

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Is that the carrying of heavy loads or carrying with too narrow tyres?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We can deal with that in Committee. Similar legislation already exists in Section 89 of the Public Works Act, and it will be repealed if this Bill becomes law. Clause 51 is a new clause so far as this State is concerned, but similar provision is included in Division III. dealing with motor cars. It is specially to provide against reckless or negligent driving of other vehicles, and puts the same on a similar basis for the interests of the travelling public. In regard to Clause 52—

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Is this "joy riding?"

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is legislation copied from the Victorian Act, and it is for the purpose of putting a stop to what is known as "joy riding." I could give some instances. In regard to Clause 53 the Municipal Act and the Roads Act already give the local authority this power, and the Public Works Act gives the Minister power. Therefore the clause only re-enacts the existing provision with the additional safeguard that the Minister may annul any order given by a municipality where sufficient reason is given to open a street.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Supposing he closes a street for 10 years?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think we had better leave that matter for the Committee stage. Clause 54 contains powers similar to those granted under the Municipalities and the Roads Acts. Clause 57 is virtually taken from the Cart and Carriage Licensing Act. It is merely re-enacted in modified form, the better to meet the provisions of the Bill. Clause 60 is new. It is a machinery clause, and it legalises what is to-day a general practice. Clause 61 is practically the same as the existing sections in the Roads and the Municipalities Acts. The Roads Act and the Municipalities Act makes the penalty £50. The reason for the larger penalty at the end is to provide for any of these offences which may be committed but which are not specified. Clause 62 is a machinery clause, while Clause 63 is prac-

tically a re-enactment of existing legislation, but in modified form, owing to the passing of the Act of 1909 dealing with the appropriation of fines and penalties. Clause 64 is merely a re-enactment of the existing legislation, so as to put all laws dealing with vehicles in one Act. It is slightly modified to meet present requirements. The Bill is a measure dealing with traffic only, whereas the Public Works Act deals more with the construction of tramways. I have a good deal more to say, but I will reserve it for the Committee stage. I beg to move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Hon. W. Kingsmill debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.18 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 12th November, 1912.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Report of the Zoological Gardens and Acclimatisation Committee for the year ending 30th June, 1912. 2, Supplementary Return re Crop Reports in Esperance and Norseman Districts—Further Return to Order of the House dated 29th October, 1912.

# QUESTION—ESPERANCE AND NORSEMAN LANDS.

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that a large number of goldfields residents are anxious to acquire wheat lands in the mallee belt between Esperance and Norseman, and that no information is available at the Kalgoorlie lands office as to when the said lands will be available for selection? 2, Is he aware that settlement in the Esperance-Norseman district is being blocked by the withdrawal of these lands from selection? 3, Since this land has been classified as first-class wheat land by a majority of the members of the Railway Advisory Board, and by other official experts, will the Government have it surveyed and thrown open for selection as soon as possible? 4, If not, why not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The course pursued is the same as in other similar cases. 3, Though there is perhaps the largest area of unoccupied good wheat land in the State in this locality, it is considered inadvisable to throw it open until railway facilities are approved. 4, Answered by No. 3.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. FRANK WILSON (for Mr. Layman) leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. George on the grounds of ill health.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1912-13.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the 7th November on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and the Annual Estimates; Mr. Holman in the Chair.

Vote—*His Excellency the Governor*, £2,746:

Mr. DOOLEY (Geraldton): I listened with a great deal of pleasure to the Budget presented by the Treasurer, particularly with regard to the mass of detail in connection with the work done during the past year, and when

I come to consider the many croaking criticisms from certain sections of the Press I am very pleased that the general tone of comment should be one of proper optimism. With regard to the opposition offered to the Budget, I can only say I was very much disappointed at the puerility of the criticism.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is a nice word.

Mr. DOOLEY: It suits the occasion. I naturally expected that when this criticism was offered we would be told exactly where the Opposition would have done differently had the position been changed. But we look in vain for anything of the kind in the speeches of the Opposition. Of course, with every member of the House, I regret that we have a deficit instead of a credit. We naturally like to be on the right side of the ledger. But when we come to understand that the deficit has been caused by the very bad season, and when we consider that the expenditure entailed has been in the interests of the individual welfare of the community, I think we have very little to complain about in that respect. There are one or two matters which, I think, the Premier should seriously take into consideration when replying to the debate. There is, for instance, the statement made by the leader of the Opposition with regard to the cost of loan flotation. That hon. gentleman stated that had he been conducting the negotiations for loans the incidental expenditure in connection therewith would have been reduced to the extent of £190,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did I say that?

Mr. DOOLEY: Yes.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not. You are misquoting me.

The Premier: I scarcely think the leader of the Opposition could have said that, because it is a matter of impossibility for any man to do.

Mr. DOOLEY: Well, that is the interpretation I put upon his remarks, and if I have misread or misheard the hon. member I hope he will put me right. I certainly understood him to say that the extra cost of floating those loans, as compared with what the pre-

vious Government would have done, amounted to £190,000, which meant a dead loss of that amount to the country. It is a very serious matter, and one which, I think, requires to be cleared up. The hon. member also stated that the Premier had illegally manipulated the funds of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department, to the extent that he had utilised them in a way not in accordance with proper book-keeping. The hon. member pointed out that the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage was controlled by a special Act which provided that the profit, if any, in connection with the department should be devoted entirely to improving the supply, or the works in connection therewith. With regard to the statement that something like £630,000 had been expended on works not directly reproductive, I am very glad the leader of the Opposition has drawn attention to the fact; because, although the Premier in the past has put a certain definition on what should be regarded as strictly reproductive works, and what money should be borrowed for works of any kind, I think that when the circumstances are taken into consideration it will be conceded that the expenditure was amply justified. The leader of the Opposition seems to take exception to the Premier using that money for the assistance of the agricultural industry, and also the mining industry and immigration. He objects to that, when, as a matter of fact, he would himself have advocated the same thing in similar circumstances. The member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) sought to make it appear that the unemployed difficulty had not existed during the regime of the previous Administration. He endeavoured to make out that on previous occasions, when unemployed agitations were brought before the country, the party now sitting on the Government benches tried to vamp up a difficulty or problem in connection with unemployment which did not actually exist, but that, as soon as they got into power, things were altered and a real unemployed difficulty cropped up, notwithstanding which they were stony-

hearted and absolutely refused to take into consideration the crying needs of the unemployed. It is a most remarkable thing that the latest report of the State Labour Bureau clearly sets forth that so far as unemployment in this State is concerned matters are practically as they were during the previous year, namely, 1910-11. Of course we know very well that no matter how prosperous the country may be there are times in the history and work of the State when certain big works have been finished and a little time elapses before other works are taken in hand, with the result that, for the time being, there is a slight unemployed problem. But so far as is indicated by any record other than the mere fact that a few men chose to rush precipitately to the Premier in connection with this matter the other day, the position is, if anything, an improvement on what it was in previous years. We find that, so far as general labouring work is concerned, that is work in the agricultural industry, in July of this year there were 34 positions to be filled, which were turned down by the men who came to the Labour Bureau for work; in August there were 32, in September 79, and in October, the very time when there was supposed to be such a great dearth of employment, there were 112 positions offering at the Labour Bureau which were not accepted by persons seeking work of a general kind. Public works provide the best payment and the most congenial employment, and because some of these works have been completed, and there has been an interim between their completion and the starting of others, there is temporary unemployment, but nothing to justify the outcry that has been made. I had occasion to call on Mr. Longmore this morning in connection with a matter quite apart from unemployment, and I asked him if his department had experienced any pressure in regard to applications for assistance on account of unemployment, and he stated that there had been no indication that matters in that respect are in any way worse than they have been before. These facts should speak with a little more

authority than the mere assertion of the member for Greenough. Another statement which that hon. member made was that the Labour party advocated one thing when in Opposition and practised quite another when sitting in authority, but that statement ill-becomes the hon. member, because we know that so far as that attitude in politics is concerned, there is nobody in politics throughout the Commonwealth to-day who lays himself open to a charge of that kind more than the hon. member has done. We have only to recognise that throughout this Parliament we have endeavoured to put into execution and upon the statute-book the very planks of our platform which we have advocated in season and out of season. I need only refer to the Industrial Arbitration Bill, the Workers' Compensation Bill, the Workers' Homes Act, and last, but by no means least, the Amending Land Bill. If those measures, amongst others, are taken into consideration, the charge of insincerity is at once dissipated. I must certainly take strong exceptions to one or two clauses in the annual report of the Commissioner of Railways. The report states on page 11—

The various items improving the financial position of the staff at large, as detailed above, total £107,300. It is with extreme regret that I have observed no general increase of energy or effort corresponding with such a large increase of expenditure.

I contend that that statement is entirely unjustified, or, if there is any justification for it at all, the statement is a gross reflection on the Commissioner and his departmental heads. Either it implies that hitherto the staff were working at their limit, and there was in consequence, no room for any increased energy, or that the organisation of the staff was such that they were not able to get a fair return for the money expended. I know from my own experience that the statement is not correct. It may be all right for the Commissioner to sit back and say, "I am giving you more money, let me see you do more work," but if a staff is not properly organised, if proper encouragement is

not given, and the men are not properly directed, then nobody but those in charge of the organisation is to blame for such a state of affairs. I regard the statement as nothing else but a mere piece of spleen, because the Commissioner has had to grant a decent living wage much against his inclination. I know very well that it would pay him better if he gave a little more sympathy and encouragement to the rank and file, instead of making carping criticisms which are entirely out of place in a report of this character. He has in his department men who are working night and day on inventions and improvements to facilitate the working of the railway system. I know of fully half-a-dozen men who are working on improvements of this character, and who have received only the scantiest thanks. I have recollections of a former Commissioner of Railways in New South Wales (Mr. Eddy), who, with all his faults, recognised the great advantage it was to encourage the rank and file to put forward their best efforts, and he used to circularise the men, inviting them to offer their ideas for improvements in all branches of the service. The result was a vast saving in the management, and a far better spirit prevailed amongst the staff themselves. I know of one man who has effected considerable improvements in one or two things, and in one case he was absolutely deprived of the little credit that should have been due to him. One improvement which he has devised means a saving of many thousands of pounds to the Railway Department, and yet he has received no satisfaction in connection with it. His union took the matter up and laid it before the Commissioner, but his claim, which was in relation to an experiment that he had carried out on his own account, with the approval of his local foreman, has remained in abeyance for eighteen months. I say that is grossly unfair. When this man proved that he was capable of improving the service and of evolving ideas which would mean a big saving to the department, he was not given the ordinary rise which was due to him. He wanted to have the

full credit that was due to him for his invention, but that did not suit certain people who thought the matter should have been handed over to the department and that he should be prepared to take any thanks that might be offered to him as an act of grace. This improvement was chiefly in connection with an axle box. The lubricator was found to be unworkable and to be continually causing trouble and delays to the traffic by becoming heated and burning out. It was not possible to insert a new lubricator except by hanging up the train, and that of course involved great delay. This man devised an alteration which did away with that trouble, and consequently saved the department a good deal of expense. That was only one item, but I know of others of a similar nature. I know of one case where the man is having his patent acknowledged throughout Australia and by the Commonwealth Government, and I believe that the American railway companies have also decided to adopt it; yet that man was working on his invention for four or five years before he could get the slightest recognition of his efforts. Another matter in which I think the Commissioner has shown rather bad policy is in connection with the espionage being practised on certain members of his running staff. I know just as much about the average man and his ideas of honesty as anybody does, and I contend that the system of espionage adopted by the Commissioner is not going to improve matters. That system was turned down by the Police Department long ago. I refer to the practice of engaging pimps to watch men who have the handling of money. The fact that the Commissioner in his report has not a single defalcation to report on this occasion speaks volumes for the staff; yet we find him engaging men of no character to act as spies on other men, and also practising the devices of way back publicans in requiring a return of 165 and 170 per cent. on the liquor sold. I consider such practices are unworthy of a gentleman holding the position of Commissioner of Railways. Surely there are other methods which can be adopted

if there is any doubt as to a man's honesty. Caterers in other walks know the amount of provisions they supply and the number of meals those provisions should provide and also what return to expect from a given stock of liquor, without adopting tactics such as those resorted to by the Commissioner. If an attendant does beat an estimate based on something like a business system it is time then to seriously consider whether the employment of that particular person in that capacity should be continued.

