks per week, and saving £1 per thousand on that will show a clear profit for the bricks used in the public buildings throughout New South Wales of no less a sum than £1,000 per week. It

will show a saving of that to the State of New South Wales, and when that is the case we can fully understand what a saving it will mean to Western Australia, and particularly as it is the intention of the Government to proceed with their scheme for the establishment of Workers' Homes. I come now to the important subject of education. I desire to offer a few brief remarks in connection with this subject, retaining much for some opportune time. Considerable attention, we are told in His Excellency's Speech, has been given to the important subject of education. I venture to say that much more remains to be done. I do not want to disparage for a moment the good work that the Minister for Education has already done, but I do wish to say that I believe the salaries of both teachers and inspectors in our Education Department are altogether incommensurate with the important work entrusted to their care, and I hope the Minister for Education will tackle seriously the problem of agricultural education, and that every assistance will be given to encourage its extension in our schools and also by the establishment of agricultural high schools at our State farms. The establishment of these schools at the State farms will be materially assisted by the Wheat Belt Commissioner. That gentleman is an enthusiast in connection with experimental work in agriculture, and I believe that his services in the agricultural high schools to be established at the State farms will be of material benefit to the State. The Education Department of Western Australia may well feel proud of one part of its system. I refer now to the school saving banks that are known as the penny savings banks. These institutions have been established in connection with all schools in order to encourage thrift amongst the children. Already 12,000 children in Western Australia are receiving, very early in life, every encouragement to be thrifty and not to be spendthrifts. The amount now owned by the scholars through saving their pennies is no less a sum than £10,000 which stands to the credit of the school children of Western Australia. The De-

partment may well feel proud of what has been done in this direction. Now, I believe that every hon. member will be glad when the day comes that we find our primary schools linked up, not only with the secondary schools, but with the university. I believe that all of us will be pleased to expedite in every possible manner the time when we shall have free State primary education, free State secondary education, and a free State university. In connection with the secondary schools, reference has been made in this House to one secondary school in the State, the High School. Personally, I have no fault to find with the High School or with its methods, but I can see no earthly reason why that institution should be considered as a separate school, if, as we are told, it is a private institution. If such be the case, then I say by all means let us have it as a State secondary school. It is subsidised by the Government, I understand, to the extent of £1,000 per annum, and, if it cannot be taken over by the State and made a State secondary school, then I can see no reason why other secondary schools in Western Australia should not also participate in the State aid, and receive £1,000 per annum each. Reference has been made in the Speech to certain railway proposals, but I regret to note that one important line, one which the Railway Advisory Board some time ago furnished a most favourable report, is evidently—shall I say, inadvertently—omitted from the list. I refer to the Armadale-Brookton line. A most favourable report, indeed, was furnished by the board on that particular proposal, and I express the hope that, in His Excellency's next Speech, we will see on the top of the list that most worthy project.

The Premier: The route of the Transcontinental railway will have to be fixed before we can decide that.

Mr. TURVEY: I take it, then, the people may realise that it is not altogether improbable that the Transcontinental railway will traverse that route. We are informed in the Speech that legislation will be introduced for the amelioration of our social conditions, and I would

appeal to hon. members sitting opposite to give all the assistance they possibly can to the Government in this direction. They owe a duty to the community to assist the Government in framing laws that are in conformity with the age in which they live. Many of our industrial laws are obsolete; certainly they are not advancing with the times. There is a universal change in society. Mental habits are being acquired by the people, and the education of the masses has caused them to think for themselves. The workers throughout the world are breaking the fetters that have kept them in bondage for so long, and to-day they are asking for what is their own. Other who are the drones and parasites will be relegated to receive their due also. In the past, those who produced the least received the most, and those who produced the most received the least. They have been forced to work under bad conditions of employment, to be poorly housed and poorly fed, and wherever we find those conditions we find poverty. Wherever poverty exists, disease, vice, and crime generally are rampant. The workers of the world to-day are asking for their own. Now, in conclusion, I would ask those hon. members opposite who, perhaps, cannot see eye to eye with the whole policy of the Government that, when these democratic measures are placed before the House for the amelioration of the social conditions of this State, they will do their best to see that justice is done to that particular section of the community.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies): In rising to speak on the Address-in-reply, I desire, at the outset, to endorse the remarks of the member for Swan in complimenting you, Mr. Speaker, on the reforms you have instituted in the mode of procedure in this House; more particularly do I endorse the remarks of that hon. member in regard to the necessity for some curtailment of the length of this Address-in-reply. I, like the member for Swan, am new to political life, and the only reason I can see to justify this practice is that members are treated in the same manner as a horse that has been out of harness and comes back to work in good spirits.

It is desirable to put the animal on the open road so that, if it does kick over the traces, it cannot do much harm. It may be that members returning after recess feel an excess of animal spirits, and perhaps it is as well to allow them to have the open road, so that they can kick up a bit, as they appear to do in this Address-in-reply debate. Still, I think it would be well if the length of the Address-in-reply could be reduced somewhat, and thus save some of the time which seems to me to be wasted under the present system. I also desire to congratulate the members of the Ministry upon the manner in which each and every one of them have adapted themselves to their work and obtained a thorough grasp of the different departments under their administration. The replies by the Ministers who have so far spoken to the no-confidence motion moved by the leader of the Opposition show that they have, in the short time they have been in office, obtained a good grip of the administration of their departments. I also cannot help feeling a certain amount of sympathy for some hon. members on the Opposition side on account of the position in which they have been placed by their leader. As hon. members are aware, during recess that hon. gentleman has been going about the State and addressing great Liberal rallies—sometimes I believe he has addressed an audience to the number of 13—pointing out the sins of the Scaddan Ministry, how their administration of the Lands Department was causing ruin to the State, and how their lack of financial knowledge was also going to place the State ship in troubled waters. Further, he was also charging the Labour party with having failed to fulfil the promises made during the elections in October that they were going to do something, if possible, to reduce the cost of living, and more particularly the price of meat. But immediately it is announced by the Ministry that they have taken one step, and a most decisive step, in the purchase of steamers to put on the north-west trade, we find the leader of the Opposition making a complete change of front, and saying that the action of the Government

is unconstitutional. After leading his party and a section of the public to believe that, when the House met, he would be able to make such charges against the Administration at present in power that the people would revolt against such actions being taken, we find that when he faced the Premier and the other Ministers his attack, to say the least of it, was weak indeed. I think that any old politicians would say that they had never known such a weak case made the basis of a no-confidence motion in the Parliament of Western Australia as the leader of the Opposition put up here a few nights ago, and after the reply that has been given by Ministers I am satisfied that the people generally will be of the same opinion. We find that even the official organs of the Opposition are now blaming the leader of the Opposition for having wasted the time of this House in discussing such a motion which had no possibility of succeeding, and they have pointed out the weakness of the case which that gentleman placed before the House. He appears now to be in the position of a man who arrives in town with a great reputation as a fighter. For some time after his arrival, he has great difficulty in finding anybody who will enter into an argument with him, and everything he says is accepted as right. The leader of the Opposition has claimed to be a great financier and a great political tactician, and to be able to put his finger on the financial pulse of the world. He said at these great Liberal rallies, "these men in power know nothing about finance, and how can they be expected to manage the affairs of State?" And he led the people to believe that, when he came before the House, his charges would be proved as correct. But when he meets the Premier his reputation is shattered. He is like the man with the reputation as a fighter. Once he finds anybody courageous enough to enter into an argument with him, he is worsted, and I venture to say that the man with the least financial knowledge in political life would now be pleased to cross swords with that gentleman. It was almost pathetic to see the look of disappointment on the faces of members

on his own side when they realised that the great charge to be hurled against the present Administration was all over, and was so painfully weak. In regard to the purchase of the steamships for the North-West for the meat trade, the leader of the Opposition has repeatedly asked almost every member who has spoken in support of the purchase of these steamers how it was going to benefit the consumer. Now, it appears to me, once we admit the existence of a meat ring—and I think that there are few indeed in the State who will deny its existence in Western Australia—we must admit also the meat ring does not miss any link, first the grower in the North-West, then the shipping companies and the auctioneers, down to the retail butchers. Many of them are interested in the ring; not all—I quite understand that. I believe I have said "auctioneers." Well, even if they are interested in the ring, it would be a very small interest indeed, and we can leave them out. Perhaps it would rather be rather offensive to the member for West Perth, though I am sure he is not connected with the ring. Supposing we leave out the auctioneers, we have the large growers, the steamship companies, and the retail and wholesale butchers interested in this ring. If we admit this fact it does not matter to the large butchering firms what price is paid, or what price they appear to pay, for the stock in the Fremantle market; because it is merely a paper transaction; they are really buying from themselves. On the other hand, if a small man, or one outside the ring, is desirous of entering into the butchering trade in Perth, he has to pay that amount in cash when he goes to purchase his cattle. This is where it makes a difference. If we admit the existence of a ring, while they can show on paper that they are carrying on their retailing butchering business at a loss, if they are so disposed, they are at the same time only buying their own cattle in the market at Fremantle; and they can show any price at all; it is merely a paper transaction, and really does not affect them. When they come to retail the meat, if they follow their books right through on this basis, on what they pay in the Fremantle market, they appear to be retailing at a loss. The

outsider, however, who is cutting into the trade, has to pay these charges, and he is on a very different footing indeed. That is one way in which it can be shown that it is going to benefit the consumers, if the State steamships are successful, which I believe they will be, in allowing the small grower in the North-West, the man not connected with the meat ring, to have facilities to get his stock to the Fremantle market. That is all that is necessary to bring about a considerable reduction in the price of meat to the consumer in the metropolitan area. Then also I have heard the leader of the Opposition say in the House, and he has been reported on several occasions to have said, that stagnation exists in the Lands Department, and that we can go there and find four or five clerks who have nothing to do, though we find from the figures presented by the Minister for Lands that land settlement is undoubtedly going on. Someone in the House, I think it was the member for Forrest, suggested that if it was the case, that there appeared to be nothing going on in the Lands Department, it showed there was better administration, and that the officers were carrying out their work on better business lines. That may be the case, but another solution of it appears to me to be this: the Minister for Lands has shown us how he has endeavoured to stop these illegal transfers of land. Undoubtedly many of the St. George's-terrace farmers, who have been making a living in the past out of land transactions, have found their occupation gone, and they are not thronging the corridors of the department as they used to do formerly, and the clerks are not running around getting information for them instead of for the man who is really desirous of going on the land, and selecting for himself. I was struck by one remark made by the member for Beverley (Mr. Brown) in regard to the platform of the Rural Workers' Union. The hon. member stated he was pleased that the efforts of the organiser through his district to form this union had failed, and that there were few indeed of the agricultural labourers who had joined the union. Yet a moment or two afterwards the hon. member said that the farmers

and settlers are going to fight for their rights. And undoubtedly they are; I give them every credit for doing so; but surely, while the member for Beverley is busy in forming an association to fight for the rights of the class to which he belongs, the farmers and settlers, he will not deny to the rural or agricultural labourer the same right to combine to look after his rights as an employee? That is all the formation of a rural workers' union means, and I am sure when the member for Beverley looks at it from that light he will not again say that he is pleased that these men have failed to form a union. Surely a powerful organisation such as the Farmers' and Settlers' Association does not want to fight these men disunited and have them cut up in detail. They are not afraid of the strength of the Rural Workers' Union when they take the opportunity to combine themselves. It appears to me a sorry state of affairs when we see one of the paramount industries of the State, the agricultural industry, claiming it cannot pay anything like a fair rate of wages, or give a fair set of working conditions to the men employed in it. It has been the history of organised labour throughout the world that where good wages are paid and fair conditions exist, the labour is more productive, and material is produced at a lesser cost than where lower wages and bad working conditions exist. If that is the case—and I believe it is—it is not at all to be wondered at, because on the very face of it, we must recognise that an industry that pays good wages and gives fair conditions is going to attract the very best labour; and without a doubt the wages and conditions in the agricultural industry for workers on the farms is not such that would attract the best class of labour to the State. I would like members of the Opposition interested in farming matters to look at the matter in this way. They are really standing in their own light. The member for Beverley said that many of the men employed were breaking valuable machinery through incompetency. How can the farmers expect anything else when the only class of labour they get is that which cannot find employment anywhere else and which, in the last resource,

must go to the farming areas "to work," as it is termed, "for the cocky." I believe those engaged in the industry are really standing in their own light in this matter. The member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) was very fearful that the State, in embarking on these different enterprises, was going to interfere with private-enterprise people who were putting capital into various industries in the State. I think the State has a counter claim in some of the industries for the treatment it has received from private-enterprise people who have gone into various industries in the State. I refer more particularly to the mining industry. In the early nineties the discovery of the Eastern Goldfields attracted population from the different States of Australia, and from all over the civilised world; and one can quite realise the great impetus the discovery of the goldfields gave to the State of Western Australia; but in many instances, I claim, private companies, who developed, or partly developed some of the claims in this State, have not acted fairly in their transactions and dealings with the State. I must give credit, and I think most people will, to the Administration of the day in the early nineties for the prompt manner in which they constructed railways into the interior and provided water supplies to permit private-enterprise people to exploit the golden wealth in the goldfields areas; but I claim they have not been met in a fair spirit in many instances. I have a few figures relating to the gold production of some of the mines immediately north of Kalgoorlie, most of them being situated in the Menzies electorate. The Paddington Consols, 30 miles north of Kalgoorlie, has crushed 133,000 tons of ore for 60,000 fine ounces. The mine is now abandoned, and the greatest depth reached on this mine was 600 feet. A little further on, at Bardoe, there is the Zoroastrian. This mine treated 70,393 tons for 49,494 fine ounces of gold, but is also abandoned, and the greatest depth reached is something over 400 feet. There is also the Golden Pole at Davyhurst. The member for Pingelly was at one time managing this mine, and I know he has stated, and, I believe, correctly, that it paid over 400 per cent.

upon the capital that was put into it. It has crushed 74,500 tons for 71,961 ounces. It is also abandoned at a depth of about 700 feet vertical. The Westralia Waihi at Davyhurst has crushed 46,279 tons for 19,700 ounces. This also is practically abandoned at a depth of 600 feet. I think I am correct in saying that there is no producing mine in Australia to-day, payable at a depth of 1,000 or over, that has been continuously payable from the surface down to a depth of 1,000 feet. In almost every instance in gold mining in Australia poor zones have been met with at different levels, but the mines payable below that depth have kept on with their development work and have gone through the poor zones to get payable values at greater depths. Yet we find these mines, which took a great amount of money out of the districts I have referred to, did not give the propositions a fair mining chance; and now the State is in the position that it has spent a great amount of money in providing water services, railway communication, public offices, and all the different conveniences the State provides to try to assist these people to carry on the industry; but I claim the companies have not, and the figures I have quoted support me in claiming that they have not, given the State a fair go in the mining industry at any rate of Western Australia. Another instance, and one of the most glaring of the lot, is the Queensland Menzies at Menzies. The mine has crushed 50,321 tons for 76,928 ounces, but is also abandoned at a depth of 600 feet. I have here a clipping from a report of the inspector of mines for this district, which bears upon this matter. It reads—

The Queensland Menzies mine has done very little work during the year. This is a remarkable mine, after having paid between £80,000 and £100,000 in dividends that it should be to-day lying almost idle. The shoot of values which paid these large dividends pitched diagonally through the entire lease, and was mined to within 10ft. of the boundary, where displacement occurred, the boundary being so near to the Nada lease, belonging to another company, that they stopped further prospecting

for this splendid ore shoot. It is the opinion of several competent miners that this shoot could be again located.

This company were forced to abandon their mine owing to the injustice imposed by the working of the concentration of labour sections of the Act. However, I will deal with that phase of the question later on. The Lady Shenton, Menzies, crushed 96,611 tons of ore for a return of 132,656 ounces; the Alpha lease, immediately adjoining, has crushed 18,807 tons for 16,330 ounces, and the Lady Florence has crushed 7,813 tons for 5,690 ounces. These three leases, which have worked the one continuous ore-shoot, thus give a total of 123,231 tons crushed for an aggregate return of 154,676 ounces of fine gold. Yet we find that mines which have produced this amount of gold are practically abandoned at a depth of 700 feet. In this case I know that the directors decided upon closing down very much against the advice of the manager, and this too, with £30,000 in hand and a well-equipped plant on the surface. The show was closed down without having been given a fair mining chance of proving whether good values would not again come into the reef. Another striking example is furnished in the Cosmopolitan at Kookynie, 13 or 14 miles north of Menzies. A few years ago Kookynie was one of the most prosperous townships on the goldfields, yet to-day it is practically deserted. The principal mine in the district, the Cosmopolitan, has crushed 543,686 tons for a return of 264,206 ounces of fine gold. The Cosmopolitan mine was working well and paying fair dividends until it came into the hands of a well-known firm of mining engineers, who control many properties in the State. Men in the district to-day will tell you that immediately upon this firm assuming control they increased the battery power from 20 to 50 head, and proportionately increased the tonnage of ore treated; but, unfortunately, it was not done by taking out the really payable ore. Men who were employed on the work are prepared to state that the filling which had been put into the stopes, mullock which should

never have been crushed, was taken out and sent through the battery to keep it going. Moreover, a huge dump of many thousands of tons of mullock was deliberately trucked down into the faces, trucked along the levels to the shaft, and brought up and put through the battery; and so, through management such as this, we find the mine abandoned to-day. Immediately after the company ceased operations they let many tribute parties into the mine. These men were making really good wages, some of them from £10 to £20 per week, but the company allowed the water to rise in the mine, and the men had to go away, leaving 2-ounce stone flooded by the water. This is another instance in which private enterprise in the mining industry has not given the State a fair return for the efforts the State has made to help them develop the mines. It is sometimes said that values will go out in all these districts at a comparatively shallow depth. This has been the opinion in the past, but there is at least one mine which has proved the contrary; I refer to the Menzies Consolidated. This mine has been working continuously for the last 16 or 17 years, employing an average of from 100 to 150 men. They have had poor zones to go through; in fact there have been times when the different working faces in this mine were no more promising than those in some of the mines abandoned to-day. But the management kept on working on a different principle. They went through the poor-looking places, and to-day, at 1,200 feet from the surface, this reef is as large and carries as good values as at any previous time in the history of the mine, and the mine is still employing between 100 and 150 men, thus showing that where a company has persevered the gold has continued to go down. I referred just now to the concentrating sections of the Mining Act. Under the Act a company employing a certain amount of labour on one lease can get concentration of that labour, or amalgamation as it is sometimes termed, and so take the average of the men working on the whole of their leases. That is to say, suppose a company had a lease here in this Chamber,

and another situated in the Perth Town Hall. Of these two leases they are working only one, but as a result of their employing more labour on the one lease than is demanded, they secure concentration of labour. And in some instances, through the working of these sections, we have companies holding 200 or 300 acres of land, all the labour being concentrated at one spot. This Queensland Menzies Company was a glaring instance, showing how the concentration sections of the Act work against the true interests of the mining industry. Another company held the adjoining mine, the Nada lease it was called. The Queensland Menzies people worked a shoot of ore through their own lease and at about 600 feet the shoot was found to be going out into the Nada lease. They entered into negotiations with the Nada people to secure the ground to follow up the shoot, but they could not come to terms and, unfortunately, a displacement occurred 10 feet from the Nada boundary. This is not the first displacement that has occurred in the Queensland Menzies property. Sometimes a reef of gold-bearing ore may shift a few feet one side or the other, and this is what occurred there. However, they could not come to terms with the Nada Company to follow the ore shoot, and consequently the Queensland Menzies people transferred their plant to another locality. While the machinery was being removed, the manager said to me that if he had control of the Nada ground this machinery would not have been dismantled. The position to-day is that the Nada lease is abandoned, and anybody could take it up, but unfortunately it would cost thousands to put the Queensland Menzies mine into the same condition as it was when first abandoned on the ore shoot escaping into the next property. I want the Minister for Mines to look carefully into this phase of mining, for I know from experience that it is high time some action was taken in this regard. Another State enterprise we have is the public battery system. Many years ago the system was started by a previous Administration, and it has done a great deal of good indeed for the mining community, but, unfortunately, for

various reasons this industry has of late years fallen off considerably. I know the present Minister for Mines must find it a very difficult department to control; that is, if he is being asked to show any good results from the system; because, during the last six or seven years, there has been noticed amongst those of the prospectors who have a few hundred pounds capital, a marked tendency to forsake prospecting on the goldfields and transfer their labour and their capital to the agricultural areas. I am not making any complaint about that. I believe that perhaps it is in the best interests of the State that these men should have done so. But it is impossible for them to be in two places at once, and the drain made upon the State's resources, both in men and money, to develop the agricultural areas, is in my opinion responsible to a great extent for the falling off in the returns from the public batteries. One day last week we had some new regulations designed to assist those still battling on the goldfields. Among them is a regulation relating to low-grade ore, and making a special concession in respect to ore crushed of a value of six weights or under. Whilst I appreciate this attempt to assist the men working in the industry, I think the term "6 weights bullion" is not quite definite enough. In many cases gold won from the battery, whether private or State, is not worth more than £2 15s.; sometimes it is as low in value as £2 10s., while very often indeed it is not worth more than £3 per ounce, whereas in other cases more fortunate prospectors, having a show where gold values are good, secure gold of a value of 4s. a weight. On the wording of this new regulation the concession is to be given to ore of a value of six weights or less. I think the regulation would give better satisfaction if it referred to a money value. If the Minister thinks it is advisable to give a concession in the case of ore containing gold to the extent of six weights or less, I think it would be much better to make it, say, 24s. per ton, to use the money value instead of the amount of bullion; because it is very unsatisfactory for one man to get the benefit of this concession on six

weight dirt worth perhaps 24s., while another man might have seven weight dirt, which is worth only 20s., notwithstanding which he would not be able to take advantage of the concession. This matter should be looked into, and I trust the Minister will do so. In passing, I must compliment the Minister for having, immediately upon assuming office, gone into the question and found that it was possible to pay prospectors for their sands upon agreement of assay. This is a boon that prospectors have long looked for but were unable to get until the present Minister for Mines took charge of the department. I give him credit for having done this, and I know that throughout the goldfields his action has been much appreciated. Another regulation which I think should be altered is that which provides that all ore over two ounces per ton shall pay an extra 5 per cent. crushing charge. The same argument which I used with regard to the six pennyweights proposition applies here. A man who handles two-ounce ore might not be doing so well as a man who handles nine or ten pennyweight ore, for the reason that the high-grade ore is difficult to get. Sometimes it has to be carted a long distance, and usually it is found in small veins. A man sometimes works six or even twelve months, and he gets only a proportionately small return in cash although he has had a two-ounce crushing. It looks very well on paper, but that is all. This regulation should not apply to ore going over two ounces and the man handling it should not be asked to pay the extra 5 per cent. Another aspect of the mining industry which I believe will occupy a good deal of attention and will be of benefit to the State, is the system of tributing. Members will agree it is feasible that, where these large mines have been worked down to a great depth, there are often small veins on some of the leases which are altogether distinct from the main body of ore which the company have worked. Tributers are always willing to work these small veins if they can get there on fair and reasonable terms from the

companies. I was pleased to notice in the session before last that amendments were made to the Tributers Act so that the tributer should get £3 per week before any tribute percentage could be collected. That is a good thing, but I would be prepared to go further and say that the arbitration rate of wages ruling in that district should be the amount. That would be fair all round. Some might say that the mine owner would not have a fair chance and would not get anything. I say that where a man is willing to let on tribute, it is fair evidence that he does not wish to work it or that he considers it would not be payable to work on wages. If a man risks his labour on the chance of getting nothing, no percentage should be paid until the full arbitration rate of wages is earned. For anything above that sum the owner should be paid because he has probably put down shafts and levels and perhaps has opened up the mine to a certain extent, and when gold is obtained he is deserving of some recompense. I say, however, that no percentage should be paid until the full arbitration rate of wages has been earned by the members of the tribute party. Turning to the industrial side of mining, there is a great controversy among members of the miners' unions and the mining community generally as to the advisability, or otherwise, of continuing the contract system in mines. I believe our contract system is one of the worst ever instituted in any mining community in the world. I believe that the contract system, or so-called contract system as it exists to-day, is as near an approach to sweating as we can get. It brings out the worst side of human nature, both in the employer and employee, and I believe the employee often requires to be protected against himself as much as he does against his employer. Take a party of strong young men, who are competent miners, and who want to make a little more than the ruling rate of wages. They will take risks and go into places which they know perfectly well are not altogether safe. They will go into places before the fumes have dispersed, and they swallow more

dust than they otherwise would, and the result of such practices is to be seen in the Coolgardie sanatorium to-day. On the other hand an employer, having let this work on contract, feels that he is not bound to see that the men are working under safe conditions. The shift boss might go around, but his only concern is to see that the battery is kept going. If the contract system were abolished, it would be the duty of the shift boss to see that the work is carried on properly. He would go around and see the miners once or twice every shift. If there is dangerous ground, he knows it is to his advantage to take no risks. Under the contract system, however, there is a sort of divided responsibility, and the shift boss does not like to interfere with the men or to prevent them from getting on as fast as they can. A man might see that the working faces are kept safe, but further behind the ground might not be safe, and it is nobody's business to see that these places are properly looked after. I believe that more than 50 per cent. of the accidents which have occurred on the Boulder mines through falls of ground occurred in the circumstances I have mentioned. If the contract system were abolished, better supervision could be maintained and the mines would be worked on safer lines than they are at present. I have conversed with many mining managers on this matter, and they invariably have said that men working on wages will not give the same satisfaction as they used to do some years ago. There may be something in this contention, and it is only natural to suppose that that is the case. If a mine is carrying on work on contract system and a change is made to the wage system, a large number of the men employed would find that the ordinary arbitration wages would not come up to what they have been used to making under the contract system. I admit that under the contract system the men often make more than the arbitration wages. On the other hand, there is also the tendency to let work on contract on the ground that it would not be advisable to show too good results, and

while the contract system continues this tendency will exist. If the contract system is abolished and the men know that they cannot get work under contract, we will find that the great majority will be willing to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. From my mining knowledge, and it is fairly extensive, I believe that the sooner the contract system is abolished the better it will be for all concerned. Another matter to which prominence is being given is that of working night shifts. Some little time ago a commission were appointed to inquire into the subject of miner's phthisis, the prevalence of tuberculosis, miners' diseases, and complaints to which miners are subject. I believe that one practical method of bettering the health of miners is to do away with night shifts. Perhaps some members have not worked in the mines and do not know anything about the conditions of the industry. I ask those members to picture the position. This Chamber is larger, and has more air space, and is better ventilated than the ordinary mine underground; and yet into the same space we have 200 or 300 men working continuously from Sunday night till Saturday night. Each man carries a candle and we may be sure the candles are not of the best quality, and do not improve the quality of the air in the mine. Constant explosions are taking place; high grade explosives are used, and it has been found impossible to make a satisfactory explosion without giving off fumes which are destructive to the health of anyone who inhales them. From Sunday at midnight until the following Saturday at midnight the continuous round of work goes on. The men are going into this atmosphere night after night and day after day, and there is no chance of the mine getting a blow out except on the one day in the week. In addition to this we find that the men very often have to take what rest they can get during the day while the temperature is over 100 in the shade. How can a man sleep and be fit to go to work at 12 o'clock at night under such conditions? Can he be in a proper physical condition to give satisfaction to his employers under such conditions? Tuberculosis and kindred chest