Mr. Taylor: Some persons rely largely on the cash register.

Mr. DOOLEY: That system could be adopted, but there are other systems. It seems that the obsolete system which the Police Department have turned down of employing pimps and that class of men, men of no character who cannot be relied on—

Mr. Underwood: When did the police turn it down?

Mr. DOOLEY: It has been turned down by the police for some time.

Mr. Underwood: What next?

Mr. DOOLEY: Yes it has. The method adopted by the police now is to—

Mr. Underwood: A lot of men get into the force that way, that is their initiatory work.

Mr. DOOLEY: The Police Department are engaging a better class of men and are putting them on the permanent staff, and are making them responsible officers. I am not applauding that; I am simply saying that the old system of employing this type of man to catch attendants—respectable men so far as their characters go and of the very best credentials—is anything but laudable. In the other paragraph the Commissioner practically takes the Minister and Cabinet to task on account of the action of the employees in using political influence in order to gain their ends or to influence the Ministry to bring about improvements in their conditions which the Commissioner otherwise would not have granted. I contend that the Commissioner of Railways is a gentleman who is engaged as an expert manager, and as regards his passing of opinions which

are solely the province of the Minister in charge I consider the Minister should have resented it and refused to have allowed those statements to go into his report. Those statements are nothing more or less than an attempt to dictate to Cabinet in the first place and to Parliament in the next.

Mr. Taylor : Then you ask the Minister to revise the Commissioner's report ?

Mr' DOOLEY : Yes ; before it was allowed to go into circulation. Such a thing is a gross reflection on the Administration. He should not allow a gentleman in the position of Mr. Short to express his opinion and dictate as he has practically done to the Minister with regard to the action of his staff.

Mr. Taylor : As expert manager of a trading concern of the Government, he should be permitted to send in his report untrammelled by party or Governments or anything else.

Mr. DOOLEY : So far as it is confined to his business, the management of these railways, that is all right, but when it comes to a matter of political opinion it should not be allowed.

The Minister for Mines : This is not new. Exactly similar paragraphs have appeared year after year in his reports and I want the hon. member to understand this is not the first year he has expressed this opinion.

Mr. DOOLEY : I understand that, but it ill-becomes the Commissioner. The reason he is squealing is because the general staff have reaped some benefit by making a legal, proper and constitutional representation to the powers that be. He makes no reference to the time when the Commissioner's appointments were made and to the political influence used then to improve the position of some of those gentlemen. As long as the heads of the departments can have full approach to the political heads nothing is said, but when it is a matter of getting something like decent living conditions for the rank and file it hurts the Commissioner and he must perforce rush this ill-timed reference into his report.

Mr. Taylor : The hon. member is prejudiced.

Mr. DOOLEY : I am not. I was just about to commend the Commissioner for a matter which is within his sole province, and that is the method of constructing new railways. The Commissioner has made a report for which I highly commend him. I do not see how an expert could have spoken in any other strain. Moving about the country and knowing some of the inspectors who have had to report on this matter, I know the Commissioner is on solid ground when he says that the Works Department after constructing railways in the past have not handed them over in a proper and fit state to work.

Mr. Taylor : He is correct in that.

Mr. DOOLEY : He is. This is no reflection either on the Public Works Department or on the contractors. The trouble arises from the anxiety and rush to get the work completed and handed over to the department as afterwards there is always a certain amount of shrinkage and settling down, and to rectify this has been an unfair burden on the railway department. Before the railways have been working any length of time alterations and refitting have had to be carried out.

Mr. Taylor : The maintenance for the first 12 or 18 months is too great.

The Minister for Mines : Not only for the first 12 or 18 months. The railways are too light.

Mr. DOOLEY : These light agricultural lines have in many instances developed practically into trunk lines, and the policy has been shortsighted on account of not taking that fact sufficiently into account. Lines have been rushed out here and there and they have been light lines to serve a limited district, and in course of a year or two they have developed into trunk lines. The Commissioner of Railways asks that he should construct these lines. Everything in connection with railway construction should be in the hands of the Railway Department. That department has to maintain the lines and naturally the officers will see that the works are built on a proper foundation, and they will construct them with an eye to the future

welfare of the track. Another matter upon which I would like to touch is in connection with workers' homes. The Workers' Homes Board are doing a great work. I have had a good deal to do with the board as a result of people seeking assistance from the board, and I would like to say that what we consider the least effective part of the Act, Part IV., is the only part which has been put into operation up to the present. I contend that we have been too long waiting for the operation of Part III. So far as the operation of Part IV. is concerned I have nothing but commendation for the board, and I wish particularly to refer to the secretary. There is no one in our public service who can be more courteous or has a keener insight, or carries out his duties more conscientiously. Everyone who comes into contact with him has nothing but the highest praise to offer for his promptness in dealing with every matter brought before him. When an application is made no time is lost on his part in placing it before the board, and when the board have dealt with it, he expedites matters to the fullest possible extent. It is fully nine months since I pointed out to one member of the board that there were considerable sites around Geraldton which should be dedicated and brought under the operations of Part III. of the Act. That gentleman asked the district surveyor to make a note and report on those sites. So far as can be gathered nothing in the way of having them dedicated to the board has been done, and people are clamouring for homes in Geraldton under this section, but they are unavailable. The result is that the land boomer is getting in. He sees what is coming and he is cutting up land and offering to provide for the worker at a good rate of interest. He is booming land values, he is inflating them unnecessarily and the burden of this will have to be borne by the Workers' Homes Board later on. The longer the delay the greater will be the difficulties of the board when Part III. is brought into operation. I strongly urge the Premier to give consideration to this matter

because, so far as I can see, from one end to the other of the settled and industrial portion of the State, this is causing a good deal of dissatisfaction, and the supply of decent housing accommodation at reasonable rates is as far off as ever it was.

Mr. Taylor: With regard to that worker's home, the floor of which collapsed with the weight of a roll of linoleum, did that happen at Geraldton?

Mr. DOOLEY: I do not know that it did. I do not know anything about it. In conclusion I would like to ask the Opposition where they would endeavour to improve on the present method of raising revenue and expending the money in connection with the administration of the State. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) stated that he sees nothing but lavish expenditure. I listened attentively in the hope that I would hear something in the way of constructive criticism, but I maintain that the Opposition are not fulfilling their functions if they do not point out where improvements can be made. If they say the expenditure is too great, how would they suggest it should be lessened? Would they reduce the expenditure on immigration, or the expenditure on education? Would they reduce the salaries and improved conditions given to the civil servants and the police? Would they reduce extra expenditure in wages in the Railway Department? If they would, they should say so; if not, they should point out where improvement can be made. This carping criticism is that of which Byron spoke when he said, "A man must serve his time to every trade except that of censor; critics are all ready made." That sort of thing is very nice to talk about, but the country wants to know just exactly how and where we are going to improve the condition of things with regard to the expenditure. The member for Kimberley complained about the proposed taxation of the Government, and spoke about the increased land tax and the raising of the exemption in connection with the income tax and making it a graduated tax. But that is the Government's method of meeting

this increased expenditure, and, as I have said, I have listened very closely to get some point that would indicate to the House and the country where improved methods of financing the country could come in.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning) : It is not my intention to address myself at any length to the question of the Budget. I did not have the opportunity of being in the Chamber when the Premier delivered his Budget, but I have since had an opportunity of reading the Premier's speech in *Hansard*. I fully sympathise with him and his Government in the unfortunate position in which they now find themselves so far as finances of the country are concerned. The deficit announced by the Premier has for some months past been expected by hon. members who have followed the published statements of the finances from time to time; and, therefore, the announcement by the Premier did not come as a surprise. Excuses are always made, and no doubt it is every Treasurer's privilege to be able to make excuses for deficits, but in this case I think the Premier and the Government have laid too much stress upon the unfortunate bad season which has prevailed in this State during the past year. I admit that the Government were faced with very trying circumstances in the first year of their administration, and I do not wish to be ungenerous to Ministers; I fully appreciate the efforts they put forward in endeavouring to meet the peculiar situation brought about by the unfortunate partial drought in our agricultural districts; but at the same time, when we come to look into the statements of revenue and expenditure placed before the Committee, we find there are other reasons which have added very greatly to the difficulties in which the Government find themselves to-day, for instance, the undue haste with which the Government have, upon assuming office, increased and very largely increased, the expenditure in connection with our railways. Certain sections of the community may think this is very commendable, but at the same time the Government should

have been more cautious and the Treasurer should have looked further ahead before rushing into this very large expenditure without reckoning the results. I have not the slightest doubt that in that big trading concern, the Railway Department, there are many of our employees who have been underpaid and possibly overworked, but to some extent that has to be expected in a large department such as the Railway Department. We do not of course wish to see our employees underpaid or overworked, at the same time it is the duty of the Government to deal cautiously with the expenditure of large sums of public money as instanced in this case. It would have been more preferable to have made these increases to the railway officials more gradually and not to have increased salaries to the extent that was done in one year.

The Minister for Mines: My difficulty is that they are saying it is too gradual.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: One must view with very grave concern the fact that the great revenue-producing concern of the State, the Railway Department, should be faced with such an abnormal expenditure in one year. What the people of the country want to know is where this increased cost of administration is going to end. We also have this unfortunate fact in the report of the Commissioner of Railways referred to very much in the House during the last few weeks, that, although these increases have taken place, there is no increased energy shown by a number of the officials. I have had some experience of the railway officials, and I think the country has every reason to be proud of the railway staff, but the time has arrived when the railway officials and other officials in the employ of the State should realise that these institutions are not carried on for the fun of the thing or in the interests of the officials only, but that they are in the first instance provided to develop and assist in the development of the country. In view of the fact that we are faced with this large increased expenditure during the past year and the probability of an even greater cost of ad-



ministration in the very near future, the people of the State require some assurance from Ministers as to where this is likely to end. What is going to be the result of the efficiency and good work we expect to be done by our railways in opening up and developing the country? Viewed from an agriculturists' point of view we can only say that we are greatly concerned as to what is going to be the result of the administration of this department, especially if it is to be controlled by a Minister instead of being removed from political control as now. The Premier has not taken us into his confidence so far as this is concerned; but reading between the lines, I should say that it is the intention of the Government to advocate the political control of the railways. If that is the case, the Government will be faced with greater difficulties, and it will be very hard to say where the trouble is going to end so far as the railway administration is concerned. Take the recent strike at Midland Junction. It was called a conference, but after all, I think that we can take that as another word for strike. We have heard very little in the Chamber during this debate with regard to this particular strike or conference that took place a few months ago, yet we have only to keep our eyes open going through the country to see evidence of it, to see trains stuck up in many directions and engines which have been almost ruined as a result of the temporary stoppage of a certain section of the employees at Midland Junction. The Government were very much to blame in that they did not show a stiff back in connection with this conference. I contend that if any Government employees go out on strike and the assets of the State are damaged—if they intentionally go out on strike and allow these assets of the State to become seriously damaged or their efficiency impaired. I think they should be seriously dealt with, and in this case I am surprised that the Government did not take some serious action. It is generally admitted, even by the railway employees themselves, that as a result of that conference many of the locomotives

in the department are in a shocking state of disrepair.

Mr. Thomas: How could the Government help that?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Government should have shown a firm hand.

The Minister for Mines: What would you have done?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I know what should have been done. The Minister knows that Ministers and those gentlemen sitting by him are only reaping the just reward of some of their past labours. We want hon. members who are seeking the suffrages of the electors to instil into the minds of the gentlemen whose suffrages they are seeking that there is another side to this question besides that of higher wages and shorter hours. There is the question of loyalty to the employer. It is a singular fact that we very rarely hear hon. members when addressing meetings of their supporters reminding them that there is another side to the contract. All we hear of is the cry for shorter hours and higher pay, and with this continually going on there is not the least doubt that the average workman is coming to feel that there is nothing to expect beyond shorter hours and higher pay. He is not expected to put any more energy into his work; he has lost all interest in it. He works eight hours a day and during the remainder of the time is probably conniving as to the best way of getting shorter hours and increased pay. As far as my experience goes with workmen, I have always endeavoured to see that they are properly treated and perfectly satisfied, and I do not see that any worker should expect more than this, no matter in what walk of life he may be employed. When we hear hon. members continually expressing solicitude for increased wages and shorter hours, it is not to be wondered at that we should have these difficulties and that the State should be put to serious loss and inconvenience, as was the case in respect to the Midland Junction conference or strike. The Premier has pointed to the great activity in regard to public works. I want to say again that any criticisms I have to offer are not offered in party spirit alone, nor do I wish to be

ungenerous to Ministers, for I feel convinced that they have conscientiously done what they thought to be best. At the same time I consider the Government are on the wrong track, and especially in regard to the policy of carrying out public works departmentally. I do not object to some works being carried out departmentally. I think it is a very good thing that some of our works should be left to the department, for the reason that we are thus better able to know what they are likely to cost, and, moreover, it is a good check upon the contractors. At the same time I do not think we are adopting a very wise policy in carrying out all our works departmentally, and I view with a certain amount of concern the announcement of the Premier that there are over 3,000 employees in the service of the Public Works Department. I realise that a good number of these men will be employed on the agricultural railways under construction. But when we come to think of the numbers of them who are in small detached parties spread throughout the State, and the cost to the State of shifting those parties from one place to another we must believe that the cost of administration is necessarily greater than if the work were carried out by contract. Therefore I think that, instead of the employment of all these men in the department being a cause for congratulation, the House should be told exactly where these employees are engaged. For my part I think it will be found that many of the works being carried out under departmental supervision could be more economically carried out if let by contract, or placed under the control of the local authority.

Mr. Thomas: Have you any proof of that?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes I have instances in my own district, instances of which the Minister himself is aware. I am convinced that there are many cases in which the work could be done by the local authority at a cheaper rate and more effectively than it can be done under departmental control. It is satisfactory to know that during the past year a great deal of land settlement has taken place, in fact we are told by the Premier that even

more land was disposed of last year than in the previous year. Although regretting the necessity for the display of consideration, we appreciate the fact that during the past year the Government have reserved the rents of those settlers who, through the bad season they had experienced, were not able to meet their engagements. I think the result of last year's land settlement should have convinced the Government that it is futile to bring in a measure altering the tenure of our lands. I am quite satisfied that if the Bill becomes law we shall see a very serious falling-off in the settlement of our lands during the current year. This will mean a great drawback to the country, and will seriously affect the progress of the State.

The Minister for Mines: The settlers are all anxiously waiting to come under it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: All I can say is that the Minister has a lot to learn in regard to land settlement. I know, of course, that Ministers are anxious to build up a big revenue, but I know, too, that this proposed alteration of our system of land tenure has been and is being very unfavourably received throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Mr. Underwood: By whom—those who have already got land?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: No, those who are looking for it. It is absurd for any hon. member who knows anything about poison country to get up and advocate a system of leasehold tenure in preference to freehold. When you come to consider that it takes almost 20 years of work before one can say that the land which once grew poison is safe, and that it is proposed to ask people to take up this land which is useless to-day and a menace to the country, and to ask the settler to give the whole of his energy and capital to the development of that land; and that when he has made an asset of it the departmental officers will come along and re-appraise his rent—in view of all this the proposition is an absurd one.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They will have the poison land for 10 years rent free in your district.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes, as a leasehold measure it is very liberal and, so far as

the poison is concerned, I congratulate the Minister upon being able to find out some means of giving assistance to those people who have poison lands. But that does not get over the difficulty so far as the principle of the Bill is concerned. I say there will be very great difficulty in getting people to look at land settlement unless you can give them some fixed tenure. Again, so far as improvements are concerned, we know it is quite impossible to value them, because many improvements are in the form of clearing and cultivation, and in other forms not constituting visible assets. We know that after many years people sometimes take stock of the value of their improvements on their lands and that they will inform you that they could not tell where the money had gone to—notwithstanding that it had been wisely expended. Under the Bill the leaseholder would not receive a fair return for the money he expended in the way of improvements. However, I do not think the Government are altogether sincere in their belief in regard to this measure. They have a pretty good idea of the fate it is likely to receive in another place. It is merely another plank of the party's platform, as fixed at Bunbury, which is now being brought before Parliament.

Mr. Underwood: It was fixed before Bunbury was ever heard of.

The Minister for Mines: Who told you that it was being unfavourably received?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I say that, so far as the people of the country are concerned, they hold that it is a very bad measure.

Mr. Underwood: They did not say so at the last elections.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I would have thought the Minister could employ his time better by giving some redress to those people who have found themselves in the unfortunate position of having taken up poison country at prices beyond its true value. I have on more than one occasion brought under the notice of the Minister the great disabilities under which the people to the west of the Great Southern line are labouring.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Your leader says that only land speculators disapprove of the high prices.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Many of the people in that locality who have taken up land in the areas to the west of the Great Southern are in a very bad position. They have been waiting for some years for an alteration to be made in the reclassification of their land. In the first instance their areas are too small to admit of their making a livelihood, the price charged is too high—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): How is it the price is too high?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The price was fixed beyond its true value.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Yes, by the late Minister in his office, in opposition to the advice of his responsible officers.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I do not make any excuses for the prices which were fixed. The late Minister has for some time past known my views in regard to the prices fixed. I have held all along—and I do not care whether a Minister of the late Government or of the present Administration is responsible—that the prices were wrong.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Give the credit where it is due.

Mr. Monger: The prices the Government are fixing now are altogether out of reason.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I point out to the Minister that the high prices are still being perpetuated and instead of being reduced, in connection with which so much was said by Labour members at the last general election, I understand that in some instances they have been increased.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How does the present Minister fix them—in his office?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I understand that the report of the surveyors filters through certain officials in the head office and is finally dealt with by the Minister.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He does not increase the price, anyhow.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I would not like to blame the Minister unfairly and I should be the last to do it. I heard only the other day of an instance of subdivision where land had been thrown open under the administration of the late Minister for Lands and was with-

held for a time from selection and it has since been thrown open and some of the blocks have been increased to a higher price. I do not know whether the Minister is aware of that fact, but if he wishes it I will give him the instance. So far as the Department of Agriculture is concerned, very good work has been done in the past year in the construction of roads and in the provision of water supplies, and although perhaps the Government were not successful in striking good water in every bore, I think a very great deal of credit is due in the first instance to the officials at the head of that department who spared no energy during that very trying period. Whether the work could not have been carried out better by contract is a matter which should be looked into by the Government, because I am satisfied that in some instances it could have been done cheaper by the local authority than by the Public Works Department. The supply of seed wheat and manure to the farmers who had the misfortune not to reap a crop last year has been very much appreciated, and I can only hope that with the prospect of a better season, the people who were unfortunate enough to have to apply for seed and manure will be able to reap a bumper harvest and rapidly pay back to the Government the advances made to them. The rolling down of thicket country is a matter which has engaged my attention for a considerable time, and one which I feel is of great interest to those settlers who have land in the Ongerup, Gnowangerup, and Nampup districts. About 18 months ago investigations were made through the Agricultural Department for suitable plant for the purpose of rolling down thicket country and I am very pleased to know that the tests made then have been continued up to the present until now we know that this country can be rolled down by steam power at less than half the cost for which the scrub can be cut down. There is one plant at work at Ongerup and it is doing excellent work. There are two plants at present undergoing improvement and alteration for the purpose of this work, but it is almost exasperating to think of the terrible delay that has taken place in

preparing these plants. It has been under way for months, and for three months I have been informed that these plants will be ready in a fortnight. I understand that it will still be a fortnight before the plants can leave the nearest railway station and there is even a probability that it will be in the new year before work can be started. I have brought under the notice of the Minister the urgent need for having more plants prepared, because we have hundreds of thousands of acres of this country which can be rolled and which the people of these localities are waiting to have rolled as soon as the plant is available. Although these plants run into £1,200 or £1,500 apiece, the expenditure after all is very small and I hope the Minister will, even at this late stage, although he complains he has not the money available to purchase other plants, do something to provide the two extra plants to which I have referred.

Mr. Underwood: But that is socialistic.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The hon. member can hardly say I am advocating socialistic ideals. We know very well the difficulty that was experienced to get anyone to take up this work. It was work of a special character and attended with risk.

Mr. Gill: For that reason the State should take it up?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Yes, why should we ask any individual to run the risk of ruination for a matter which will be of great benefit to the State?

Mr. Gill: Then there is no objection to State socialism when there is a bit of risk attached to it?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I regret so far as our mining industry is concerned that we have not a better tale to tell. We know very well and members of agricultural constituencies realise the service which the mining industry rendered to this State, especially in its earlier stages.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And is doing now.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Not to the extent it was a few years ago. I am not one who is of opinion that our mining industry is played out. I think there is still great hope for the future. No one can say that all the gold to be won in this State is centred round the Golden Mile.

Western Australia is a big country after all.

The Minister for Mines: We are still producing 50 per cent. of the gold yield of Australasia.

Mr. Underwood: What about tin and copper?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Minister's statement is satisfactory. There are also other minerals such as tin and copper, and I am satisfied every encouragement and assistance should be given to develop these industries. We have been told by the Premier that everything will be all right and that the good crop we expect to reap is going to put the country's finances right. Although that is not going to be done in one year it is going to be done within two years, but it is very poor consolation to the man who is going to help to put the country right to know that one of the first Acts the present Administration desire to give effect to is the increase of land and income taxes. Members of the Opposition have been twitted that the farmers always object to pay taxes. I know there are many properties, not only farms, but lands in this country, and probably farm lands which could well afford to pay a fair taxation. They have been well established, they have probably had railway communication for many years and they are in good positions and their owners or occupiers are well established. When we come to consider that so much of our land has been taken up within the last five or six years, that is the greater proportion of our alienated land, I am afraid the Government and their supporters do not fully realise what this increased taxation means to the new settler. Certainly the Government are providing under their taxation proposals that the five years' exemption given to a holder of land not exceeding 1,000 acres for all land selected prior to the passing of the Bill will be still exempted; at the same time I think the Government have overlooked the fact that during the last few years the local governing bodies have greatly increased their taxation. Local taxation has been increased very considerably during the last four or five years. While last year £50,000 was col-

lected by the roads boards by way of rates—I have not the figures for the municipalities—I believe a fair estimate of this year's rates will be something approaching £80,000. Notwithstanding the fact that we have gone through a most trying period in the history of the agricultural industry, with poor crops last year which will take many of our settlers two or three years to recover from, we believe that the proposals of the Government are going to work a very great hardship particularly on the new selector and certainly when all exemptions are wiped out. I think the Government ought to take into consideration the fact that local authorities have done so much in the way of taxation and some provision should be made in this measure to provide—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in discussing a measure to come before the House.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I was going to say that as far as taxation is concerned we should apply the same provisions as exist in New South Wales. That is to say, that an exemption should be provided. Where the local authorities tax up to a certain amount the State tax should not be in existence also. Then we are told that the Government propose to appoint a Valuer General, creating another State department, to see that the local authorities rate land properly. I do not see anything to complain of the manner in which the local authorities have rated their lands in the past. My experience goes to prove that in most instances this work is carried out by a sworn valuator under the Transfer of Land Act. In my district that has been done for years past.

The Minister for Works: It is the majority we are trying to get at. The minority may tax all right.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Minister has the solution of the difficulty in his own hands. He can withhold a certain amount of subsidy.