and lung diseases are more liable to attack people whose physical condition is low, and I contend that one of the reasons why lung diseases are so prevalent among the mining community is traceable to night working. I believe the House would be justified in endeavouring to abolish the system of working underground the whole twenty-four hours round, and make provision that so many hours must be allowed to elapse to give the fumes a chance to disperse from the mine. I think the member for Leonora, while speaking last week, claimed that the mining industry was still paramount, although the agricultural industry was making great strides. I do not feel very much concerned whether the mining industry or the agricultural industry takes the leading position, providing that the gold yield does not diminish, but that it is due to the continued expansion of agricultural development. If in this way the mining industry is forced to take second place among the industries of this State, I will not complain. I believe that if the present Administration have a chance to carry on as they are doing, the mining and agricultural industries will continue to make great strides and thus we will be doing something to assist Western Australia to take and retain a leading position among the States of the Commonwealth.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier): Although the debate, so far as it has progressed, has called forth very little criticism regarding either of the departments under my control, I, nevertheless, desire to give the House some information concerning the work which has been accomplished during the year, more particularly with regard to the Mines Department. Exception has been taken by a member of the Council, who was also a member of the late Government, to a somewhat innocent paragraph in the Governor's Speech which states that, during the year, new fields have been opened up at Ora Banda and Mount Jackson. That hon. member declared that it was news to him to hear that these fields had

been discovered. I regret that he is not able to understand a paragraph written in plain English, because there is a very great difference between the opening up of a new field and discovering it. The hon. member stated that Ora Banda and Mount Jackson had been discovered prior to the early days of Kalgoorlie, and that his old colleague, the late Minister for Mines, had been nursing Ora Banda for the past ten years. I can only say that, as a result of that ten years' nursing, the infant was until lately still unable to walk, and per medium of the Redistribution of Seats Bill, it was fathered on to the innocent member for Coolgardie. I do not believe there is a mining district in this State towards which so much neglect and want of sympathy and consideration has been shown during the past two or three years, as Ora Banda; as a result of which the progress of a live and prosperous field has been retarded. For a period of at least two years, residents there had unavailingly urged upon the late Minister for Mines to give them what is of all importance to a mining field—an adequate water supply, and I can say on the other hand, that I do not believe there is any district in this State that has been dealt with more expeditiously than this field during the past five or six months, and where greater success promises to result. What is the history of Ora Banda? As stated, I visited that district during the recess, and it has been said by one of my critics who also represents a mining constituency that he has been disappointed at the want of assistance given to the goldfields. Whilst that may be excusable in an ordinary citizen, it is wholly unfair and inexcusable on the part of a public man, more particularly when the district concerned happens to be a promising centre in his own constituency. This is a clipping taken from a newspaper some time after my visit to the district, and just to show how incorrect his statement is, I will read what the people of Ora Banda think of the present Government—

Just now we cannot but come to the conclusion that although Mr. Collier has not given us all that we asked for, he has at least shown his sympathy by

giving what we asked for in many cases, and in every case has done the best he can under the circumstances. The geological party arrived to-day under the charge of Mr. Jephson and will commence work next week. In the meantime some work is being done at Black Flag. A grant of £100 has been made for improvements to the main road to Broad Arrow and another £100 towards forming the main street at Gimlet and the track to the Government tank; then £500 is available for the construction of an ambulance ward; £50 has been granted for improvements to the cycle and motor track and a sum will be placed on the Estimates for the recreation reserve. The much needed school will be opened in a few days in one of the local halls pending the removal of the school from Ora Banda.

It will, therefore, be seen that all the adjuncts of civilisation, and the necessary conveniences which were required in order to enable people to live in the outback districts have been provided during the past six or seven months by the present Government, and turning to the other district the same thing may be said. Although Mount Jackson is one of the earliest mining districts in Western Australia and was worked even prior to the discovery of gold in Kalgoorlie, I say, notwithstanding that, I have been responsible for rediscovering that field. During the period of the Bullfinch boom many prospectors went out there, and when I took office, I found that no crushing facilities had been provided; neither were they contemplated by the Mines Department, and in the beginning of January, 1912, the Superintendent of Batteries was sent to the district to report on it. As a result of that officer's investigations, a battery was leased, and improvements effected to it to the extent of some £1,150, and early last month a crushing of 250 tons was treated at this mill, and it yielded 1,200 ounces. So that in one of the oldest fields in the State, the action taken after I assumed office, was responsible for re-discovering the district, and adding another producer to the gold-fields already existing in Western Australia. I might contrast that action with

what has taken place at Mt. Egerton, a new district in the Peak Hill goldfield. In October, 1910, the Assistant Government Geologist made the recommendation to the then Minister for Mines—

The Government might take the risk of erecting a 5-head mill, with a gas engine to drive 10-head; there was no fear but that the plant could run two years from shows now held, whilst the possibilities of the place were considerable.

That was in October 1910. But the then Minister, with his usual policy of procrastination and delay, wanted more information. A report was called for as to the suitability of a Hólman mill for that district, and that helped to fritter away three or four additional months. When that was reported on as being unsuitable, it was suggested that the mill at Nannine should be removed to Mt. Egerton, and subsequently, on the 11th September, 1911, tenders were called for the erection of the new plant, exactly twelve months after it had been recommended by the Government Geologist. That mill will start crushing within the next week or two, and I believe that we shall then have added another prosperous mining district to the others of Western Australia. But that would have been the case twelve months before, if reasonable expedition had been shown in the granting of crushing facilities to the district. I can turn again to Payne's Find, and I do not know whether it was because of feeling arising out of party politics, but I find that a new mill had been practically approved, when the late Minister for Mines gave instructions to delay the erection of it until I had decided whether it should be erected from loan money or from revenue. I am pleased to say that directly after my taking office last October the erection of the plant was approved, and early last month the first crushing put through. One of the difficulties I had to contend with was the fact that many of our plants were obsolete. It has been found impossible to give satisfaction to prospectors or to keep down crushing charges whilst many of the mills are totally inadequate for the work required of them. It has been the policy of the

Department in the past to buy the nearest second-hand mill to the site where it was proposed to erect it. At Meekatharra, although they had a 10-head battery there, prospectors were practically driven to Day Dawn, finding it cheaper to carry their ore to Day Dawn and have it crushed at a private battery. After going into the matter, I decided that the only remedy for that state of affairs was the erection of a new plant, and that has been ordered and is now being put together. Exactly the same thing prevailed at Mt. Ida, one of the best little districts in the back country, which has yielded a large amount of gold for many years past. The plant there was obsolete, and I have decided to erect a new battery on that field. At the beginning of the year, in order that the North-West should not be neglected, I decided to send one of the Government Geologists there, and he has, during the past four months, travelled through practically the Pilbara goldfields, and is now about to return to Perth. The result of his visit is that, after forwarding me a report from Bamboo Creek, while he was in that district, I have decided that a new battery shall be erected there, and steps are being taken to have that done at the earliest possible moment. I can point to another new field, Mt. Keith, situated 30 miles from Mt. Sir Samuel. The matter of crushing facilities was only brought under my notice during my visit to the back country three months ago. A geologist was immediately despatched to report on the place, as well as the inspector of mines, and last week I had the pleasure of approving of the erection of a new battery. Thus, it will be seen that there are five new batteries approved, or in course of erection at the present time, in the State, and this is more than has ever been done in the previous history of mining in Western Australia, and yet, notwithstanding this fact, we have ill-informed critics who will not even take the trouble to read the daily papers, because, if they did, they would find that the statements they had made were incorrect. Those critics declared that nothing had been done to assist the mining

industry. In addition crushing facilities have been provided for at many private mills. In that new district, 50 miles to south-west of Southern Cross called Westons, arrangements have been made with a private company to provide crushing facilities for all the prospectors there and the battery has been at work on that field for about five months and a considerable amount of stone has been crushed with satisfactory results. Again at Marvel Loch, where my predecessor had been subsidising an obsolete mill, which brought forward more condemnation from the prospectors than any other battery in the State, I have now, by granting a subsidy of £1,000 arranged for the erection of a new battery, which will be completed next week, and I believe, according to the terms of the contract, crushing will be carried out there much cheaper than at any other mill in the State. Again, in Ravelston, in the Peak Hill district, similar assistance has been given. The member for Murchison will know as the result of my action in forfeiting a number of leases which have been locked up, there are now 25 or 30 prospectors at work there.

Mr. Holman: They have taken up every lease.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The old Peak Hill leases had been held without a man in the district, but there are now thirty-five prospectors at work, and it is my intention to spend £1,500 in putting that battery in order. Further, I have decided on remodelling and overhauling the whole of the old plants. I have had a report prepared by the new Superintendent of State batteries showing the repairs and improvements required by the old batteries, because many of the old ones are sadly in disrepair, and I have approved of an expenditure of £8,000 for overhauling and remodelling these plants. Does that bear out the statement that absolutely nothing has been done for the mining industry? I say that not for very many years past has so much work been done in regard to assistance to the prospectors on the various mining fields. Shortly after taking office I found that one of the most serious complaints by the

customers of our State mills was that they were unable to obtain payment for tailings for at least two months after the completion of assay. I have now made an arrangement with the Treasurer whereby for the past eight months I have been able to pay the prospectors within fourteen days of the assay. That is a great assistance in the backblocks where men have been struggling along on a low-grade show, for they will now be able to obtain the money a fortnight after assaying, whereas formerly they were waiting sometimes two months.

Mr. Foley: Four months sometimes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Two months was the minimum. Further than that I have agreed to make a special rebate on low-grade ores, realising that the only means of giving cheaper crushing facilities to the public is to increase the tonnage crushed at the State batteries, because, after all, I have found that the great difficulty with our battery system is that the batteries to-day are only crushing up to one-third of their total capacity. After going into the matter, I decided to make a rebate of 2s. per ton or 1s. per hour, on all parcels of low-grade ore under 6dwts. in value up to 1,000 tons in extent, not necessarily from one lease, but from any number of leases and any number of crushings.

Mr. Holman: You have put too low a value on it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member will recognise that it is all a question of how far the State is prepared to lose money on these transactions. The Government battery system must be treated as a whole, and unfortunately we are losing a lot of money on it. We could make one dwt. of ore pay by giving sufficient assistance from the Government, but there must be a point below which it is not generally profitable for the Government to go. However, it is my desire to give this innovation a trial and possibly we may be able to improve it later on; at any rate, this is a very material assistance to the prospectors who are working low-grade ores in different parts of the State. Unfortunately, a great portion of the rich ore has been worked out, and we must recognise that the future

of the mining industry will depend largely on the profitable exploitation of low-grade propositions. I may mention for the information of the member for Pilbara that at the much discussed battery at 20-Mile Sandy, where the charges have been higher than at any other Government battery, I have decided to make a reduction and bring them down to the level of the rates charged on the Murchison goldfields. A rearrangement of the managerial staff has been made whereby we are running two more batteries than previously, with provision for a spare battery manager from the existing staff who will be able to go on relieving duty from one battery to another, and with all this greater efficiency we are making a saving of over £200 per annum. This in itself shows that something has been accomplished. Then again if we turn to that other very necessary adjunct of profitable mining on the goldfields, the question of water supply, what do we find? That the price of water from the Goldfields Water Scheme to low-grade propositions has been reduced by from 2s. to 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons, or a rebate is being allowed of 1s. 6d. on all ore up to the value of 10s. per ton, while on ore up to the value of 14s. per ton, which was previously charged 5s. per thousand gallons, we are allowing a similar rebate. In this way there is a great prospect of mines, which would otherwise be unprofitable to work, being brought to a profitable stage at an early date. I found shortly after taking office that in the South Yilgarn district, at Marvel Loch, a very promising field indeed had been handicapped for lack of a water supply. So far back as 1908 an agitation had been commenced for the provision of a water supply, but nothing was done until January, 1911, when a report was obtained. After that, nothing further was done till May, when the late Minister for Mines instructed that the matter should remain in abeyance for three months. In July he would not promise that a pipe-line would be laid down from the Goldfields Water Scheme, notwithstanding that a petition had been sent to the Government, which contained about 400 names. When I took office this was one of the first mat-

ters brought under my notice, and I found from the files that the late Minister for Mines and the late Minister for Works had banded the papers backwards and forwards for twelve months and absolutely nothing had been done. In the meantime a water famine was being experienced in the district and residents were paying 10s. per hundred gallons for water, notwithstanding that the engineer for mines water supply suggested that the charge should be only four shillings per 100 gallons. That is the sort of sympathetic assistance given by the late Government to outback districts. On October 26, within a very short time of our coming into office, the Minister for Works and I discussed the matter, and we decided that a pipe-line should be put down, and the water will be laid on next week at a total cost of £12,000. A pipe-line has also been laid on to Westons. At Ora Banda the water supply is just nearing completion at a cost of £24,000, and at Meekatharra a supply is being provided for an expenditure of £9,000. All these matters go to show that although I have not been advertising the fact—though that should not prevent those interested being aware of it—I have done a considerable amount of work in order to assist and develop the mining industry. Taking the totals from the 3rd of October until the 15th of July, a period of nine months, covering the term of office of the present Government, there has been expended on water supplies and boring, etc., on the Eastern Goldfields, £41,329; on the Murchison Goldfields, £15,105; on the Pilbara Goldfields, £400, on the development of mining, loans, and rebates, £6,393, and another amount of £4,866, which has been approved but the authorities for which are not yet issued; and on the erection of Government batteries, £31,034; or a total expenditure in nine months on mining development and assistance to mining of £99,129. Do these figures show that the necessities of the Goldfields have in any way been neglected? That is a larger sum than has been expended in a similar term for many years past. In other ways I have been able to do something, particularly in the matter of tightening up in regard to exemp-

tions. There are properties working now that have not been working for many years past, and whilst I am determined that the holding of properties out of use by those who have no intention of working them shall not continue, I have always been prepared to give fair consideration to owners where consideration could be justified. Where companies or individuals have spent considerable sums in opening up or developing properties they are entitled to some consideration in the matter of exemption, and whenever a good case has been made out I have not hesitated to grant that exemption. Neither have I hesitated, on the other hand, to forfeit properties held by speculators who had no intention of working them and held them only by the labour of tributers. The leader of the Opposition said that he wanted to know the cause of the falling off in the battery returns. In my opinion that falling off was largely caused by the manner in which his Government boomed the Bullfinch field. We have had reports from all over the back country where Government batteries are situated saying that the prospectors were attracted to the Bullfinch field and have never returned; and, moreover, from the knowledge I have gained during the last nine months by meeting those interested in mining and coming into contact with those hitherto prepared to invest capital in the industry, I say that that disastrous affair has done more injury to genuine mining in Western Australia than anything since the wildcat days of fifteen or sixteen years ago.