The Minister for Works: No, that is not a fair way.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It has been done in the past. We passed a measure in this Chamber a few years ago making it in-

perative for local bodies to rate up to 1d. in the pound, and I can assure the Government they would have acted wisely if they had left the proposals to increase the tax out of the question altogether, because whatever tax you put on the land it must reduce the value of that land as a security, especially at this juncture, when money is badly needed and tight throughout the whole world and difficult to obtain. We should be slow to put further taxes on the land and reduce security. I understand it is the intention of the Government to further liberalise the Agricultural Bank. The work which has been done by that institution during past years has been very good, but to some extent it has been disappointing. The management have done well to meet the increased work that has fallen on the bank, but as money is very much more difficult to obtain and the Associated Banks have practically closed down, and the rates of interest are increasing daily, it is almost impossible to get advances from the Associated Banks except from hand to mouth as it were.

The Minister for Works: That is not limited to Western Australia.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am quite aware of that. We are in a rather peculiar position as far as Western Australia is concerned. We have disposed of a certain area of land which has to be improved within certain periods, and we must have capital with which to do that work.

The Minister for Works: We would be in a very bad way if we had to trust to the banking institutions to assist us.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The private banking institutions have done good work in the past.

The Minister for Works: Why then was it necessary to have an Agricultural Bank Act in the past?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Because we could not get the Associated Banks to look at a holding as a security before it became developed and improved.

The Minister for Works: It is exactly the same to-day.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It is not the same to-day. The chartered banks have done good work in the country.

The Minister for Works: They have been endeavouring in the past to get the result of the development by the Agricultural Bank. The bank has proved a property good and then the banking institutions have taken it.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: In that case the Agricultural Bank has precluded a settler from going any further. He probably had a big margin of security and found that he could go to the Associated Banks and get more money than from the Agricultural Bank. I have stated in the past that settlers have been foolish in leaving the Agricultural Bank and going to other institutions and probably they find that out to-day and are sorry for it. We are in this position to-day: after all the chartered banks are only the custodians of other people's money, money may be tightened up throughout the world, still we have some millions of acres of land under conditions of improvement, and money will have to be found or exemption will have to be given to the settlers in connection with the carrying out of their improvements. I think it is necessary for the Government to make provision in the direction of further liberalising the Agricultural Bank by altering the policy of the bank to meet the present situation. Otherwise they will find that the people are not going to develop the country, or the agricultural industry will not progress as fast as we may expect it to. I have no wish to keep the Committee longer more than to say that we wish to see people come to the country and obtain employment. We want to encourage people to come here with money to develop the country. There is any amount of room for them, and we want to restore confidence in the country. We want to make people who come here feel that they have every confidence in the country and the prosperity of the country, so that they are not afraid to invest their money. If we go on with some of the legislation which has been placed before Parliament and some that has been forecasted I think we are not going to

give that encouragement to the people that we should give. I only hope even at this late stage, the Government will not allow these measures to be so freely brought before Parliament, measures that are of a character likely to disturb the settled conditions of this country. I hope the prediction of the Premier that the good harvest that is almost assured will have a beneficial result on the finances of the country, will come to pass, and that it will be the cause of increased prosperity and increased development of the State.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I would just like to say a few words on this question, particularly in reply to the honourable gentleman who has just sat down. In dealing with the strike in the railway workshops, the hon. gentleman went on to moralise considerably on the trend of the working man of to-day. Of course he is not a working man himself.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: I expect he has worked harder than you have.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Once you make the remark that a member is not a working man the reply always is that he has worked harder than you have, yet some members always refer to the working man in connection with reduced hours and increased wages, and they are always complaining of the tendency of the men working for wages to endeavour to get as much as they can for their labour, but they forget as working men, who have worked harder than others, their efforts have always been to get as many hours as possible for as little as possible. I think the hon. gentleman should just recognise that the working men have as much right to get as much as they can as he has. In regard to the question of shorter hours, shortly I may say there are many occupations in which a man can do as much in six hours as another can in twelve hours during the year. I may say there is a general tendency, particularly among the agriculturists, to pay low wages and work long hours. I may say I heard some agricultural gentlemen speaking the other day. They pointed out that the men employed in clearing land worked all hours, worked very long hours, and one gentleman said, "The more power

to them," and when you hear a gentleman saying "The more power to them" in my experience that means less pay to them. When an employer says "More power" it means less pay always. Clearing is contract work as a rule, and from my experience it is the worst paid work in this country. At the same time it is certainly not work so hard as many other classes of labour, and there are quite a number of men employed at clearing who could not last ten minutes if they are put in a ballast pit with a navvy gauger over them. Yet they work for wages in clearing land. In regard to a few other remarks of the hon. gentleman in regard to the Land Bill, he endeavoured to point out the great amount of settlement that took place the year before last, and he said if the Government persisted in their leasehold Bill this settlement will be practically finished with. What I would like to point out to the member and to this House is the fact that the late Government did not settle the land, they sold the land. There were thousands of applicants for land who went away unsatisfied. The Government could not supply them with land. I know dozens of men, genuine settlers, who endeavoured to get land in the State, and after being turned down on three or four applications they left the State and went somewhere else to get land. While that state of affairs was in existence the Government were selling land to myself, for instance, to the Speaker, to the Chairman of Committees, to the Ministers on this side of the House, and to the Oppositionists on the other side of the House. As a matter of fact, while these settlers were looking for land and being refused, almost every member on the Opposition side of the House got land, and half the members on the Government side got land, and I want to say in my opinion they are not genuine settlers. There was also Sir Winthrop Hackett and Lady Hackett, Sir Walter James and Lady James who got land; Mr. Schruth, Mr. Glowrey, and almost all the leading hotel-keepers in Perth got land. Mr. Sommers and other land agents, almost all the land agents in Perth got land. All the leading stockbrokers were

supplied with land, practically all the civil servants, those in higher grades, and who are still in the service, are holders of this land that the late Government were supposed to settle. We find the manager of the State hotel and all of that class of civil servants are holders under this system of settlement that the Opposition boasted so much about. As a matter of fact, in the last six years, the Government in their administration of the land did all it was possible for any Government to do to block settlement in this State. They absolutely sold the land to those who, like myself had no intention of settling on it, and they turned down hundreds and possibly thousands of people, who had intended to settle on it. If that is what the hon. member calls settlement of the land, then we disagree very materially.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: I was alluding to the people already on the land.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: But the great bulk of the land was sold to men who have no intention of going on it, but who are holding it either with a view to selling it and obtaining the unearned increment, or working it by means of cheap labour, and most of them will refuse to allow the Arbitration Court to fix the wages. I am pleased indeed that this Government are endeavouring to retain at least the remnants of the agricultural land which are left, and keep it for the genuine settlers. The essential of their proposals is that the man or woman who gets the land must reside on it, and when residing on it, it is natural that they will have to get their living from it. The previous Government's idea of settlement was to sell the land at a fairly high price, which absolutely precluded any person without funds from becoming a settler, while in the proposals of the present Government the chance is given to practically every man to go on the land. Figures have been given previously, but I may quote them again. In a thousand-acre block, at £1 an acre in the first twenty years under the former Government's conditions, a man paid £1,000; under the proposals of the present Government, the payment will amount to a

little over £300, and the former Government were the Government who professed that they were already helping to settle the land.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: In some cases they had to pay £1,500.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly; there were one or two other statements made by the hon. member which are well worthy of consideration. He spoke of poison leases, and said that the Government would find it impossible to let poison land under existing conditions. All I can say is that we find it impossible to let this land under any conditions.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: A lot of it has been taken up.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: How much?

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Millions of acres.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was taken up at a shilling an acre, payable in twenty years, and a certificate had to be got to show that it was cleared of poison. I happen to know that hundreds of thousands of acres of that land which was taken up under the conditions I have stated has not had the poison taken off it to-day, and the Government have been swindled by those who took it up. The previous Government made an egregious mess of the poison leases, and I think it was up to the present Government to introduce a method which would be an improvement on that of the past.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: There is very little freehold issued under those conditions.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I know of one or two big ones. An extraordinary thing my friend mentioned was in regard to the scrub-rolling plants of the Government, and he became quite enthusiastic in supporting the idea that the Government should provide those machines, and he also became somewhat complaining because the Government did not use more expedition in regard to the matter. It is somewhat relieving to note that the whole of the members on the opposite side at least are not opposed to State enterprise. We have heard continual criticism from that side, particularly from the leader of the Opposition, in regard to the awful and fearful trouble that was ahead of us ow-



ing to the Government engaging in private enterprise and in business undertakings, and the hon. member, I have no doubt, quite agreed with it. At least he never opposed any of those remarks until it came to something which was for the benefit of the poor struggling cockey, and then he claimed that the Government were not going half far enough with their socialistic schemes.

Mr. A. E. Piesse : I said that the Government should roll the country before selling it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : I have no doubt that, if the hon. member got that far, he would advocate that the Government should take off the crop for the farmers. Again, the hon. member is highly socialistic. Indeed, I do not know when I have heard a more socialistic speech than that delivered by the hon. member in regard to the Agricultural Bank. He thinks that the chartered banks have done great things for this country. I agree that they have done great things—for their shareholders. But they are so good and philanthropic to the agriculturists at least, that he wants the State to come in and give them a hand. I will say that I think it is up to the hon. member, after advocating the extension of the operations of the Agricultural Bank, and the introduction of scrub-rollers and tree pullers and various other State enterprises for the assistance of the agriculturists, that he should give some support to the running of steamships to assist squatters and those who are struggling to open up the country in the Northern parts as well as those who are in the Southern portions. I claim that a line of steamships is equally essential to the development of the North as scrub-rollers and tree-pullers are essential to the South. I want to make a few remarks about the financial position. The leader of the Opposition has complained that the Government have done nothing very big, but still he has to admit that the deficit is a fairly large one. I would like to say in regard to much of the criticism that has been levelled against the Government in regard to the size of the deficit, that they should take into con-

sideration the past season which we have had in the agricultural country, and the past two or three bad seasons which culminated in another bad season lately experienced in the pastoral country. We have heard a lot about the poor struggling farmer, and he has my sympathy. We have heard a lot about the loss of railway freights, but we have not heard about the great drought which we have had along the western rivers of this country. The losses on the Ashburton and the Gascoyne rivers and at the head of the Murchison river will amount to at least £1,000,000. At one station alone there were lost between eighty and ninety thousand sheep, and when I point that out, members will appreciate what those districts have suffered. When we come to consider this in conjunction with the worst season that has been known in these districts, the greatest loss that has ever taken place in the pastoral industry in Western Australia; that all this has happened since the Scaddan Government have been in office, and that, in conjunction with the only bad season known since agriculture has been an industry in Western Australia, these things would put any Government back in their finance. The fact that we have not many unemployed, and the fact that we have been able to pull through as well as we have done, speaks wonders for the recuperative power of the State, and also says something for the management of those at the head of affairs. I am going to point out that a previous Government had a considerably larger deficit, and that they had this larger deficit during good seasons when there was no loss, when the money was not tight, and when a far greater return was being obtained from our mines. We have also had year after year hundreds of unemployed, and when the public come to realise the position the present Government are in, and the difficulties they have to contend against, I am sure they will see that it was a fortunate circumstance that the Labour Government were in power when the distressing time struck the State. I contend it is owing chiefly to the administration of the present Government

and to the inauguration of these very works which are complained about, that the State has pulled through as well as it has done. I do not think there is much more to be said, but I trust that the agricultural representatives when advocating socialism—a profitable class of socialism for themselves—will recognise that there are other people in the State who would be benefited by socialism, and that those people, as well as themselves, should be given a chance.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury): I do not know that I would have troubled to take any part in this debate had it not been for the fact that I was present the other evening, and listened to the speech delivered by the member for Pingelly, a long, eloquent and interesting address. That hon. member said a number of things to which I take strong exception, and for that reason I intend to take advantage of my privilege on this occasion to reply to some of his remarks, and incidentally to speak on a few other matters as well. What has impressed me in connection with the whole of this debate is that in previous years some of the hon. members who now occupy seats on the Opposition benches—there are not many there just now by the way—when they were in occupation of the Government benches, it was customary for them at all times to be most optimistic. Everything in the garden looked just perfectly lovely.

Mr. Underwood: Especially the deficit.