Mr. Holman: It was worse than those days.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was undoubtedly worse than those days, and it will be a long time before this State recovers from that experience; but the hon. member would blame me after I have been nine months in office for the results we are now reaping from the action of his Government.

Mr. Holman: The greatest boost the hoodler ever got.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not desire to say anything further with regard to mining. I think I have shown the falsity of the statement of that

gentleman, who in an off-hand, airy fashion, without giving any particulars or information whatever, declared that the goldfields have been absolutely neglected. At any rate after travelling over practically the whole of our goldfields during the past six months, I can say, and I believe that hon. members who are sitting on this side of the House, and who represent the whole of the goldfields constituencies will also say, that there has never been for many years past more contentment and satisfaction throughout the goldfields than at the present day. Now turning to the railways, I suppose hon. members will agree with me when I say we have passed through a very trying time during the past eight or nine months. Shortly after taking office we were faced with the position that the then existing agreements were about to expire. Of course, the responsibility of making new agreements with the organisations rested with the Government, and whilst these were not fixed up without some little friction, nevertheless, I can say that never in the history of Western Australia has there been more satisfaction amongst the workers than exists at the present time. We, of course, gave increases in several directions, which as was stated by the Premier, amount for the present financial year to some £74,000, but we believe that those increases were justified. In fact, right throughout the whole of the staff, although there are some few matters to be adjusted yet with one section of the employees, better wages are being paid to-day than have ever been paid on our railways before. I noticed that during the campaign in the Central Province at Geraldton the leader of the Opposition declared that his sympathies were with the men who had gone out on strike. It seems to me a rather strange way of showing sympathy, when one has the opportunity to give increases, to increase the man getting 7s. 6d. a day by 6d. to bring him up to 8s., and then, when one is out of office, to express sympathy with the man who is getting 9s. that he does not get an increase of 2s. In future it will always be the desire of the Government to give first consideration to those

receiving the lowest wage. We were faced during the past season with a considerable shortage in rolling stock, and since the Government have been in office we have approved of the purchase of 36 new locomotives estimated to cost £150,000, and 250 waggons, the contract for which has been let to the Maylands workshops, at an estimated cost of £35,000.

Mr. Carpenter: Will they be ready in time for the next harvest?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, but there are 1,000 waggons under construction that were ordered by the previous Government, and they will be available for the coming harvest.

Mr. Carpenter: You will need them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We shall.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where are you getting the locomotives from?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are coming from Great Britain. Although Krupp's tender was something slightly cheaper than the British tender, the Government nevertheless decided to give the contract to the British manufacturer. There are 250 waggons being constructed in the shops, and tenders are now being called for an additional 500. We have given orders for the construction of rolling stock involving an expenditure of £377,450 during the nine months.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You will need it all.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the season turns out as it promises, which we all hope, I am afraid that this additional rolling stock will not be sufficient to cope with the coming harvest; but even if that be so, I am justified at this stage in saying that the fault will not lie wholly with the present Government. Cheaper excursion fares have been given during the summer months to the goldfields than have ever obtained hitherto; and as a result, something like three times the number of goldfields citizens have availed themselves of the opportunity to visit the coastal districts. Not only that, but they have been given the right to have the tickets made available to Perth and Fremantle, instead of the practice which obtained in the previous year of having them available only for Bunbury, Albany,

and Busselton. While I have the greatest admiration for those beautiful cities, especially in the summer time when the climate is nice and invigorating, I nevertheless believe that many of the goldfields people much prefer to visit Perth and Fremantle than to go to those districts. In fact, the results show that this has been the case, and it has been a great boon indeed to people who have to put up with the long, trying summer on the goldfields. Also, in order that their trip may be made a little more comfortable for them, I have decided—in fact before Christmas last I had running on the goldfields lines second-class sleeping compartments. Two coaches were put on for the Christmas holidays, and at the present time there are three more in course of construction. We shall be able to cope with the whole of the demand for second-class sleeping accommodation on the railways, a very much needed reform.

Mr. Green: When will they be available?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are in course of construction and will be out in a few weeks, perhaps. One of the other matters I noticed was in the speech of the member for Northam, where he declared that one thing the Government had failed in, and which all Labour Governments must fail in, was in regard to the finances.

Mr. Green: He thinks you require embonpoint.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is becoming quite a hoary old theory on the part of our opponents that no body of Labour men can be capable of in any way financing successfully, but I venture to say—and in fact the records of the Treasury will show—that even if the disaster which occurred in October last had not overwhelmed our friends, nevertheless there would have been a deficit just as much as, if not greater than, that we have at the present time. In fact the increases to our railway servants, to the police, the school-teachers and other public servants, more than account for the deficit with which the year was wound up. The Under Treasurer in September last, as the leader of the Opposition knows, the month before the elections, informed the

hon. member that there was likely to be a deficit of £156,000 on the year's operations.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will you explain how he made up that estimate?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not desire to explain it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But it was not an estimate; it was only if the expenditure and the revenue were the same as in the previous year. It was no estimate at all.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The broad fact remains that the Under Treasurer at that time anticipated a deficit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, he did not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He did, and that even without any allowance being made for increases to public servants.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No. He showed a surplus of £16,000 on the 30th September. You know it, and why not quote the minute? It was made up from the estimates of the departments.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We know all about the hon. member's estimates.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was not mine; it was the Under Treasurer's.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: One would imagine that during the years the hon. member was in office he had one long succession of surpluses. The public would hardly credit the fact that, covering the whole period of six years, I believe I am correct in saying that only once did he produce a little ewe lamb in the shape of a surplus.

Hon. Frank Wilson: For two years we had a surplus.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Then I beg the hon. member's pardon. I was speaking from memory and I thought it was only one year, and yet hon. members stand up and charge this Government with being incompetent with regard to the finances.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have started very well.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Their Government for six years had a procession of deficits, and in some instances I believe as great deficits as the one that we have had this season. I believe the

accumulated deficit exceeded £300,000 at one period.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, for four years.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: After we have been here for four years we shall see whether our accumulated deficit will exceed that.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You did not lose £600,000 to the Federal Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And the hon. member did not lose the money we lost this year because of the bad season.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Very much more. There is no comparison.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Hon. members during the whole time they were in office did not experience such a season as the State has just gone through.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What nonsense! Your revenue shows it. Look at your railway revenue.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The railway revenue? Careful administration. Our railway revenue has been very much lower last year. Only by cutting down expenditure and by careful administration have we shown a profit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not give the right figures?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member has given them so often that the House does not wish to be wearied again.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You got more; why not be accurate.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Turning to the very serious charge levelled against the Government during this debate, that of doing something illegal—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why will you not admit you got £40,000 more revenue on the railways last year?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am dealing with another matter.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then why make a misstatement?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not, and the hon. member knows it. The hon. member was more concerned, in moving his amendment, as to the illegality of the action of the Government in entering into trading enterprises than he

was with regard to the finances. While it was declared primarily that the objection was that money had been expended illegally, nevertheless the whole of the debate turned upon the wisdom of the procedure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Practically the whole of it, both in this and in another place.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You had better turn up *Hansard* and see.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Much more time was devoted to showing that businesses would be a failure than was devoted to showing that the steamers purchase was illegal.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It was proved.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Nobody knows better than the hon. member. Will he contradict the Crown Law authorities when they declared it was a perfectly legal transaction?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Certainly. We have better authority than that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In any case the Government are satisfied that the authority is pretty sound.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What have you charged them up to, anyhow?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member got all that information. They have been charged up to the expenditure authorised by the House.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are they charged up to the Treasurer's Advance Account?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not because the transaction was illegal that he and his Liberal friends were worried, so much as it was that it was the first inroad that was being made upon the huge profits of some of the members of the Liberal League; and while it was declared for months past that had the Government succeeded in purchasing the tramways of Perth, had the mayor of Perth offered no objection to the purchase, and had we gone on and purchased them without Parliamentary authority, we would have been applauded as statesmen.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, no!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The expenditure of £475,000 without Parliamentary authority in the purchase of the

Perth tramways would have been a statesmanlike action, but an expenditure of £100,000 on trading concerns was wholly illegal and an unwise proceeding.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You cannot purchase the trams without Parliamentary authority.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. members did not care, nor did the critics care, whether we had Parliamentary authority or not so long as the action met with their approval.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Certainly; you have to go to Parliament for it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In any case the businesses are not going to pay.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are they not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: So hon. members declare. Now, I can never understand why if the State can profitably control transport by land, and if it is a good thing to do so, they cannot do it with more success by sea. There is a greater possibility of monopolies existing in transport by sea; because if a man wishes to go to Geraldton and does not care to ride on a privately-owned railway, he can take the alternative and walk; but if he wishes to go to Kimberley, to walk is too far, and he is compelled to travel by a privately-owned boat. To that extent there is always the greater possibility of a monopoly existing with regard to shipping than there is with regard to railways. The same old bogey that is being trotted out that the enterprise is not going to be a success has been urged against other enterprises taken up by this or any other Government. Was there not a man occupying a public position in this State at one time who declared it would be an unwise policy to construct a railway from Fremantle to Perth because he said a cart came from Fremantle to Perth twice every day? It is the same old argument. Every time a step forward is taken we are told one is treading on dangerous ground. If the State can supply its own requirements with regard to sleepers at a cheaper rate than they can be purchased from the private mills, why cannot the State also supply the sleepers for the trans-Australian railway, which it is our intention

to do? The member for Murray-Wellington declares there is no analogy whatever between cutting sleepers for one's own requirements and cutting them for the purpose of selling to others.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He admitted that they had a surplus stock to dispose of to the public.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But the hon. member failed to show why there was no analogy. During his occupancy of the commissionership, the Railway Department decided, because of the high prices they were being charged by the combine for sleepers, that they would erect a mill of their own; and the results have amply justified that enterprise, for up to date the mill has returned a profit of over £2,000, and has had the effect of reducing the price of sleepers by 25 per cent. If, therefore, in one instance it is wise to erect a State mill, why should it not also be wise in another instance? In my opinion there is nothing that can be carried out by private enterprise which cannot with equal success be carried out by the Government departments. One of the most intricate businesses in the Commonwealth is that of the post office, yet the State can successfully carry to every village, town and hamlet in the Commonwealth the letters of the people, no matter where those letters have been posted. But, notwithstanding that the State can successfully control a huge concern of that kind, and manage the railways successfully, it is contended that the State cannot successfully run a steamer to the North-West, or control two or three sawmills.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You must remember that there is no competition whatever in those departments you refer to.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What is it that the hon. member's friends are afraid of? If we cannot compete with the privately owned concerns, they need not worry about it.

Mr. Wisdom: They are not worrying about it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not worrying! There has never been such a noise made in the public life of the State

before. Another place has been turned into a party House to a greater extent than ever before in its history. I understand that in the course of a similar discussion in another place some of the bitterest statements and the most violent party speeches have been made regarding the action of the Government—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am sorry I am not, because after all there seems to be more fight in the Opposition in another place than in the Opposition we have here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There is no Opposition in another place.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, it is not a party House. I say that in entering into these businesses the Government have taken a wise step, one that will be to the ultimate advantage of the whole of the people of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Whom is it going to benefit?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member will find out. It is not the possible failure of the enterprises that is worrying him; it is their probable success. If he thought these enterprises were going to be pronounced failures there would be no man in the State better satisfied than himself, because his opportunity would then come again in two years' time. It is because the hon. member knows these enterprises are going to be successful that he is crying out so loudly. The hon. member himself, just on the eve of the election, when driven into a corner, urged on by the strong course of public opinion, declared himself in favour of Government controlled steamers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did he?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, in a speech made at the Queen's Hall on the 6th September last year, just before the elections, he said—

A steamer would be put on the North-West trade when a steady supply of fat cattle could be obtained and slaughtered.

And at this there was applause.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What about the chilling works?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Why did not the hon. member erect his chilling works? Ever since I have been in the House I have heard about these proposed chilling works of his at Wyndham. For six long years he had the opportunity of putting that part of his policy into practice, yet now he turns round and wants to know why we are not doing it. Just prior to the election, when the feeling was getting pretty strong, the hon. member himself came round to the idea that a steady supply of fat cattle could be brought to Perth by a Government-owned steamer. The hon. member cannot deny the fact that he pronounced himself in favour of the policy of the Government-owned steamers. I will leave the question at that.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, go on.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member and his party have also been very indignant because the Government proposed to give a grant to the Trades Hall; in fact his colleague, the other leader, tabled a motion which amounted to one of no-confidence, stating that the action of the Government in granting assistance to the Trades Hall was against British liberties. It is a most remarkable thing that these gentlemen can so quickly forget their own remarks because, as has been pointed out, there are any number of precedents for our action in that respect, right back to the days of Sir John Forrest. But one would hardly expect to find that the hon. member's own Government, a few years ago, gave an absolute outright grant for the erection of trades halls on the goldfields, without any qualification whatever. The hon. member knows that these halls erected by the unions are just as much political institutions as are the trades halls of Perth and Fremantle. To make so much trouble in regard to an action which had already been taken by his own and previous Governments is merely trying to hoodwink the public. I have just been informed that the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce secured a grant of valuable land from the previous Government; but

I suppose I had better remember that the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce is not a political body, at least our friends would say it is not. I have a little leaflet here which is reminiscent of the late election. It was issued by the Liberal League, and it wants to know whether the electors are going to vote for progress or stagnation.