Mr. THOMAS: The Treasurer was always most optimistic about the glorious possibilities of this young country, and declared then that a deficit of a few hundred thousand pounds was absolutely nothing; that when the country began to feel its legs, when it had had a breathing space, so to speak, prosperity would come to us again in no small measure; but strangely enough, no sooner do those hon. members lose possession of the Treasury bench than everything becomes gloomy. The political sky is overcast. Pessimism is the order of the day. The country is going to the dogs, and poverty is staring us all in the face. It may be that is an honest conviction, but it may be in some

measure that the geographical position of hon. members at the present time, the fact of their being shifted from the emoluments of office over to the Opposition side, has somewhat jaundiced their views. The sun does not shine so brightly as it did prior to the last general election, and consequently in regard to everything done by the present Government they take the gloomiest view of the situation. I sympathise with those hon. members, as I always do sympathise with members of an Opposition, but I think they would show themselves to be better sportsmen if they would buck up, face the world boldly, and wait their time. It may be a long time, and I trust it will be a very long time before the country will trust them to handle its affairs again, but I would remind them that even in adversity cheerfulness is a virtue. It is a duty they owe to society. In previous years we have had genuine unemployed difficulties in Western Australia. We have had hundreds and hundreds of men out of employment.

Mr. Heitmann: Not very long ago, too.

Mr. THOMAS: No, not very long ago. But the then Liberal Government treated it very lightly, and said that it was only a temporary phase of our national existence, and that in due course things would adjust themselves; there was no need to worry. To-day a small temporary difficulty, less than those of previous occasions, hardly to be called an unemployed difficulty, crops up, and we hear our friends ranting of the failure of the Labour party to attend to the employment of the people. Strange it is through what different glasses one looks at things when sitting in Opposition and when sitting on the Treasury benches; what a difference it makes to one's judgment. On the one side everything is cheerful and bright, and on the other side everything is dyspeptic and jaundiced and miserable. Why is it? I do not know; I can only suspect. Despite the many charges levelled against the Treasurer for his financial statement and the deficit of which he is so proud, there is at least one that cannot be alleged. During his term of office and while the finances have

been drifting a little to leeward he has stuck to his position, he has remained in Perth and faced the situation, and I have no doubt that ultimately, with his sound practical grip of affairs, he will win. But I know of another Treasurer who, when the finances were drifting to leeward at the rate of £15,000 a month, hied himself away to Japan. He did not worry himself about how the affairs of the country were going; he was far away in sunny Japan, probably sunning himself in the smiles of a pretty little geisha, and yet those hon. members who have been so careless of the duty they owed to the State for the salaries they were receiving, and who have been so forgetful of what their duties were, are the first to-day to turn round and quibble and carp and grow gloomy over the prospects of the present Treasurer.

The Minister for Mines: That gentleman was sacked from the Treasury by Sir Newton Moore.

Mr. THOMAS: Yes. The hon. member who has so much to say on the Opposition side, and who is leading the attack on the Government, for practically every year he was in office piled up a fresh deficit, and finally his Premier realised that if the hon. member was left there long enough we would surely drift on to the financial rocks. Immediately Sir Newton Moore took the Treasury things began to show a slight improvement. However, be that as it may, I want to devote just a few moments to the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper). I listened to that gentleman with mingled feelings. I admired the length, if not the breadth of his oration, and, knowing the hon. member as an old goldfieldsite, I was literally astounded when I heard him making such disparaging remarks about the goldfields of Western Australia. One of the things I have always lamented in connection with party political strife is the effort continually being made by a certain section to stir up ill-feeling between the goldfields and the country members. For that reason I have much fault to find with the hon. member's speech. He referred on the goldfields in no unmeasured terms and said that they

received a good deal more consideration from the State than they were entitled to. Those remarks were not only unjust and unkind, but ungenerous to a degree. I do not think I am very far wrong in saying that the hon. gentleman owes his position in the House to what the goldfields have done for him, and in return for what the goldfields have done for him he has nothing to say for them but disparagement of their resources and possibilities. That is an act which is discreditable to any hon. member. In the words of the old saying, "He is biting the hand that fed him." If there is any hon. member who owes a debt of gratitude to the goldfields of the State it is the hon. member who has said so much to misrepresent them. His action is entirely unjustifiable. I know the two reasons why those remarks came from the hon. member. In the first place when the hon. member sought Federal honours the goldfields gave a very decided vote in favour of Labour. At the conclusion of those elections the hon. member broke forth in a tirade of abuse of the goldfields. Later, in seeking election for a farming constituency after he had thrown off the old goldfields love for the new, he found that the best way to succeed in his election was by praising up the district which he sought to represent and disparaging the goldfields which were said to have different political opinions. To my mind it is disreputable in the extreme to endeavour to forward one's political interests by stirring up strife amongst the different sections of the community. I represent a farming constituency and I am always prepared to urge what is just and right for the farming community, but I trust that I shall never be so mean as to forget what is due to the goldfields of the State. Where would be our prosperity to-day and our rapid development, of which we are so proud, if it had not been for those plucky miners who went into the interior and risked their lives in opening up and developing the goldfields which have brought so much wealth and advertisement to the State? I would like to see every hon. member representing a farming constituency give due credit to

the goldfields for the prosperity we now enjoy, and if in time to come we do give them a trifle more than they return in revenue I say we shall only be doing a tardy act of justice. The hon. member for Pingelly went on to attribute a great deal of our deficit and other imaginary misfortunes to Federation. It seemed to me a strange and anomalous position of affairs that an hon. member who aspired to be elected to the Federal Parliament some time ago should turn round and say that most of the ills from which Western Australia is suffering are due to Federation. While there was a prospect of getting a seat in the Federal Parliament at a salary much higher than we are paid in this State, I am sorry to say, the hon. member was prepared to discuss the good things that Federation might bring, but immediately that opportunity seems to have vanished for ever he cannot say enough in disparagement of the Commonwealth. I do not think that is a very admirable spirit. We were told by the hon. member that Western Australia would have prospered a great deal more had we never joined the Federation, and that we were giving away to the Federal Government something like half a million pounds a year in customs that we ought to be enjoying in Western Australia. We will assume for the purposes of argument that we are giving away half a million pounds a year in customs duties, but we must remember that we are getting something pretty considerable in return. We are getting 25s. a head for the whole of our population. We are getting this year, I think, something like £220,000 or £230,000 of a special grant, and I find that notwithstanding those figures, which would wipe off a good deal of the money we are supposed to be losing in customs, included in the Federal Estimates for the current year is a sum of £5,438,000 to be spent on defence. As Western Australia has a coastline of over 4,000 miles, practically one-third of the whole of the coastline of the Commonwealth, it may be claimed perhaps justly, that a big share of that money expended in the defence of Australia is expended in the defence of Western Australia.

Mr. Taylor: It is a big tax on the people.

Mr. THOMAS: It is a big tax on the people, and while I am not one of those who are anxious to push military matters to an extreme, yet I say we would be unworthy as Australians if we were not prepared to put our hands in our pockets to provide a reasonable amount for the protection of the country in which we live.

The Premier: Cheap insurance.

Mr. THOMAS: I have read of an individual who said that he was not going to fight for Australia—by the way, he was a socialist, like the member for Kattanning—and if he were shot anywhere, he would be shot behind.

Mr. Heitmann: That was rather an unnecessary remark.

Mr. THOMAS: I thought he ought to have been kicked in the same place. I do not like to see Australians complaining about the cost of the defence of Australia. I am proud of the fact that we have ceased to lean on the old country for our defence.

Mr. Wisdom: We have not.

Mr. THOMAS: We have to a very large measure, almost completely so, and we are working towards the time when we can do so. There was a time when we were children, politically speaking, and we were dependent on our parent nation for our protection, but we have grown to manhood, and I want to see Australia shoulder her share of the burden and be prepared to pay for her own defence, the same as any other country is doing. That together with the fact that we have federated and have national ideals makes Australians proud of their country as we see her marching forward to take her place among the great nations of the world. I need not pursue that point. In addition to what I have spoken of as returns we get from the Commonwealth, it must not be forgotten that over four millions pounds is to be spent on the great Trans-Australian railway, and the greatest benefit to be derived by any portion of Australia from that work will be the land in which we are living.

Mr. Wisdom: We are spending two million pounds.

Mr. THOMAS: For a paltry share.

The Premier: It is not for that work.

Mr. THOMAS: It is to contribute towards the completion of the work. Without Federation the Trans-Australian railway would never have been carried into effect during the lifetime of any member here; it would have been impossible with our finances to carry out that great national work. I have shown what the Commonwealth has done for Australia; I have not gone into the figures as I might have done, for I have other figures here. Take the Post and Telegraph expenditure. Not including new works and buildings, this has exceeded the revenue by £385,000, which has to be found by the Commonwealth, some share of the balance being due to Western Australia, a burden we would have to pay were the Commonwealth not in existence.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: What about the Customs?

Mr. THOMAS: I have allowed for the loss of the Customs. I am showing that we are really getting more back again than otherwise. Penny postage has been a priceless blessing to Western Australia, yet the Federal Parliament are carrying the whole of the cost of it.

Mr. Wisdom: We are carrying our share of it.

Mr. THOMAS: In addition to the loss on Posts and Telegraphs, £385,000, the Federal Government have spent £1,442,000 on new works and buildings. It is customary among certain politicians who do not stop to think to come to the conclusion that because we are not receiving the whole of the Customs revenue we might have had had we remained out of the Federation we are at the loss of it; but had we the Customs revenue we would also have the other expenses, the whole cost of defence and the loss on Posts and Telegraphs, and we would have a tariff war between Western Australia and the other States that ultimately would be a tremendous disadvantage.

Mr. McDowall: You would still take money from our people.

Mr. THOMAS: I cannot quite follow the hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: The money comes from the people, irrespective of the Government.

Mr. THOMAS: Of course, and the Commonwealth are spending it, just as much, and apparently, as far as I am able to get at it, more, in the interests of Western Australia, up to the present anyhow, than in the interests of any other State of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Heitmann: I still think they could do a little more for the development of the States.

Mr. THOMAS: If the hon. member had an opportunity in that august assembly and brought to bear the searchlight of his intelligence on these affairs, no doubt an improvement in the Federal administration would be immediately perceptible. It occurred to me while I listened to the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) alleging fault after fault against Federation that the hon. member could see nothing to be proud of in the Federation of all the States of Australia, in having one vast continent speaking one language, and having practically a one-coloured people aspiring to one great ambition only. It seemed to me that the hon. member, who could see nothing in the aspiration of a nation—

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with the Estimates now.

Mr. THOMAS: I am trying to show that for any loss of revenue we may have suffered through Federation we have compensating benefits. However, if I am wrong I shall not proceed on that line of argument further, but I hope I shall be allowed to make one little reference to the hon. member before I part company with him. The hon. member said that the only ray of sunshine we had in the State at the present moment was the farming industry. While I am prepared to make an allowance for the farming industry, I should think that the remark was just about as true as if the hon. member said he was the only ray of sunshine in this particular Chamber. We have been severely criticised in connection with this deficit; and when I say "we" I am pre-

pared to take a share of the blame as well as any credit that rests on the Treasurer; but while we have been criticised most unfairly and ungenerously, we have not been given credit for—and I apply this to members like the member for Kattanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) who, I think, is a fair-minded individual—what we have done to help the farming industry of the country, because much of the deficit that has been brought about has been brought about in our endeavour to do what is right and just in the interests of the people as a whole. I recognise the fact, perhaps not so clearly as my hon. leader the Premier, that the farming industry is the foundation of prosperity in this State. If a great architect were building an enormous structure that was to stand as a monument to his memory for all time, the first thing he would do would be to lay the foundation as firm as human skill and ingenuity could make it; and having done that, then he would proceed brick by brick and step by step towards the sky, with every confidence that his foundation was firm and sure. Thus it is with the Labour party. Wishful of building up a structure of prosperity that will stand as a monument to us for generations and generations to come, we are laying the foundation of that prosperity as firmly as science and genius and human ingenuity and skill can make it; we are providing for the prosperity of the primary producer, and thus his prosperity becomes the lasting and enduring prosperity of the State as a whole. I am not going to deal with many of the questions that have been dealt with here with regard to cost of water and that sort of thing during the last dry season; but in one act alone, in doing away with the special charge of a shilling a ton on new agricultural railways, an act which I think I may justly say is exclusively for the benefit of the man on the land, or almost exclusively for his benefit, with a falling revenue and financial difficulties facing us such as we have had, the Government acted generously. It means giving away £20,000 per annum for the benefit of one industry, and I think that hon. members representing

farming constituencies and being interested in land themselves should at least have the decency, if not the generosity, to acknowledge what the Labour party really have done for them during their short term of office.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is a charge that would never have been imposed if the late Government had had any sympathy for new settlers.