Limitation of State borrowing as it affects the settlers, no roads, no agricultural railways, no water supplies. These three items are not reproductive to the State as laid down by the Labour platform, and, that being so, cannot be proceeded with.

Our friends have been false prophets in that regard, and they were particularly unfortunate inasmuch as there has been more progress in respect to these three items during the last nine months than was made during the whole time the Liberals occupied the Treasury benches. At any rate it is pleasing to know that the electors did not accept them at their word, and still more pleasing to the settlers to know that the prophecies have not been fulfilled. I do not wish to speak at any greater length; much of the ground one might cover in a debate of this kind has already been dealt with by various speakers. The discussion has tended to show the relative strength of parties in this Chamber, not only in regard to numbers, but in regard also to the arguments advanced; because I believe that not on any motion of no-confidence ever debated in this Chamber has a leader of the Opposition got such a complete trouncing from the Premier as has been given our friend during the course of this debate. At any rate I venture to say that the work of the Government has not been equalled since the inception of Responsible Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are blowing your own trumpet, you know.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member was fairly effective in that direction when he had the opportunity, and having sat so long opposite the hon. member it may be that I have acquired some of his bad habits. In any case the Government have been faced with many difficulties which did not beset previous Administrations. New political paths

have been opened up during the past few months, pathways which I venture to say will be followed by every Government in the Commonwealth before very long, followed even by our Liberal friends in the future, as in the past they have followed our footsteps whenever success has been achieved.

Mr. MONGER (York): I have not too many eulogies to offer to the present Administration on the score of His Excellency's Speech. It is my intention, during the remarks I have to make, to try, wherever I consider they are justly entitled to fair praise, to give them that praise. But when I come to look calmly and quietly at the position and at the many instances they have pointed to as entitling them to credit, I feel that in the majority of cases they see what no one else can see. It is gratifying to learn from the Speech that land settlement is still going on in a satisfactory manner. It was also pleasing to me to hear from the Minister for Lands the other evening that something like two and one-half million acres of land had been surveyed, and that he anticipated that it would all be applied for in the very near future. At the same time he expressed his intention of not allowing settlement to take place in certain areas. On a plan submitted to me only to-day, I notice that north of Arrow-smith and east of Wandering new areas have been sub-divided, and I venture to say that in allowing these areas to be submitted to the general public, the Minister is not carrying out the principles he put forward. I have been particularly struck by one statement in His Excellency's Speech, for the reason that it varies so materially in so short a time from an answer given in another place this afternoon. In the Speech we are told that 61 surveyors with their staffs are in the field. In reply to a question in another place this afternoon the Minister said that there are only 48 surveyors in the field. If we are to take His Excellency's Speech and base the whole of the conclusions arrived at on the reply given to a question within three weeks of the opening of Parliament, we must come to the conclusion that when

the Governor's advisers prepared the remarks for His Excellency's delivery they could not have given the proper facts of the case. I only mention that because I desire to deal with land settlement generally, and I wish particularly to draw attention to those restrictions issued by the Minister for Lands on the 20th October last, really before he had warmed his Ministerial seat. He issued these instructions, and they have been referred to somewhat frequently in this Chamber. During last session, I asked a question as to whether he had obtained authority to allow him to issue instructions, and I say, with all due respect to the Crown Law Department, that these instructions could never be given effect to. Only recently we have seen how futile these instructions have been, but they created a certain amount of fear in the minds of the associated banks, and the result has been that where the associated banks always looked upon conditional purchase as equivalent to a Crown grant, the moment these instructions were issued, and in the face of a not too promising season, they closed up their pockets and refused any further advances or assistance. I think the whole of the kudos for that unsatisfactory state of affairs can be honestly laid on the shoulders of the present Minister.

Mr. Heitmann: You do not desire this country to be governed by the associated banks, do you?

Mr. MONGER: Many of those who obtained advances from the associated banks are now realising that they made a mistake in removing their transactions from these institutions to the Agricultural Bank and are desirous of going back to them. I think, notwithstanding the great cry made last October, that the Government were going to liberalise the conditions of the Agricultural Bank—

Mr. O'Loghlen: We did so.

Mr. MONGER: Nominally, but can any member point to any case where a farmer has reached the limit of £2,000—or, I might say, there was no limit given to the powers we gave last session. Can any member say he knows of friends who had transactions with the associated banks,

and that since the increase was arranged for and passed last session he knows of one of these accounts having been taken over from the associated banks by the Government institution? Regarding the Minister's restrictions, which I say he had no power to enforce, and which the present Land Act as it now exists never gave him power to give effect to, though he had the power to issue them, the Attorney General might as well give instructions that in future petty larceny will be a hanging business. He has as much power to give such an instruction and give effect to it as the Minister for Lands has in this instance. What has been the effect of these instructions? It has brought a number of people, desirous of putting a transfer through, to Perth, and they have had to ask for an interview with the Minister, and when the Minister has interviewed them he has almost invariably told them to come back to him in a couple of hours. When they come back he tells them, "I have seen one of the under secretaries, and if you go to Mr. Under Secretary so-and-so he will fix you up, but you are under a very great obligation to me for the manner in which I have treated you."

Mr. Heitmann: I can hardly imagine the Minister making such a statement.

Mr. Thomas: A most ungenerous statement.

Mr. MONGER: And in the case of a widow—

Mr. Green: Poor widow.

Mr. MONGER: She was brought down 120 miles to interview the Minister, and when I met her in Perth I told her if she had wasted a penny stamp I would have done all the work for her.

Mr. Heitmann: That shows it is unnecessary to come down to Perth.

Mr. MONGER: It shows how ridiculous these instructions were. I want to mention how one of the colleagues of the Minister for Lands was treated. The Minister for Works had a conditional purchase which was converted from Section 55 to Section 56 on the 26th June last. I asked certain questions in regard to that particular block of land on the 14th November last, and the Minister's

reply was, "With regard to block so-and-so, the department is awaiting the inspector's report *re* residence." The Minister for Works was cognisant on the 14th November that somebody wanted to know what he was doing in regard to his particular holding. This is what I take exception to: notwithstanding that he was warned on the 14th November last, it was not until he returned from his North-West trip that he made any attempt to bring the matter into the position of a legitimate transaction.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He carried out improvements, did he not?

Mr. MONGER: When the Minister was in Port Hedland he was evidently interviewed, because in the next issue of the *West Australian* we find these words—

Evidently, by the telegram published in the local papers, capital is being made out of the fact that I hold a thousand-acre block at Kuminin, and that I contemplate purchasing a further thousand acres adjoining. No doubt my critics, in their desire to cover their own nefarious practices, have taken advantage of my absence to misrepresent the facts.

These are the words I am dealing with at the present moment. I want to know who attempted to make any references to the nefarious practices of other people? I say they were perfectly justified in saying that Mr. Johnson's land transactions were illegal from the start, and have been illegal up to the present, and the passing of a transfer by the Minister for Lands and the altering of the conditions is so contrary to these ridiculous instructions he issued, that I fail to see how he can adopt any other course than to cause the forfeiture of the Minister for Works' block and his conditional purchase.

Mr. Green: You are trying to draw a herring across the track.

Mr. MONGER: I will deal with the hon. member's railway presently. It was my pleasure to accompany the Ministers for Lands and Works to a conference at Tammin in regard to the amending of the Goldfields Water Supply Bill as passed last session, and I am going to say

that I had a most enjoyable trip, and I really enjoyed the opening remarks of the Minister for Works at that conference. It was one of the most bouncing and bluffing speeches I have ever listened to from that gentleman, but when the conference sat for several hours during the day, and when my two friends found that they had a very adverse audience to deal with, how different was the attitude of the Minister for Works towards the constituents of the Minister for Lands as compared to the treatment meted out to mine only a few weeks previously. When the Minister found that an adverse resolution was to be carried by that meeting, he made a most *misericordia* appeal to these people, "Now I ask you not to submit any resolution; I ask you to allow matters to stand over until my friend the Minister for Works returns from the North-West, and we will have another conference at Perth and pay the expenses of your delegates." How very different that was from the attitude adopted by that gentleman when speaking to the people I have the honour to represent in this Parliament. When he was speaking to the Minister's constituents he promised them a trip to Perth and to then consider the matter again. What was the result of that further consideration? In the first place he said, "I am not going to reduce; you have to take this water at the price I fix"—there was a terrible lot of the "I" about him—"and if you will not, you will have to do without it." "What is more," he said, "I am going to refuse to ratify the agreements entered into by the previous Administration in regard to water supply in close proximity to the main Coolgardie trunk line." When the settlers of Tammin told him they were going to have water at half-a-crown and make the Minister carry out the obligations of the previous Administration, and when the Minister found that big talk on his side was not going to be received too kindly by that audience, he knuckled under and within a short time after his return to Perth he agreed to reduce the price by 25 per cent.

Mr. Green: That will not hurt you.

Mr. MONGER: How different from his attitude to the constituents of gentlemen who occupy seats on my side of the House.

Mr. Turvey: More spoils to the victors.

Mr. MONGER: There is another matter of lands administration that I desire to congratulate the Minister upon, and that is the closing up of the Melbourne agency. Poor Western Australia could not any longer afford to keep a Melbourne agency going, notwithstanding the fact that splendid work was being done and that hundreds of people had been induced to come here through the influence of the gentleman in charge of that agency. Later on I will move for the full papers in regard to the arrangements made by the Government and the reasons which actuated them in closing up that agency in Melbourne. There is another little matter that came under my notice the other day. The Lands Department are economising on a very big scale, but the economy is not being effected in the electorate of the member for Williams-Narrogin, but it is in the adjoining electorate; and it is that, instead of the agency there being open once a week, the department has decided that it shall be open only once a fortnight. I have thought this matter out, and the only conclusion I can come to is that, because the member who represents the electorate sits on this side of the House, the convenience of settlers is to be sacrificed. It is not my intention to deal with the many items referred to in the Governor's Speech. My principal reason for rising to-night is to make some references to certain railways.

Mr. Lander: Do not mention the Wickpin-Merredin line.

Mr. MONGER: I shall refer to that later. I notice that one of the first measures that is going to be brought up for consideration is the Norseman-Esperance line.

Mr. Green: Hear, hear; the first one on the sheet.

Mr. MONGER: I wonder if the speech made by the Attorney General last session is still fresh in the mind of the hon. mem-

ber, who is so constant an interjector? In the course of the Attorney General's remarks that gentleman said that in the previous year there had been in that district over 800 acres under cultivation. I wonder if the hon. member, who has spent a good deal of his time in that district, has any idea of the results of last year's harvest. I am going to give those results to the House, and I hope that the hon. member who has referred in such glowing terms to the great capabilities and the prospects of the Esperance country will bear in mind that in 1912 the quantity of land under cultivation, according to the statistical returns, was barely half what it was in 1910-11.

Mr. Green: You killed it.

Mr. MONGER: I will shock hon. members by giving figures as shown in the latest returns. I wonder if the hon. member for Kalgoorlie has any idea of the figures of this great wheat belt with its millions of acres, and which had one of the finest markets that Western Australia had to offer at its door, and which preferred to send its chaff and its corn away through Esperance and Albany? I wonder, I repeat, if he has any idea of the latest statistical returns of its production last season? I am going to tell the hon. member that there were three acres put in for grain, and the yield from those three acres, as shown in the statistical return, was nil. There were 417 acres under crop for hay, which gave a total yield of 201 tons, considerably less than half a ton to the acre. Those figures were not faked at my request, and I presume some hon. members will say there is a mistake somewhere, but I am giving the latest statistical information as regards the capabilities and the production of Esperance. We are calmly asked to allow the Government—and we must allow them to do anything they think fit—to sanction the expenditure of £300,000 to build a line of railway to convey 201 tons of hay.

Mr. Green: What is your authority?

Mr. MONGER: The latest statistical returns, as furnished by the Registrar General's department.

Mr. McDowall: The *Statistical Register* or the *Monthly Abstract*?

Mr. MONGER: I knew some of my friends would not like to hear these figures.

Mr. George: They have killed the Esperance railway now.

Mr. MONGER: There is one thing that struck me in regard to the reference to these railways, and that was that there was no mention of any kind with regard to the intention of the Government concerning the lines already sanctioned, and the attitude that has recently been adopted by the Government in altering the routes at the whim of a Minister or of the party. This appears to me to be more than the people of Western Australia are going to stand too long. The latest matter we have heard of is the serious alteration in the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line, and only this afternoon another place sanctioned the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the whole of the circumstances in regard to that line.

The Premier: Hear, hear.

Mr. MONGER: I am glad to hear the Premier say hear, hear. How different is his attitude from that which he and his followers took up last session when I asked that a select committee should be appointed to inquire into another line; there was no hear, hear, about him then. I come to two railways that are not mentioned but which have been very considerably interfered with during the administration of the present Government; I refer in the first place to the Quairading-Nunagin line, and only the other afternoon, when I asked a question as to whether the Minister intended to place upon the table of the House the reports which caused the alteration of the route as recommended by the advisory board, I got the reply I anticipated, that that information would be furnished in the ordinary course, if I moved in the usual way. I knew that would take up a lot of time, and that it might be weeks before the notice of motion which I tabled on the following day would be reached. I certainly think it would have been a manly and just reply by the Minister for Works to say to the House that he would give all the information asked for in the question, but that in the future motions would have to be

moved in the ordinary way. I wrote a little time ago and asked that plans be furnished to me showing the routes now decided upon and the route as recommended by the advisory board, and I think even the Premier and the Minister for Works will say that when one receives a reply such as I received, one is justified in bringing these complaints, which might perhaps be considered trifling, before the notice of Parliament. This is the letter I received in reply:—"The maps asked for showing the surveyed route of the Quairading-Nunagin railway are sent herewith. I referred the matter of the route recommended by the Railway Advisory Board to the Surveyor General, who says that the permission of the Premier is required before this can be shown; would you please obtain this permission, and plans can then be supplied." Surely members are not supposed to go, cap in hand, to the Premier and say, "Please, sir, allow the drafting department to give me a bit of information which has already been public property for a long time, and which for weeks and months occupied a place on the walls of this Chamber."

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Why did you want it, if it was public property?

Mr. MONGER: I wanted the lithos showing the plan of the route as recommended by the advisory board, a very reasonable request to make, and that was the reply I got, and I did not feel disposed to ask the Premier to give me permission to get the plans. Now I am going to deal with the question of a railway that I believe has received more consideration at the hands of the people of the district I represent than any other line of agricultural railway that has ever been before this Chamber. When introducing a petition last session I referred briefly to the position that had been taken up when the Bill was introduced and sanctioned by Parliament some time in December. After dealing with the second reading speech on the Bill, and after having dealt with the question as plainly as lay in my power, I made a very strong appeal to the Minister, and I said—

Let the Minister and his colleagues decide upon men of the stamp of WJ

liam Paterson, John Muir, and Harry Johnston to make the alterations in the route if any be deemed necessary.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Have you every confidence in John Muir?

Mr. MONGER: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I am pleased to hear it; you will not then object to the Wongan Hills-Mullewa route.

Mr. MONGER: I went on to say—

Then if these gentlemen say "The circumstances have changed, the conditions in the locality have changed, and notwithstanding our earlier report we consider the route should go in another direction," I shall be satisfied.

Notwithstanding that appeal to the Minister for Works, he took no notice of it, but he was good enough to take several members of Parliament and myself through the district, and I was hoping when he started on that tour that before he came to any definite and distinct understanding as to what he was going to recommend to Cabinet he would have said: "I am not going to take the responsibility of any alteration of the Advisory Board's recommendation, because I am interested in the district." No other man but the present Minister for Works would have arrogated to himself such responsible duties, and I do not think any other Cabinet amongst the British speaking people would have allowed an interested colleague to be the sole arbiter of so important a question. During the course of that trip, on a festive occasion when we were treated most royally and loyally, after hearing the actual intentions of the Minister for Works, as conveyed to me by the speech he made before I had the honour of responding to the toast of Parliament, I could only come to one conclusion, and that was that a hundred to a hundred and fifty of the finest settlers in Western Australia were going to be sacrificed in order that Ministers and their colleagues might vent their spleen on one individual. When I made that remark, the Minister said it was a cruel and cowardly remark, and another fellow who was "yapping" at me there said "Yes, it is so." I am going to repeat here to-night that the only reason

for any alteration in the recommendations of the Advisory Board is the fact that either the Minister or the majority of his colleagues, or the majority of caucus, have decided that these 100 odd settlers are going to be sacrificed and inconvenienced in order that they can vent their spleen on that one man?

Mr. Lander: They have decided to carry out what is laid down in *Hansard*.

Mr. MONGER: There was a remarkable occurrence at that gathering. I produced a series of plans from the Lands office showing all the latest selections of land between Wickpin and Merredin and between Quairading and Nunajin, and a plan showing the Advisory Board's recommendations. Those were the plans as furnished by the Lands Department right up to the date of our departure on that trip, and I have to compliment the Minister for Works on having so little confidence in his colleague, the Minister for Lands, that, notwithstanding that the Government had been six months in office, he placed no faith in the plans and lithos furnished by that department. A nice compliment to pay! Yet up to that date, notwithstanding that it was four or five months after the passing of the Bill by this Assembly, lithos were furnished showing the route of the railway in the position as recommended by the Advisory Board, and the settlers who selected paid an increased price owing to the contiguity of the proposed railway. During the course of the remarks made by the Minister he said, "We have fixed the route of this railway to a point about two miles south of Korrijin." I may say that the Minister had been talking a lot about the mandate from Parliament, and I said, "All I want is that you shall carry out the mandate from Parliament; I want you to carry out the second portion of the Schedule of the Act and you will be carrying out what I and the settlers in this locality require and demand." Remember, the Minister had distinctly stated that the Government had fixed the route at two miles south of Korrijin. Later on the acting Minister told me that the Government were going to carry out within the four points of the compass the schedules of the Act passed by Parliament. In order to carry out what

the acting Minister told me, instead of that railway being fixed two miles south of Korrijin, it is brought round now two or three miles north, in order that the *ultima thule* of this Bill may be given effect to, to within 10 miles of the Merredin line.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It is within the schedule of that Act; is it not?

Mr. MONGER: I thought the hon. member had more sense. I am quoting the definite pledge given to hundreds of settlers that the Government had fixed the route to a certain point, and I had no fear of the balance of the route being carried out, thus giving effect to the desires of the majority of the people. But what do I find now? They have definitely fixed the route north of Korrijin to a point called Quarebin Rock, and the plan showing the route to be taken indicates a direct line from Quarebin Rock to Nunajin. I am told that the route recommended by the present Minister "on his own" is by no means the best as regards the grades, and I can assure him—and no one knows it better than he does—that, as regards the land, it will be a crying disgrace to allow an agricultural railway to go through one of the worst pieces of agricultural land in Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: Your electors will be pleased to hear that.

Mr. MONGER: I am not afraid of my electors. Therefore, having had that positive and definite assurance that the route was fixed to a certain point to carry out—what? To carry out some electioneering pledge, or some electioneering statement of the Premier to please some particular supporters of his own that, even if the late Government had carried out the line, if they (the Labour party) were returned to power they would pull it up and take it from Hedges.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Who said so?

Mr. MONGER: I am making a statement. After that trip, notwithstanding that the Minister who accompanied us said that within a week his report would be presented to Cabinet, and if it was not carried out there would be another Minister for Works—I did make the interjection that I did not think Western Aus-

tralia would collapse if he retired from that position—I received telegrams from settlers, who were very much concerned by the unsympathetic reply of the Minister for Works, asking me to arrange with the Premier to receive another deputation. I am thankful to the Premier for receiving that deputation, which, I think, was the most influential that ever waited on a Premier in regard to an agricultural railway. Accompanying me was the leader of the Opposition and the late Minister for Works, Mr. Daglish, and I want to read to hon. members what Mr. Daglish said, because there are some misconceptions in regard to this railway and the attitude adopted by that gentleman. Mr. Daglish said—

He was present, not as a politician, nor as one having any interest in the district. As the result of the debate in Parliament when he was Minister for Works, his idea was that they should obliterate as far as possible two long deviations in the line. However, any remarks he made then, and any instructions he gave as Minister, were always to be read and interpreted as to be carried out in accordance with the schedule of the Act. He had never imagined that a railway could be laid down to follow Euclid's definition of a straight line—the shortest distance between two points. There had been no intention on his part to make one straight line, but to make approximately, so far as it could be done, taking the requirements of the district into consideration, two straight lines, one from Wiekepin until it reached the most easterly point at which the railway would touch and the other thence northwards to the north of Merredin. One of the principal objects of the line was to serve the Kummimin people and those to the east of Kummimin. He honestly believed, as the result of the information he obtained when Minister for Works, that the best line would be along the route laid down by the Wilson Government in July last, which was to go approximately 40 miles south from Merredin, and then generally in a south-westerly direction to Wiekepin.

In reply to that deputation the Premier said—

He had particularly made a point of not discussing the question of the route of the railway with the Minister for Works, until he had heard the views of the deputation. Nevertheless, he did not agree to receive the deputation until Mr. Johnson consented, because they had made it a rule that questions of route should be decided by the Minister for Works once an Act had been passed for the construction of a railway. The representations made by the deputation must necessarily carry weight. He recognised at once that the position was a very difficult one to deal with. They had had all sorts of accusations thrown about the country that the line had been twisted to suit certain gentlemen, and when they saw that five different surveys had been made they must be led to the belief that influence had been brought to bear from some quarter. As a result the position to-day was in a tangle. When the maps were first shown in Parliament, with a great turn in the line towards Mr. Hedge's property, the impression was gained that it was intended to serve that property.

Mr. Daglish: That was never stated in debate.

The Premier: It was debated outside and on the public platform. It was made one of the principal questions of the elections as to whether the line should be straightened up. There was a considerable amount of discussion in the lobbies.

Mr. Wilson: That is the trouble. The discussion took place in the lobbies and on the hustings, but not in the House.

After going a little further, the Premier stated that the matter would be given careful consideration and that the deputation would be advised through me in due course. I want to show now the courtesy extended to us on this side of the House by the gentleman who runs the Premier's department. The information was given to the Press on the 24th April. On the

30th April I wrote to the Premier as follows:—

(Some weeks ago a deputation consisting of prominent settlers from the Kumminin district waited upon you in regard to the route of the Wickepin-Merredin railway. In reply to that deputation, which was supported by the present leader of the Opposition and the late Minister for Works, you promised that the decision arrived at by Cabinet would be communicated to the deputation through me. May I ask if any decision has been arrived at?

Two days later, on 2nd May, I received a letter addressed to me at York, which stated—

With reference to your telephonic request to be supplied with the Cabinet decision in relation to the route of the Wickepin-Merredin railway, I beg to inform you that it has been decided to make a survey of the extension to the Yilliminning-Kondinin line, so as to junction with the Merredin railway and serve the Mt. Arrowsmith district.

That was the Premier's letter to me, and seeing the absurdity of the reply, I wrote on the 2nd May—

In further reference to my letter of the 13th ultimo, may I ask if your letter of the 29th idem, which only reached me this morning, is to be read as a reply to same.

To that communication I have heard nothing further, but I take this particular opportunity, on behalf of the deputation that waited on the Premier, of thanking him for the courteous manner in which he dealt with me in the reply he gave to the deputation. In regard to this particular line, I have always appealed, both personally and in public, that instead of the Minister for Works taking upon himself the responsibility of settling so vexed a question, the advisory board should be again sent out to report, and I promised that any recommendation they made, whether it was a point to the east or a point to the west, I would give it my best support. But no: what do we find? The Minister pays a trip to the district, but evidently has his recommendation in his pocket before he sets out, and he makes a recommendation, and on that

Cabinet follow like a lot of sheep to the fold, and they say, "We will do what the Minister for Works has asked us to do." I want more than that: I want more information than that; I want to know that the Minister has some reliable data to give us that made him make the recommendation that he made. I want to know what engineers and what other land experts he has asked for an expression of opinion; and I say that if he has not got other information than that which he had framed in his own mind before the last election, he has done a most unfair act in making the recommendation he has. I feel certain that the good sense of the people of Western Australia is not going to allow a Minister to carry out on his own works contrary to the advice of the proper qualified officers of the Crown. If the Minister for Works delegates to himself these powers what good are we in Parliament? We might just as well say "Here, Mr. Minister for Works, draw your pencil along this, and we will build a line of railway where you want it." I say in conclusion on this point, that a more unsavoury piece of political jobbery has never been perpetrated in the history of Responsible Government; and I say there is no other Cabinet that would allow a Minister to go about the country flouting, "I am going to do this; I am going to tell Cabinet this and that and the other; if they do not do it there will be another Minister for Works;" as much as to say, "I know they cannot do without my valuable services, and I am going to carry out not what I think is in the best interests of the people;" because he must know that the Government's advisers will advise in a more—well—unbiased manner than he would himself.

Mr. HEITMANN: You must remember that the previous Government had five lines surveyed in that direction.

Mr. MONGER: And the last one was the best; not the first one. I may perhaps have laboured the question, but I am glad to know that notice has been given in another place for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into this. I would like to be upon that select committee to subject the Minister for Works to the cross-examination he should get

when giving evidence before it. It was no use trying here. Last September when I presented a petition signed by practically all the settlers in that locality, with the exception of Mr. Hedges and his partners, whose names were omitted, not one member on the Government side supported the petition. It is no use our asking for any consideration from them. I can only hope that the select committee, which I believe will be appointed in another place, will subject the Minister to that cross-examination he is deserving of. There is only one other matter I desire to make a reference to, and that is the Premier's desire and intention to render financial and other assistance to the Trades Hall. I understand that the Premier said that any promise he made would be subject to the consent of Parliament. I have a great opinion of unions, but I do not like the ideas of some of those rabid unionists that only those belonging to their organisations shall receive any consideration. In fact, for their own sakes, I think they would be very sorry if it were given effect to. It may be fresh in the minds of some of those I have referred to as being rabid unionists that a telegram appeared a little time ago, which said—

Mr. Fisher, when asked his opinion of the decision of the Broken Hill Carriers' Union to admit Afghans under certain conditions, said he presumed the men were camel drivers, and the union had good reasons for its decision. He did not desire to say anything about the policy of admitting coloured men as unionists, nor whether the action of the union conflicted with the White-Australia policy.

I presume that if these Afghans who are affiliated with the Broken Hill carriers, were to come to take up their residence in Perth, they would soon become affiliated with the Trades Hall in Perth; and I suppose the next thing we would see would be communications going out to Bux Mahommed or others of that ilk addressed "Dear Comrade." At the same time as that famous expression of opinion from Mr. Fisher, in which he states that the Trades Hall can do no wrong, there was an article in the *West Australia*

lian, headed "Chinese not wanted as unionists." The member for Subiaco was in the chair. The article proceeds—

The chairman said he could not deal with the question from the standpoint of law for the simple reason that he was not a lawyer, but they could only consider their position if the law compelled them to take Asiatics into their unions.