Mr. THOMAS: While hon. members opposite claim that they are so fully and so deeply in sympathy with the farmer, it is a very remarkable thing that when they were in office they never made any effort to knock off this special impost. As a matter of fact they were instrumental in putting on the farmer this unfair impost of a shilling a ton extra on new spur lines of railway. It seems to me there is some suggestion of humbug in a party who, while they are in power, take advantage of their position to raise revenue from the farmers by putting on a shilling a ton, obtaining £20,000 per annum by this means, though all the time they are posing as being the friends of the agriculturist. I would like very much to know where the friendship towards the farmer could come in when they were bleeding him by that particular means. A lot will be said about the fact that the Labour party seek to ensure increased revenue by increased taxation, but I venture the opinion that if the proposals of the Labour party were carried, whatever they may be, with regard to land taxation, all the increase we would get from the farmer alone would not amount to the £20,000 per annum that was saved to him in this one item.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: My point in regard to the taxation was that it is doing injury to our securities, although possibly we are benefiting by £20,000.

Mr. THOMAS: How are we doing injury to our securities?

Mr. A. E. Piesse: By imposing further taxation.

Mr. THOMAS: Gracious me, I fail to see the hon. member's point of view. How are we doing injury to our securities by increasing taxation if we are spending further sums in the development of the

country? While we are increasing the taxation in one direction, we are certainly remitting it in another, and I am showing our consideration for the people in the primary industry by showing that while we may be putting on a land tax with other objects than revenue, although revenue is a big consideration, the other objects being the development of the land, the country and so forth—while on the one hand we are making a slightly extra impost, on the other hand we are releasing the people from a still greater burden.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: It is a bad time to put the tax on.

Mr. THOMAS: I never knew a time when it was not inopportune to put a tax on anyone; it would be a very excellent scheme, and we would be a most popular Government if we could carry on by remitting taxation on everyone. And while the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) brought forward several socialistic proposals this afternoon, which all mean that the Government will need extra funds, he winces immediately—some hon. members not only wince but loudly squeal—at the thought of a little extra taxation. Yet these members are always ready to approach the Government with requests for extra help and facilities to carry on their industries. The member for Katanning remarked that some of our present troubles were due to the disturbance at the Midland Junction Workshops, and delivered rather a long complaint to the effect that the men were continually asking for shorter hours and higher pay. Yet when asked to define exactly what differences he would have made in connection with that strike the hon. gentleman said he did not exactly know. It seems to me that there is too much destructive criticism and too little criticism of a constructive nature, that, as an hon. member quoted here this afternoon, in every trade and profession of the world we have to serve an apprenticeship except in the one trade of criticism, in respect to which we need no preparation whatever. While the hon. member was fair and generous in his remarks—because I believe him to be perfectly just and I

believe he is, to say the least of it, at all times fair—I do think that in blaming us for some shortcomings and for having brought about a loss of revenue by that strike at Midland Junction, he should at least show how it would have been possible to do better. It may be that some damage has been done and some considerable amount of loss incurred by the State as the result of that cessation of operations at the Midland Junction workshops. But I claim that a very large measure of the blame, if any were applicable to anybody, should be placed on the shoulders of the members who occupy the Opposition benches: because if we had a proper Arbitration Act in existence to-day, if during their long years of office they had made an effort to place suitable arbitration laws on the statute-book, strikes and lockouts would be very much less in evidence than they are to-day.

[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]

Mr. THOMAS: The trouble, if any, does not rest on the shoulders of the Ministry, but entirely on the shoulders of the hon. member and his party who to-day are so ready to blame us for our shortcomings. I consider the Government had no other course to pursue than the one they followed on that occasion. It was unfortunate that just after taking office the Government assumed an attitude which, I think, has won the approval of friends and enemies alike. Realising the fact that they were placed in a position to do justice to the whole of Western Australia, they did it, unflinchingly taking up a position which probably was unpopular with some of their own party; realising that justice had to be done they took a firm stand, and I think the hon. member in his calmer moments, when he meditates upon the action we took, will, later on, be prepared to say "You did the right thing." Another point in connection with the matter of the charges brought against us for bringing about a slight shortage in our revenue is this: if we chose to treat the people of Western Australia badly, if we chose to be parsimonious enough in the administration of our public ac-

counts, there is not the slightest doubt that we should achieve a surplus. One of the things so greatly to the credit of the Labour party is the fact that they have, during their short term of office, improved the conditions of existence so very much for all the Government servants. When we consider that increases have been granted on the Railways alone amounting to over £100,000 per annum, when we consider that the civil servants, the school teachers and others have received increases, when we consider the awful financial mess the Treasurer had to clean up when he came into office after years of muddle and mismanagement by the leader of the Opposition; when we consider all these and remember what we really have achieved, I think the Premier and Treasurer is deserving of every possible praise by members of the House. Not only has he carried out his duties moderately well, but he has been a big success, and if the hon. member continues to do as well in future as in the past he will go down to posterity as one of the very best Treasurers Western Australia has produced; in fact it will be so long before he is supplanted that it will be a very difficult matter to find comparisons to show how his work as Treasurer has panned out. The member for Greenough said we seem to be priding ourselves very much upon the fact that the Treasurer had delivered an honest Budget, that he had made an honest Budget speech; and the hon. member could not understand why we were so surprised and so pleased about it. After all the years we have had of Liberal Governments in Western Australia, after all the financial jugglery we have been permitted to witness, after all the political sleight of hand that has become synonymous with the name of the leader of the Opposition—after all the years of that sort of thing, is it to be wondered at that we are absolutely delighted that at last a Treasurer has come along and has, if he has done nothing else, delivered an honest Budget to the people of Western Australia. Whatever the hon. member's faults and failings may be, they have been apparent on the surface. The Pre-

mier in playing the game has put all his cards on the table that the people may see what is really being done. An hon. member interjects that the Premier still has a card up his sleeve. Well, I am convinced that when the occasion arrives the Premier will play his joker as well as any man could do, and that when the time comes for him to lead his hosts in the political campaign he will conduct them like a good general and bring them back to Parliament once again. I can quite understand why the member for Greenough has no appreciation for the present Treasurer—because the present Treasurer has pursued a steady, consistent course since his first advent into politics. In order for the Treasurer to receive the appreciation of the member for Greenough, the Treasurer would require to be something of a political cinematograph, presenting a continual change of political views, throwing a different picture on the screen on every possible occasion. Until we can get a politician—and it would not be possible to get a Labour politician who would be guilty of changing his views so frequently—until we can produce such a man we can never hope for appreciation from the member for Greenough. During the debate a great deal of fault has been found with the Government over the purchase of their steamers. I believe it was the member for Greenough who said that the Government had bought old and worn-out steamers that were not considered fit to be used by the Russian Government. I do not believe that charge for one moment. When the present Agent General was in active politics in Western Australia I was a pretty strong political opponent of his; but I have some admiration for his judgment, and I believe that while Agent General in London he has served the Labour party as conscientiously as he would have served the Liberal party, and I am satisfied that in operating for us in this matter not only has he exercised good judgment and served us honestly, but that he has secured more than good value for the money expended. It seems to me idle for members of the Opposition to criticise our venture in this direction. I am of opinion



that the greatest fault they have to find with the steamers purchased by the Government is the fact that the steamers are good value for the money paid for them, and that they have been a great success for the purpose for which they were purchased. Not only are they providing a great convenience for the people of the North-West, but they are proving a great source of revenue for the whole of Western Australia. If we could serve those two purposes at the one time, our critics are most unpatriotic, they let their party feeling blind them and prevent them judging fairly upon the operations of the present Government. In face of keen criticism, in face of every opposition fair and unfair, the Government proceeded on their way to keep their pledges to the people, purchased these steamers and made them an immense success, benefiting the people of the whole of Western Australia. And yet such is the lack of generosity, such the unfairness and warping influence of party politics, that we have not found a single member of the Opposition who has the decency to approve the step we have taken. I feel I have occupied sufficient of the time of the House; there are many other matters I would like to deal with, but seeing there are others who desire to speak, and that it is not desirable to prevent the coming on of other measures, I will deprive myself of the pleasure of addressing members at any greater length. I feel sure that when the Budget statement is spread throughout the whole of the State, when its contents are fully known and fully appreciated, it will bring added praise and appreciation to the Government that control the Treasury benches of Western Australia to-day.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

*[Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.]*

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): The Premier when taking the House into his confidence and delivering his Budget speech acknowledged that the deficiency of over £100,000 was the result of the year's operations, and he attributed it in a large measure firstly to the dry season and

secondly to the enormous expenditure of the Public Works Department in sending water to a number of settlers who were unable to provide for themselves, their families and their stock. I acknowledge that the Government did good work in that direction. At the same time, any other Government in power, no matter whether Liberal or Labour, having the desire to see the country's credit stand good, must have done the same thing as the Premier and his party have done. I have on more than one occasion said that if it were not for the prompt action taken by the Government of the day, a number of people in the agricultural areas would have been compelled to have left their holdings. If a politician cannot acknowledge either in this Chamber or out of it that there is some good in the party in power, although he may not hold the same political ideas, he would be unfair. At the same time, I must say that the Premier in delivering his speech acknowledged that the deficiency was due to circumstances over which he had no control. He touched upon a very different matter when he said notwithstanding that he hoped to have a large revenue this year and a prosperous harvest, he expected to wind up the year with a deficit of about £300,000. Any man carrying on business in the city or country might from circumstances over which he had no control find himself at the end of the year on the wrong side of the ledger, but he would not go about the country telling everyone he was ruined. If he was a progressive man he would say he had lost on this year's transactions, but next year the prospects seemed good and the harvest would recoup him for the loss sustained in the past year. If he did not wipe out the deficiency made in the previous year and make provision in the event of another bad season out of next year's profits, I maintain he would not be carrying on his business on sound lines. It may be argued that the Government are not in the same position as a man carrying on a private concern, but when the Premier delivered his Budget speech, I take it he brought down figures which we might fairly argue should be dealt with on commercial lines. In fact, I have

heard the Premier say that in regard to many of the State trading concerns he has started since he assumed office, the figures would be treated as if the concerns were purely of a private nature and would be available to Parliament at the end of each year. Consequently it cannot be said that I am unfair in stating that the Government figures should be criticised the same as those of private concerns when the Premier announced such a huge deficit at the end of June next. The business manager who made a statement of this kind to his board of directors or shareholders would soon be brought to book. What bank would give financial assistance to a merchant who, half way through the year said he expected to make a heavy loss? Naturally the people supplying him with the overdraft or the money for shares would want more information, and some explanation as to why he was anticipating such a huge deficiency at the end of his financial year. A glance at the estimates of receipts and expenditure will show to any ordinary person that large sums of money are to be expended in various departments. When one considers the small population of Western Australia, just a trifle over 300,000 people, and looks at the expenditure for salaries and wages in connection with persons employed by the Government, I venture to say there is not one person in twenty who would believe the figures disclosed here unless he went carefully into them. It appears to me that a huge sum is paid every year per head of the population for the upkeep of the Government of this State.

Mr. Dooley: Is not that necessary?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I say in proportion to the population the figures are alarming, and no matter what Government are in power, whether they be Liberal or Labour, the question must command the attention of every man who has charge of the Treasury benches, unless he desires to pile up a huge deficit for all time. I hope that even this year the Premier will give that phase of the question serious consideration because the population of 300,000 souls cannot afford to keep going the huge number of men who are drawing salaries and wages every year from those

300,000 people living within the shores of Western Australia. I agree with those who contend that it is unfair to compare the expenditure of Western Australia, per head of the population, with that of a small territory like Victoria or New South Wales where there are three, four, or five times the number of people as are resident in this State. The huge tract of country from Wyndham to Esperance that has to be governed must of course, to any sensible man, appeal as being a very difficult one to handle. I think I can claim to have some knowledge of the various departments in Western Australia, since I have been closely identified with the mercantile life of the State for nearly twenty years, and in my humble opinion the duties of a number of officers in the Public Works, Lands, and other offices, could be amalgamated, and a great saving could be effected in regard to a number of officers who are continually travelling about in various parts of the State.

Mr. McDowall: We have done that in connection with the Water Supply.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I believe it has been done in a small way, but there is still room for an enormous saving of public moneys paid in wages and salaries. I yield to no one in saying that we have public officers who are just as capable of conducting the business of this State as those in other States of the Commonwealth or any part of the world, and while criticising the number of officers I am not criticising their capabilities at all, nor am I criticising the salaries some of them are receiving. I venture to say a number of civil servants in this State are not getting adequate salaries for some of the work they are called upon to perform. One of the departments, I know, has been underpaid for a considerable time past, and one of the hardest worked departments in the State; I refer to the Agricultural Bank staff. Many of those officers perform very arduous labour and are worked as long hours as any employees in the Commonwealth, and no fair-minded man could say they are overpaid. In fact, many of them are very much underpaid. The question I desire to bring under the notice of the Committee is the serious amount of money that

is being paid out of the coffers of the State annually for the upkeep of the civil service and Government trading and other concerns.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Of course you are aware there has been a special commission going into that for the last year or two.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Then they want a charge of dynamite to make them bring in their report a little quicker, because surely it does not take a year to find out if the departments are overmanned. It should not take any committee a year or two to formulate a report.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They raised the salaries a lot; that is all they have done.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the raising of these salaries was justified the Government must have overlooked one or two important facts, namely, that the work done in some of the departments could easily have been amalgamated and thus a saving effected.

The Premier: If we had done that you would have been the first to introduce a deputation to protest against it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If I were so foolish as to do that, and the Premier had the backbone that he is supposed to have, he would have told me that he was running the country. The Premier has a majority behind him and he would be the first to say that to me. It does not alter the fact that the Premier coolly comes to this House and says that by the end of next June he expects to have a deficiency of £300,000. That to my mind must command the attention and respect of every person who is residing in the State.

The Premier: Your leader had a deficit of nearly £400,000.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Two wrongs do not make a right. I was not in this Chamber when the hon. gentleman referred to by the Premier brought in that statement. If I had been I would have been found telling him also what I am saying to the Premier now, that a deficiency is not good business, but that may have been an accumulation extending over some years. The anticipated deficit which is before us will be an accumulation of only two years.

The Premier: But your leader had good seasons at that time.

Mr. S. STUBBS: One important fact has been lost sight of and that is that the population of the State is not increasing in proportion to the expenditure. I maintain that it would be better to have two million people in Western Australia than a mere 300,000. Some people say that is all moonshine, and they would remark, "What would you do with them if you had them?" That was the cry in Canada some years ago. I visited Canada seven or eight years ago and the people were then flocking into that country.

The Premier: And flocking out.

Mr. S. STUBBS: But millions stayed there. There was very little discrimination exercised in regard to the admission of people, but it was the best thing that could have happened to Canada that many of them went out, for a lot who were not desirable went out with them. The great majority of those who remained made Canada what it is to-day. It is no use whatever the Premier saying that immigration on a large scale will do Western Australia any harm, because it will not.

The Premier: When did I say that?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Perhaps I am wrong in mentioning the Premier's name, I ought to have said a large number of the followers of the Premier deprecate immigration on a large scale to Western Australia.

Mr. Foley: There is not one man on this side who has said that.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Then I have misread what has appeared in print. I am awfully glad to hear a denial from members who say that they do not object to immigrants. I hope that the Premier will make a note of the remarks of some of his followers when they say that not one member objects to immigration. This will remove the wrong impression I have had in my mind, and an impression which thousands of others in this State I think have also laboured under. I hope it will appear in the Press to-morrow that the Labour Government are in favour of immigration on a large scale.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Not on a large scale; well regulated.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If my memory serves me correctly, cablegrams passed between

this State and the old country some time back—I do not know whence they emanated, but the Labour party got the credit of them. They were to the effect that the labour market in this State was flooded.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They were from Victoria.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I had an idea they came from Western Australia.

Mr. Monger: From "Premier" McCallum.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Of course members of the Labour party deny that the cable was sent from Western Australia.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: It was a long letter and everything that was in it was true.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I do not know whom to believe. Some hon. members opposite shout out that they are not against immigration, others again say that everything that was in that letter that was sent to England was true.

Mr. Green: You want cheap cocky labour.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The hon. member for Kalgoorlie is always making interjections which are not correct. I will not follow him, and I will not yield to any man in this House or outside in my desire to see a fair day's pay given for a fair day's work. But the tendency is now to get as much money from the employer as possible and to give as little as possible in return. They are not satisfied with 48 hours a week ago. An agitation has been in existence over two years for 45 hours a week. That has come from the Trades Hall too. It has not, however, come about because public opinion has been against it. There are a number of artisans in Perth who desire to work 45 hours a week, but let me inform the House that that is not the kind of thing that will build up a nation. If we are to take our place amongst the other nations the reduction of the week's work to 45 hours will not be one of the factors that will go towards that achievement.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is what they said when we were working 60 hours a week.

The Premier: There are thousands who are not working 48 hours.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The belief exists to-day, particularly among members opposite, that the party with which I am connected in Parliament are doing nothing else but trying to decry the working man and keep him down with our heels.

The Premier: Hear, hear.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They know it is wrong.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is a very wrong and unfair line of argument, because I do not think there is a single member in this Chamber who desires to see poor wages paid in Western Australia.

Mr. Foley: You have always voted against the working man getting fair conditions.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is about as accurate as the other statements the hon. member has made. I have never endeavoured to prevent anyone obtaining fair conditions in connection with any employment in this State.

Mr. Foley: Your party has and you have voted with them.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I desire to show that in my humble opinion the Liberal party are just as fair-minded as members on the opposite side of the Chamber.

Hon. Frank Wilson: More so.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It is my opinion and nothing will alter it, that a country will not become prosperous if it pays poor wages, and I hope the day is far distant when poor wages will be paid in Western Australia. If ever that day should come I hope the Japs will come along and take the country from us. Western Australia is destined to have a great future, greater I think than any country in any other part of His Majesty's dominions, but it requires careful management and the exercise of economy in order that confidence may be given to those persons from whom we desire to get our money with which to develop our many resources.

The Premier: And pay less wages.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Premier is missing the point that I desire to make.

The Premier: I have not found it yet.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Because there are none so blind as those who do not desire to see. The Premier and his party

think that they can raise money in the Eastern States with which to carry on the business of the country. I hope they will be successful, but does the Premier realise that if a combination of the Associated Banks on the other side decide to lend Western Australia half a million or even a million, the greater portion of that million would not be sent from the other side to Western Australia but, if I know anything about business, and the Premier will give me credit for having some knowledge of business methods—I know that that money would be called out of commission in Western Australia and thereby a number of business people would be deprived from getting financial assistance to enable them to increase their businesses and develop their resources.

The Premier: All the chartered banks are bringing money from the East now.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The proper thing for the Premier to do is to endeavour to get what money he wants in London at the cheapest possible rate. There is not the slightest doubt about the fact that he will not be able to raise money in England or in the Eastern States at the same rate of interest as the country has been accustomed to get it at in the past, because a glance at the newspapers will show that nearly all the Eastern States are in the market endeavouring to raise loans either for conversion purposes or development, and it naturally follows that a small State like Western Australia, with a population of only 300,000 people and the heaviest debt per head of the population, would have to pay a little more than probably New South Wales or Victoria. I do not want to be misunderstood in saying that the resources of Western Australia are not equal to those of Victoria or New South Wales, but in my humble opinion Western Australia is not as well known in London, or perhaps as favourably known as some of the older established States, and for that reason, and that reason only, the Premier will find a little difficulty in securing money at the same rate of interest as New South Wales or Victoria. He may get it, but he will not get as much per £100

debentures as New South Wales or Victoria.

The Premier: I think so.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I hope the Premier is right. The point I desire to emphasise is that if the Budget speech is distributed amongst financial people in London, the first thing that any one of these sensible business men will say will be "They have a Labour Government in Western Australia, and they had a deficit of £100,000 last year," but when they read that, I hope they will give the Government credit for being able to do the right thing at the right time, and that they will believe that the deficiency was not caused through any fault of the Government. But when they see that the Premier, after anticipating a good season, is not making an endeavour to wipe out that deficit but is adding to it to the tune of nearly £200,000, they will come to the conclusion that the Government is being administered on absolutely wrong lines. If the Premier can prove to me that that line of argument will not be taken up in the old country I will be glad to listen to him, but as a business man and one who has had considerable experience in the history of commercial life in this State extending over 20 years, and being an employer of labour on a large scale, notwithstanding some remarks that have fallen from my friends on the Government side that I am desirous of seeing cheap wages and cheap labour, I claim to know something about the financial condition of the State, having followed it closely for a good many years; and I believe the Premier is wrong in his contention that it does not matter if he has a deficiency of £300,000 in a good year. The person who lends the money will say that he does not consider the financial statement a good one because it shows no desire for economy in any shape or form, and in consequence, the Premier will find his loan is not looked upon with the favour he anticipates. I hope I am wrong, but that is how it seems to me the Premier's statement will be viewed when it reaches the old country.

The Premier: I am not a bit nervous about whether you do hope that.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I do not think the Premier is nervous about anything; he is about the easiest going Premier we have ever had. When he gets away from the House I believe he forgets that there is such a place as Parliament House; he is fortunate in being able to take things in that spirit.

Mr. Foley: This country would look better if he left for England to-morrow and put the case clearly before the money-lender.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I hope the case will be put clearly before the money-lender through the Agent General, and I believe Sir Newton Moore will do it as clearly as any other man could. My point is that we are piling up a deficit and the population is not coming in as rapidly as it should. If the population was increasing at the same rate as in certain other portions of the British Empire, the Premier would have no fear about raising this money, but in my humble opinion the Government are on wrong lines in not endeavouring to square the ledger when they have a good year. Neither the Premier nor any other business man can tell what the next harvest will be. If the deficiency is £300,000 at the end of June next and Providence does not send a rainfall sufficient to make the following harvest a good one, what tale is the Premier going to tell when he has to go to the London money market?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Wait till we get to the fence.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is all very well, but any financial man, when he has a good season—

The Premier: We have not got it yet. A good deal of the revenue is based on last year's receipts: in income tax, for instance, we will get less this year, although we have a good season.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is all the more reason why the Treasurer should practise economy.

The Premier: You have the Estimates there; show us how you would do it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have never had charge of a department, but as a casual observer travelling around the country I feel sure that sound economy could be

effected by an amalgamation of various departments and duties.

Mr. McDowall: Your remedy is another "Black Wednesday."

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, it is not. I have tried to make it perfectly clear that if we desire to prosper, every man in the State must have work. I have good reason to remember "Black Wednesday" in Victoria, and I hope we shall never experience another such day in the history of the Commonwealth. I remember the times in Victoria when things were so prosperous that artisans were commanding 15s. and 16s. a day, and I remember that the same artisans, at the time of the bank smash, in 1891, appealed to me, and to others in the district in which I lived, for work at 5s. a day. There is such a thing as killing the goose that lays the golden eggs, and that is what I want to warn the Premier about. If things are prosperous, do not ride the Treasury to death. It would have been better if the Premier, instead of predicting a deficiency of £300,000, had said "we are going to have a good season, and we will wipe off that deficit." In times of prosperity it does not do for a good business man or a Treasurer to spend more money than he receives; this economy can be practised without having any "Black Wednesday."