We see that in Broken Hill they had allowed them. It seems as if we are getting pretty close to it in Western Australia—

Some of the unions had rules which expressly stated that only white men should be permitted to join their ranks. A voice: Supposing the Chinese form themselves into a separate union in the hotel and restaurant industry and apply for affiliation with our council. (Laughter.) Mr. Henshaw: There is a proposition in the Carpenters' Union from a Chinaman. (Laughter.) The council finally decided to recommend all unions not to admit into their ranks men of Asiatic extraction.

Now, this is what I want to impress on these rabid friends of mine—

One of the lady delegates said it was a delicate position to deal with, because there were some half-caste Chinese who, she regretted to say, were superior to white people.

The moment the funds of the people of Western Australia are to be used for an illegitimate purpose of this kind, even to allow debates of that sort, where a woman belonging to one of the lady unions of this State describes the half-caste Chinaman as better than some of the gentlemen she comes into contact with—the moment the funds of the State are to be utilised in that manner, the Government are not carrying out their duties in dealing in a fair and reasonable way.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Would you allow the Afghan farmers in your district to join the Farmers' and Settlers' Association?

Mr. MONGER: There are men sitting on the Government side of the House who owe their position in this Parliament to being selected by the Dago and the Ski gentlemen who belong to their unions but

are not naturalised British subjects, though as far as the selection ballot goes they have the same power as the hon. member.

Mr. Heitmann: What is wrong with the Italians?

Mr. MONGER: I have no fault to find with them, but I say that no man should have the power to return a member to Parliament who is not qualified to have a vote under the laws of our country for that Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): How could they return a man to Parliament when they have no votes?

Mr. MONGER: The Honorary Minister knows very well that every Ski or Dago on the goldfields belongs to a union, and that they all have votes on the selection of a candidate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The selection does not return a man to Parliament.

Mr. MONGER: Invariably it does on the goldfields.

A. Taylor: How do you arrange for the votes of the cooks at the Weld Club?

Mr. MONGER: They are not naturalised, and have no vote. I have dealt with only one or two matters in the Governor's Speech, and on the many other matters referred to I shall have my opportunity later on.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): A number of hon. gentlemen have addressed themselves to the Address-in-reply, and several of them have stated that they regret that so much time was wasted in speaking to the Address-in-reply. Most of them, in the course of their remarks, came to the matters that affect them most: the agricultural members speaking from an agricultural point of view, and the goldfields members invariably spending most of their time on matters relating to mining. I do not think they were to blame. I hope that my remarks will not be misconstrued, because although I represent an agricultural industry, I listened with great interest to the remarks that fell to-night from the Minister for Mines. I maintain that the mining industry in this State is practically only in its infancy, and I hope that whatever Government are in

power the industry will receive very generous treatment at their hands; because mining gave this State its first start in life, and had it not been for the mining industry our population would not have been nearly as great as it is to-day. Since the opening of Parliament I have listened with great respect to views expressed by members on the Government side of the House, and to-night one or two have voiced the opinion that we on this side are to be pitied. I was returned by a very large majority to represent the Wagin electorate on the Liberal side. I do not require any sympathy from the hon. gentlemen who thought that our side, being so small in numbers, was in need of pity. I believe that the Liberal side, although temporarily disabled as regards numbers in Parliament, will yet prove to the country that they have been a valuable adjunct to the political life of the State and have done exceedingly good work in the past. Notwithstanding that, I have listened, this session and last session, to charges against hon. members on this side, and particularly two gentlemen of our party here, who seem to have raised the ire of a number of members seated on the Ministerial side. The leader of the Opposition and the late Minister for Lands seem to have come in for an extra share of blame in connection with the running of the country; but I venture to say that these two gentlemen have done really splendid service for the State, and that the charges which have been levelled against them are a little bit over the fence. I do not think it is right or fair for members of Parliament to slangwang one another as has been done in this Parliament during the past few years. In my opinion better legislation would be placed upon the statute-book if fewer personalities were indulged in. It appears to me that a public man, when he rises to the position of a Minister of the Crown, is looked upon by a number of people as somebody to be hated. Many who have attained to that position have sacrificed the best years of their lives to the State, and the pay they would have received had they devoted that time to their own private affairs would have been very much greater than any return they can expect from the State. If

we had fewer personalities brought into politics it would be better for the State as a whole. During my occupancy of a seat in Parliament it will be my intention, both inside and outside the House, to refrain from making use of language which can be well done without, but which I regret to say is very often used in Parliament.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a reflection on Parliament.

MR. S. STUBBS: It may be, but if I have transgressed the rules of the House and am called upon to stop, I will do so; because I have no intention of reflecting on Parliament. But I do hold that very often things are said which should not be said, and that it would be very much better if people were to guard their tongues in making insinuations concerning the conduct of members, of both sides of the House for that matter; because in dealing with questions concerning past actions remarks are hurled from the Liberal side to the Labour side and vice versa. But, having been elected to represent Wagin in the Liberal interest. I desire in my criticism of the Speech delivered by His Excellency, and which was placed in his hands by his advisers, to say that there are several planks which I think must commend themselves to the majority of the electors. Seeing that the Government were returned by so large a majority it is, I think, the duty of the Liberals to see that the Government get a fair chance to carry out the programme which they mapped out last October. At the same time, I reserve the right to say that in respect to any measures which I think are not in the best interests of my constituents and the State as a whole, I should be wanting in my duty if I did not oppose them. The first item I would like to touch upon in His Excellency's Speech is that of land settlement. The Minister for Lands made no secret on the hustings of his belief that the land management of Mr. Mitchell was not a good one.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Shortly before assuming office the Minister for Lands issued a manifesto which

was published in the columns of the *West Australian* and which, if he had thought it out more carefully, would not have been printed in the form it was. The members on the Ministerial side of the House have declared it was the bad season that caused the unrest in financial circles in connection with the land settlement of Western Australia. As a business man of a good many years standing I can assure the House that the effect of the bad season was known to nine out of every ten business men in the State before the 18th October, and that when the regulation was issued the financial institutions shut up like so many oysters. They called in money advanced, which, in my opinion, would have remained on their books had it not been for the fear that certain lands were liable to forfeiture. Now it was the laudable desire of the late Government to settle the people on the land, and I believe the same desire exists in the breasts of the present Administration. But a great fear entered the hearts of those who had the administration of financial institutions of Western Australia, when regulations came out to the effect that land taken up under certain conditions would be liable to forfeiture if those conditions were not complied with.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Why should they not be?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I would like to say that, provided every man and woman in Western Australia took up land legitimately, even if the specified conditions were not carried out in their entirety the State would not be a loser.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Then you believe in violating agreements?

Mr. S. STUBBS: If I had anything to do with the present Government I would endeavour to get them not to sell the land at 22s. 6d. per acre. I maintain that it does not make the slightest difference to the State whether 5s. or 10s. per acre, or nothing at all, be charged for the land, provided the land is settled and taken up.

The Premier: Who raised the price from 5s. to 22s.?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Whatever Government did it, they were wrong in doing so.

It was a mistake, and I can assure hon. members that the sending of people out on the land 20 or 40 miles away from existing railways was a big undertaking for the hundreds of families who have gone out there. If they had not had assistance from the Agricultural Bank and the storekeepers they would never have been able to stay there.

The Premier: Who sent them out?

Mr. S. STUBBS: You are doing so now.

The Premier: No.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I understand from the Speech that an immense area of land has been surveyed and is now open for selection.

The Premier: No, a fair amount of it is withheld from selection until reasonable facilities have been provided.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yet I say with all respect to the Premier that if we send people on the land, even if it be only fifteen miles away, and they are bona fide settlers, the best thing the country could do would be to charge them no rent at all for the first five years, provided they put the equivalent of rent into the land in the shape of improvements. The producer is the man we want on the land, and the paltry few shillings we get from him for the first five years would be better spent on improvements to his holding. In my opinion the land regulations issued by the Minister for Lands had a most disastrous effect, for the reason that the financial institutions naturally wanted to know from the storekeeper whether the men on the land, and on their books, had complied with the whole of the conditions under which they had taken up the land. I must confess I am speaking for 99 out of every 100 business people of the State, when I say it never entered the heads of one of these business men that forfeiture would ever be thought of.

The Premier: What sort of a farmer would he be, if, being unable to comply with the conditions, he took stores from the storekeeper?

Mr. S. STUBBS: It was this thought that agitated their minds: suppose a man, through sickness, desired to transfer his land. The regulations issued by the Min-

ister on the 18th October stated that certain improvements must be effected, or a certain length of time must elapse, before the land would be allowed to be transferred.

Mr. Heitmann: Provision was made for special circumstances.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes, that is all very well. The idea of the Minister for Lands was a good one, namely, to stop trafficking in land. I honour him for that, but there was another way of trapping the man who was then mentioned, that is, the St. George's-terrace land speculator. I must say I have never met him, this land speculator, in my district. Every man, as far as I know, who is settled there, took up his land under conditional purchase, or purchased his farm legitimately; therefore the harm done in my district I am certain cannot be laid at the door of the bad season. The financial institutions which were lending money freely for months and months prior to last election stopped suddenly.

Mr. Thomas: They had been on a financial drunk and decided to sober up.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, I do not agree with that.

Mr. Heitmann: Why did they cease?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Because of the regulations which the Minister for Lands published.

Mr. Heitmann: If they lend money they must get it out of the produce.

Mr. S. STUBBS: But supposing a man wanted to sell his land to a neighbour on account of it not being large enough, or for some other reason, the banks were under the impression that a transfer would not be put through.

Mr. Heitmann: What difference would that make to the bank; they had their security and that security was what could be produced from the soil.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the conditions were not complied with, the land was liable to forfeiture, and it was the duty of business men to see that the farmer had the improvements up to date as they feared that otherwise the land would be forfeited.

The Minister for Lands: That has existed since 1906.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The cry has been going throughout the world that we wanted settlers and were practically giving away land, and suddenly this regulation appears which causes a feeling of unrest among the financial institutions. That is where I join issue with the present Government.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Has it retarded land settlement in your district?

Mr. S. STUBBS: To a certain extent, yes, and it caused such a feeling of unrest that the banks were calling up overdrafts where they were not absolutely sure that the conditions had been carried out.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I heard you say at a deputation that land settlement was taking place with great rapidity.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I maintain that the Minister for Lands' famous regulation issued on the 18th October did a great deal of harm to land settlement in Western Australia. The Governor's Speech also stated that 60 odd surveyors were in the field. The member for York stated to-day that a question was answered in another place to the effect that there were 48. I reside in a town where two or three surveyors who have been working for the Government have suddenly found that their work is done, and one, at all events, has nothing in hand at all. I would like to know what is going to happen in another twelve or eighteen months if the land settlement that members hope for does not take place, and what is to become of the thousands of people we hope to see settled in the State—

The Minister for Lands: Do you wish us to put the people away on the uncertain limits of rainfall?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, but I point out unless we go on surveying and getting data ready for the settlers whom we hope will arrive in two or three years, the work will be all behind and we will not be able to settle people as we desire. If we are reducing our surveyors from 60 to 48, perhaps in six months they will number only 15 or 20, and how will we continue the work of settling the people on these millions of acres of land which we are told we have? It appears to be a short-

sighted policy if the Government are reducing the number of surveyors in the field.

The Minister for Lands: It can only be done by putting them out where you constantly assure us land should not be thrown open owing to the risk of failure.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Do I understand that all the available agricultural lands worth taking up under conditional purchase for agricultural purposes are finished?

The Minister for Lands: Not all.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Then why not put the surveyors out in areas where there is an assured rainfall?

The Minister for Lands: There are not the same large areas of unsurveyed country in the good rainfall line now as there were. You cannot go on surveying and have the land still unsurveyed.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I understand that only five per cent. of the land has been alienated from the Crown.

The Premier: Do not forget to add what is in process of alienation, that is far more than five per cent.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It seems we still have large areas of land in assured rainfall areas, and I repeat that I agree that people should not be sent out on to land where the rainfall is uncertain and where it is more than 15 or 20 miles from an existing or proposed railway line.

Mr. Taylor: There are plenty of Crown lands still within the rainfall area to be selected.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I should say tens of thousands of acres.

The Premier: Neither of you seems to be very certain.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It is a poor look-out for the policy we expect to see adopted if the Premier does not know. No man should take up less than a thousand acres, and I do not think two thousand is too much for a family to make a living on.

The Premier: It depends where it is situated.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I agree, but most of the land of the best quality in the agricultural areas has been taken up for 15 or 20 years.

The Premier: Then what are we going to survey now?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The land that the Premier means, I take it, is that worth £7 or £8 an acre, and there is plenty of that around York and Beverley.

The Premier: Yes, until we want to buy it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am earnest in my desire to see stopped trafficking in land by persons whose only desire is to fleece the legitimate farmer, but the Government have made a big mistake. Whether they believe me or not, I cannot help it. The financial institutions of this State began to look with suspicion on these regulations, and I confess that as a business man, having transactions with hundreds of farmers every year, I never asked them whether all the conditions under which they took up their land were actually complied with, because I thought any sensible Government would not issue regulations such as were issued and which caused such unrest among business people and the associated banks.

The Premier: As a business man, have you suffered from that regulation up to date?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I believe I have.

The Premier: You believe, you ought to know.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am certain I have in this respect: The season being a bad one, I had to give a large amount of credit to farmers, and in the fear that some of the farmers might not care to remain on their holdings if they had another bad season, and I would be saddled with a big lot of land which I could not carry and for which the banks would not finance me even if the regulations would allow me to hold it all.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think the banks would have lent money if there had been another bad season?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I believe a majority of the financial institutions would have stood by the farmers to a certain extent and the storekeepers would have done so to a greater extent.

The Premier: The banks have never stood behind the people when there has been a bad season.

Mr. S. STUBBS: In the Wagin district the banks have stood by the people well.

The Premier: The banks take less risk than anybody.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am glad to say I believe the Minister has not refused a legitimate transfer. It would have been quite sufficient to look through every transfer in the Lands Department and make a proper inquiry to see if it were legitimate or not. That would have been sufficient instead of frightening people by that famous manifesto on the 18th October.

Mr. George: Infamous, I think.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The past season was a bad one for everybody and in this connection I give great credit to the Government for the way they tackled the water difficulty in the dry areas. In several instances I know farmers were at their wits ends for water for their families and stock, and in every instance which I know was brought under the notice of the Government, steps were immediately taken to serve these settlers with water, and in many cases at such a low rate that great credit must be given to the Government for that action. I would be wanting in my duty if I, in criticising the Government, did not give them credit for the work they did in supplying water in the Great Southern district.

Mr. Underwood: Come right over here and bring your chair.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have no desire to do that. One point, however, has struck me forcibly; the Government have spent hundreds of pounds a week in carrying water along the Great Southern railway, and within seventeen miles of Wagin westward there are sheets of water a couple of miles long, 17 chains in width, and varying in depth to 30 feet, which would supply the whole of the residents from Beverley to Albany if we had no rain for two years. Does not it seem extraordinary that the Government have spent five or six hundred pounds a week since last November to carry water hundreds of miles along the Great Southern line when water is available within 17 miles of Wagin?

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is no railway there.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, but the money has been spent and the cost of carrying that water would have built a railway.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How could the Government tell what time the drought would last?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The quality of the land is such that settlers have been there for 40 years and have carted their produce 17 miles to the railway without a murmur. They have been told that the line would be built, but up to the present that has never been done. Certainly Parliament two years ago passed a loan authorisation for the construction of a portion of that line and the supply of material, and the Premier in paying a visit to that part of the State recently, traversed the district I am speaking of, and publicly declared that he could not understand why it had been allowed to remain without a railway for so many years, and he promised to bring in a Bill this session. I congratulate the Premier on carrying out the promise he made to a large and representative gathering of farmers who met him at the Arthur River a few weeks ago. The building of that line will save the Government, in the case of another dry season, thousands of pounds.

Hon. W. C. Augwin (Honorary Minister): That is another charge against the late Government.

Mr. S. STUBBS: They may not have promised this particular one, but they carried out a great many other railways. I would, however, again criticise the present Government for saying that they could only build 200 miles of railway annually. If they are not able to build more, why not call tenders for the construction of others; why not build 500 miles of railways annually? It could be proved to the satisfaction of any Government, if they could spare the time to have a look at these districts, that a vast amount of splendid country has in the past been entirely neglected. The Labour Government who were in power several years ago might just as easily be charged with neglecting this country as the late Government. What I want to emphasise is that it seems a pity that in a young country like this we are limiting our railway construction to 200 miles a year. I take

it that the party in power do not desire to see contracts let for railway construction, but if they cannot build more than 200 miles annually, surely we should go outside and give others the opportunity of doing some of this work.

Mr. Thomas: The 200 miles annually is more than other Governments ever did.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I maintain that the greater number of miles of railways that are constructed in a young country like this, the better it will be for the State, and we should remember also that our experience is that railways can be constructed for £1,500 per mile, while it costs nearly £1,000 per mile to make roads. Undoubtedly, therefore, railway construction is cheaper, and if the Government will submit several lines of railways over and above those mentioned in the Governor's Speech, I will do my utmost to assist in passing them, provided, of course, that they are put in hand without delay and there is no dilly-dallying over their construction. That is all I have to say with regard to agricultural lines.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): If you read the Governor's Speech you will find that three hundred miles of railways were constructed last year.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes, and most of them were built by contract, and if the present Government called tenders they could easily build six hundred miles annually. Why not go on with these railways? There is no justification for delaying their construction. With regard to that portion of the Governor's Speech dealing with irrigation, I commend the Government for the proposed huge scheme, the object of which will be to supply water for the purpose of intense culture. It seems to me a great pity that so much money is sent out of the State for dairy produce. One has only to go down to the South-West to see the beautiful country there, and to learn that all it requires is water. I believe lucerne and fodder plants can be cultivated just as well, and quite as good a return secured as is obtained in the Eastern States. All that is required is an energetic Minister and competent staff of engineers to see that the water scheme is carried out and

that the land is cut up into fair-sized holdings and sold, not leased. I do not think the Government are sincere with regard to the non-alienation of Crown lands. I notice that there is no mention of it in the Governor's Speech and I hope we shall not hear any more about it. At present the Government will have sufficient work to do to prevent the people who are now on the land from leaving it, and also to carry out those planks of their platform which they mentioned on the hustings and leave the non-alienation of Crown lands for some future occasion. The purchase of steamers has exercised the minds of many members of Parliament and a big majority of the people of the State. I do not know where the Government got their data from which caused them to think that the buying of steamers and trading in the North-West was going to bring down the price of meat. I was under the impression, as a business man, that the price of commodities was regulated by the law of supply and demand. Recently a prominent butcher in town was asked by me the price of beef and he told me that he could sell it at 6d. per pound.

Mr. Thomas: It has fallen already.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am speaking of a few weeks ago, before the question of the purchase of steamers was mentioned. I said to him that it seemed to me that it was not an outrageous price. A representative of a butchering firm also told me if I could let him have 500 fat sheep weighing 60 lbs., he would give me £1 a head for them, and if they weighed 65 or 70 lbs. he would give me 22s. per head. Can anyone tell me that the offer of that price was due to the existence of a combine in the North-West? A local butcher at Narrogin has for some months been importing his live beef from South Australia, and he told me that the cattle from the North-West would not stand being brought down in the hot season, and I suppose he was right. I am not holding a brief for any firm or combination of butchers, and if they have raised the price of beef in the manner in which it is said they have done, I am glad the Government are trying to break it down, but,

as a business man, I have yet to learn that the Government have inquired sufficiently into the meat question and the running of steamers in the North-West to enable them to arrive at the conclusion that that line of steamers will have the effect of reducing the price of meat.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) : You have not inquired into it if you said you paid 6d. per pound.

Mr. S. STUBBS : I can produce an invoice to show that I bought it for 6d. a pound, and it was beautiful meat too.

Mr. Lander : It ought to be possible to buy North-West beef at 3d.

Mr. S. STUBBS : If the hon. member goes to-morrow morning to a butcher's shop that I can take him to, I can show him exceedingly good beef which is being sold at 5d. a pound. I suppose hon. members will say that this is due to the purchase of steamers by the Government. That is ridiculous nonsense. I would like to tell the Honorary Minister that ever since I can remember, and I was born in the Warnambool district of Victoria where cattle and sheep are grown, that certain parts of a bullock are worth 3d. and 4d. a pound more than the other parts. Even in New South Wales one must pay 2d. and 3d. a pound more for rump steak than for an ordinary joint. I desire to see cheap meat for the people, but I have yet to learn that the running of steamers will have any appreciable effect on it. On the contrary, I have every reason to believe, that if proper accounts are kept in connection with the running of these steamers, we will find if the price of meat is brought down even to one half-penny per pound extra taxation will have to be imposed to assist in the upkeep of the steamers.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) : Is that what you are hoping will be the result?

Mr. S. STUBBS : That is what you will find will be the result. I honestly and truthfully believe that the running of these steamers will be a costly affair and will not have the effect that the Premier and his Government anticipate. The Government have not gone deeply enough into this question. The price of meat is

affected by seasons and the quantity of fat stock available. In certain seasons it is possible to bring down Kimberley stock at a fair price, but there are other seasons when cattle will not travel. I understand that the reason that actuated the Government in running steamers is that they allege that a combine of butchers and pastoralists is keeping up the price of meat.

Mr. Heitmann : The Government allege we are paying too much for meat.

Mr. S. STUBBS : I maintain that the present price of beef to-day is not due to what the Government allege, and that the steamers will not have the effect which is anticipated. The dry seasons in the North-West districts have helped to increase the price of meat and to make it as dear as it has been this year.

The Premier : The season has been all right in the Kimberleys.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : Has the hon. member read the meat commission's report?

Mr. S. STUBBS : Yes.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : Do you not think there was a combination?

Mr. S. STUBBS : But that was two or three years ago.

The Premier : And they have strengthened since then.

Mr. S. STUBBS : From the information I have had from the Press and from hon. members who ought to know, there is no meat ring, and I believe that certain butchers and pastoralists have lost thousands of pounds for several years running in connection with the meat industry.

Mr. Green : And yet they keep going.

Mr. S. STUBBS : I have had two or three bad seasons in Wagin but I have not been discouraged; in fact, the whole of my capital is in jeopardy at the present moment, but I do not carry my heart on my shirt cuffs. Hon. members seem to think that if a business man has two or three bad seasons he abandons the business.

The Premier : The big men in the meat ring have not lost money during the last few years.

Mr. S. STUBBS : Yuill & Company are alleged to have lost £30,000 or £40,000 pounds in this State.

Mr. Green : What a lot of money they must have made before that.

Mr. S. STUBBS : The company did not make the money here; they made it in other States.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : The ring was too powerful for them.

Mr. S. STUBBS : They had the best show of meat in their shop that was to be seen in the city; in fact their windows at all times would have done credit to any country.

The Premier: While they were getting the meat from the South they were all right.

Mr. S. STUBBS : If Yuill & Co. did not lose money why was it necessary for them to close up? And, if they were up against the meat ring, why was the price of meat not reduced?

The Minister for Works : Yuill & Company did reduce the price of meat; very slightly, I admit.

Mr. S. STUBBS : I am trying to prove that the State is not undertaking a profitable enterprise in entering into the meat trade in the North-West.

The Premier : All we propose to do is to run steamers to bring down stock. Will you tell me why the people who are doing so well want to get out all of a sudden and are falling over themselves?

Mr. S. STUBBS : Many of the people who are said to make so much money are interested in stations and in other properties and they make their money in that way. At any rate, I contend that the Government will not attain the object they have in view by running steamers on the North-West coast. I am perfectly right in saying that there was no violent hurry for the Government to rush in and buy steamers on the eve of the opening of Parliament, and I maintain that an expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds, such as this will amount to, should have been brought before Parliament and facts and figures put forward to show that the Government are on right lines.

The Premier: You would not bring arguments against your own pledges.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, I am not going against my own pledges.

The Premier: But you pledged yourself to do this.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No.

The Premier: Your leader pledged you then; he said he would buy a steamer.

Mr. Wisdom: But he qualified it.

The Premier: No, he did not qualify it; he said he would put on a steamer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. S. STUBBS: Whether the Liberal Government promised to do it or not, even if they had proposed to undertake this enterprise I would still stand up in the House and say it should have been done by Parliament and not by them.

The Premier: You should look through their records; they have been buying stations which Parliament has not been asked to approve yet.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I desire to say that I am entirely in accord with the Government policy in regard to education. If any body of public servants are deserving of assistance at the hands of the Government and Parliament they are the men and women who are endeavouring to teach the young people of this State. To one travelling through the agricultural districts—and I suppose it applies on the goldfields with equal force—the disadvantages these men and women work under are patent at once. Their work deserves the highest praise that the Legislature can give them, and that is by giving them the best possible pay for the services they render to this State. In conclusion, may I again say that I hope the season will be a prosperous one and that the Government will not have a very big deficit, because if we have a big season I feel sure that the present deficit will be wiped out. I maintain that in a young country like this we could not expect to have a large surplus at the end of a year such as we have just experienced. The Government have had a hard row to hoe, I admit, in taking office at such an inopportune time for them as regards the season, because if ever there was a bad season in the agricultural districts of Western Australia it was the last one. The Government have

done good work in connection with water supplies and many other things to help the settler on the land, and I hope that the Minister for Lands, in his zeal to protect the public from land speculators, will not desire to see those men who are on the land lose their holdings, or forfeit their land if they do not comply strictly with every provision laid down in the Act.

On motion by Mr. Munsie, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 17th July, 1912.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Public Works Act, 1902; by-laws regulating traffic over the North Fremantle High Level Bridge. 2, Roads Act, 1902. Special by-law of the Black Range Road Board. 3, Annual report on Prisons for year ending 31st December, 1911. 4, Plan showing test bores at Fremantle Dock (asked for by Hon. M. L. Moss).

MOTION — WONGAN HILLS-MULLEWA RAILWAY SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extended powers.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West): In the motion as handed to the Clerk yesterday, in

which Mr. Sommers moved for the appointment of a select committee to enquire into the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway, no authority was given to the committee to adjourn from place to place. I beg to move—

That the Committee appointed by this honourable House yesterday, to enquire into the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway, be authorised to adjourn from place to place.

The PRESIDENT: When I put the motion to the House I included these words "from place to place," but they were not on the paper that was handed to the Clerk.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): I wish to make a statement for the information of hon. members so that they may not be taken un-awares. I propose to hold a sitting of the House to-morrow in order to introduce a Supply Bill, and I desire that it shall be passed through all its stages to-morrow.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Cannot you introduce it to-day?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Consequently, I think I should notify members of the House beforehand. The object of the Bill is to enable advances to be legally made to departments to pay salaries and wages per medium of field orders, and also to make payments on behalf of other Governments as requested, including the Home Government, such as the payment of Imperial pensions. Previously, such consent has never been obtained by our predecessors, they have gone on and spent the money, and practically it was illegal expenditure, but everything we do we propose to do constitutionally, and with that object in view, we will submit this Bill to-morrow for consideration.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What are field orders?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Field orders are orders sent out for signature. There is an amount of money for the Railway Department, which may require