The Premier: You do not put that forward seriously?

Mr. Thomas: You are a croaker.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have never been a croaker in my life. Is a man to be called a croaker if he says that economy should be practised when a deficit is being piled up? If that be so, then I am a croaker.

Mr. Thomas: But you are predicting calamities in all directions.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am only speaking on the basis of the Premier's own statement.

Mr. O'Loughlen: As a business man you had a deficiency on your books last year.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have no deficit on my books.

The Premier: Neither have I, it is in the Treasury.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You did not have a good year last year.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The season did not affect me to any extent; instead of getting in the money which the farmers owe me, it is on the books.

The Premier: So it is with us.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Premier does not say that at the end of the year there will be £300,000 on his books; he says there is going to be a good season and yet there will be a deficit. I had a good year, on paper, undoubtedly, but that money is owing to me, and will be paid to me this year, or the greater part of it.

The Premier: We will have to carry over some of the money owing to us to allow them to pay you.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the Premier came before the House and said that he would have a deficit of £300,000 at the end of June, 1913, but that amount was absolutely money that was owing to the country in connection with the operations of the year 1912-13, that would be an entirely different thing from announcing that he will have a deficit. That is, I think, a complete answer to the argument adduced by the member for Forrest.

Mr. Underwood: Where did you get the £300,000?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I understood the Premier to say that he anticipated a deficit of a great deal more than the loss of £121,000 that he acknowledges having made last year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: £287,000 is the deficit he anticipates.

Mr. S. STUBBS: That is near enough to £300,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They are splitting straws, that is all.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It appears to me that some gentlemen on the Ministerial side may know a lot about administration, but they know nothing about financing.

Mr. O'Loghlen: There are a few Napoleons on your side.

Mr. S. STUBBS: There may be. I would like some of those gentlemen who know so much about finance to come down and give me a hand.

The Premier: Get some of them on your own side.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have never yet had to come forward and say to the people

to whom I owed money that I would have to show a deficit after two years' work, as the Government are doing. All I desire to do is to put the Premier on the right track, and tell him that, in my opinion, he and his Government will find it difficult to satisfy the English money-lender, or the colonial one for that matter, by telling them twelve months ahead that he is going to have a good season and wind up with a deficit of £287,000. I notice that the Premier stated that he is going to start State agricultural machinery works, and has made provision on the Estimates for the salary of a manager. I know that the State manufacture of agricultural implements, in order to cheapen them to the farmers, is on the platform of his party, but I have yet to learn that any Government can manufacture implements for agriculturists in competition with private enterprise. If my memory serves me right, there are several firms in this State who have expended large sums of money in the erection of buildings and machinery; I hold no brief for them, because I have never spoken to any of them, nor have they spoken to me, but I do say it is hard on them after the expenditure of those large sums of money to have the Government starting in opposition to them. If the Government are going to kill private enterprise, then the sooner the State is handed over to them in every shape and form, including even stores for the sale of drapery and hardware, the better it will be for all concerned.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Private enterprise is killing the farmers to-day; look at the prices of agricultural implements.

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the Government policy is carried into effect, the farmers will be killed off the land entirely.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Can you justify the present prices for agricultural implements?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I can justify this statement, that if the Land Bill now before Parliament is put into effect, the farmers will not require the implements.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That is a doleful prophecy.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The hon. member is entitled to his opinion, and I am entitled to mine, but if there is to be no taxation of leasehold land, where is the money to come from to pay for the State steamships that we hear so much about as being purchased to bring down the price of meat, and for the State hotels and State butchers' shops?

Mr. Green: They are to show a profit; no money will be wanted for them.

Mr. Thomas: Did you not tell the people of Wagin that the present was the best Government for the farmers we have ever had?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I told the people of Wagin that the Government came to the aid of the farmers by supplying them with water and helping to keep them on the land, but I also say this evening that any Government who desired to keep good the credit of the State would have had to do the same thing. That, of course, does not detract from the merits of the Government's action.

The Premier: Your leader said the help we gave was wasteful expenditure.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I did not hear the leader of the Opposition say it, though I do not deny that he did not say it, but I do say in answer to the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) that the tax that will be required to keep up all these State enterprises will have to come from the pockets of somebody; and as the man on leasehold land is not to be taxed, and as the working men's salaries are to be exempt from being taxed up to £250, someone has to find the money. I do not say that it means confiscation, but I say that the farmer will find the tax so heavy that he will not be able to keep the pace going.

Mr. McDowall: It is not the farmer who is going to pay all the taxation.

Mr. S. STUBBS: He is going to pay most of the taxation.

Mr. McDowall: The dividend tax on the goldfields will be more than the farmers will pay.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I do not say that the people on the goldfields do not pay a good share, but my experience of goldfields in the Eastern States is that gold-

fields do not live for all time. Bendigo and Ballarat and many mining places in the north of Queensland were all prosperous years ago, and the people who were then dependent on mining are now dependent on agriculture. To my mind the man on the land after all is the man who will be called upon to pay the taxes of this country when the mining—and I hope the day will be far distant—will be a thing of the past.

Mr. Mullany: We will be all angels then.

Mr. Foley: You had better move a motion of no-confidence in your leader for his statement.

Mr. S. STUBBS: He can take care of himself.

Mr. Foley: So will the goldfields.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I say undoubtedly that the man on the land is the man who will be called upon to pay the taxes if the gold-mining industry peters out and the population of the goldfields naturally diminishes through the people having to seek fresh fields of employment. The land will be called upon eventually to keep things going. If I am wrong in that contention I shall be glad to be put right.

Mr. Green: You are giving us one of your old Upper House speeches.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I may be, but I know as much about business as the hon. member, consequently it does not trouble me what he says. The Upper House can look after itself and does not require any effort on my part.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Is it not likely that those State enterprises will be profitable; for instance, State hotels?

Mr. S. STUBBS: If the butchering business is a sample of the profits that are to be made I have yet to learn where the low price of meat is coming in. In the country districts every person I have asked has told me that meat is even dearer than before the steamers were purchased.

The Premier: That is not so.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It is perfectly true.

The Premier: It is absolutely incorrect.



Mr. S. STUBBS: I defy contradiction when I say that in many districts I know of meat is dearer than it was 12 months ago. If the Government were going to do such wonders in bringing down the price of meat, why have they not done so?

Mr. Munsie: So they have.

Mr. S. STUBBS: They were going to bring down the price of meat immediately.

The Premier: So they have in the metropolitan area.

Mr. S. STUBBS: We were going to get cheap fish, but it is dearer now than ever it was in the history of the State, and if all the trading concerns of the State are to be as profitable as the butchering trade, then God help Western Australia! That is all I can say. State enterprises are in a large measure a great mistake. I agree that methods of transit must be excluded. Railways and tramways should belong to the State.

Mr. Heitmann: Why?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Because they are a public convenience, but no man could make me believe that the action of buying steamers and running meat down from the North-West has made meat cheaper or is likely to make it cheaper. I have all along pointed out that the laws of supply and demand regulate the price of meat to a very large extent in this or in any other State.

Member: The "cattle kings" regulate it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have not met many of these "cattle kings" I hear so much about. I can assure hon. members that butchers in the country districts will tell a different tale about these "cattle kings." They cannot get their cattle down from the North-West even now though the Government have bought steamers that have been plying up and down every month, and the country butchers have to send to South Australia for their meat, and they tell me that it takes them all their time to make it pay at 6d. and 7d. a pound, the prices I have to pay for large quantities to supply to the hands on my farm. The price of meat to-day is dearer than, or as dear

as it was 12 months ago. Can a sane man tell me I am wrong in saying that the Government have not reduced the price of meat? They may have done so in one or two isolated cases where a cheap-jack butcher says that he has reduced the price of meat, but it only lasts a few days and he cannot get any more meat. I heard only the other day that a Government man went to a prominent auctioneer in the town and said, "I want 100 lambs, 100 wethers, and so many head of bullocks, and I want you to buy them." He gave the auctioneer no price, but told him to go into the open market and buy them. Do members tell me that is a fair way of bringing down the price of meat, and that these methods receive the sanction and the hall mark of the Government? If my information is correct, and I believe it is reliable, then I say that the Government who started out with the hue and cry on the hustings that they were going to bring down this meat ring or meat square or whatever they call it, have not achieved the object they had, and at the end of 12 months, when wear and tear are taken into consideration, and the wages and the coal and all the other incidentals to the running of the steamers trading on the North-West coast, they will find that they have not made profit or reduced the price of meat to the extent they led the public to believe. If I am shown to be wrong when the Premier brings down his statement of receipts and expenditure, I promise him to be just and to withdraw my statements of to-night if I find they are incorrect; but first I want to be satisfied that every item of expenditure and interest on the money is properly accounted for before I believe that any Government, Liberal or Labour, can reduce the price of meat in the manner in which the present Government say they can do it.

The Premier: I hope you are here to admit it.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I shall be here.

The Premier: We will prove it all right.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have yet to learn that private enterprise cannot run trading concerns better than any Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): It is not the question of "cannot," it is the question of "will not."

Mr. S. STUBBS: That may be so, or it may not. All I desire to say is that the vast majority of the people of the State are with me when I say that the trading concerns the Government pledged themselves on the hustings to carry out are not going to be the success that was anticipated for them, and that the public will find in 12 months' time, at all events, that they were greatly mistaken in their ideas as to the receipts and expenditure and the profit of the various trading concerns embarked on. I hope, as the Premier says, that I will be in my place in Parliament and that he can prove to me next year that I am wrong when I say that though he expects to wind up with a deficit of £287,000, it will be £300,000. There are figures in the Premier's idea of his revenue that need looking into. One item is rather big. He expects to get £100,000 from dividend duties, but from my idea of the business of the State of Western Australia next year, with money tied up as it is, it is not probable that there will be £100,000 paid into the Treasury in the shape of dividend duties. In fact it will take some of the firms all their time to square up their ledgers on account of the difficulty they will find in raising money to carry on their operations.

Mr. Underwood: We will carry on without them.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The member for Pilbara may know something about the North-West, but I do not think he knows anything about finance. I do not think he has ever had anything to do with large financial operations. I do know something about them, and I am in a much better position than a man who has never had any such experience.

Mr. Underwood: I am a shareholder in some steamships.

Mr. S. STUBBS: From what I hear about some steamships they will not last many years; they are going to pieces already. I say the Government will be wise if they listen to reason and, instead of showing a deficit next year, endeavour to

reduce the expenditure as much as possible and economise in the various departments. It will be very much more to their credit than showing a deficit, and it will restore confidence in the person in England, to whom we must all listen, to whom we must go for credit and for money to enable us to develop the resources that we have in abundance in Western Australia.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Do you not support the State manufacture of agricultural implements?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No, for the simple reason that they will not cost any less through the manufacture by the Government than by private enterprise. The people who are endeavouring to establish the industry will do the work just as cheaply as the Government and better, and we will not have more people drawing Government pay than we have at present.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I have listened very patiently to the remarks of hon. members on the Budget. I have listened to the Treasurer introducing the Budget. This Chamber for the second time since I have been a member of it—something like 12 years—has had the opportunity of hearing an ex-Treasurer criticise the Treasurer's Budget. In the old Chamber in Hay-street on one occasion we had Mr. Illingworth, ex-Treasurer, criticising with friendly criticism the Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner, in the Government he was supporting. Since then we have been unfortunate in not having leaders of the Opposition who have been ex-Treasurers, except the present leader of the Opposition; and, irrespective of what politics one holds, one must recognise the manner in which this Budget has been criticised by the leader of the Opposition. There is no doubt the experience the leader of the Opposition has had as Premier and Treasurer of the State for a number of years qualifies him to deal with this subject in a more masterly manner than one without experience could hope to do. Now I am one of those who are of opinion that the financial outlook of the State, that is, from the Budget presented by the Premier, is anything but bright. The Premier has indeed left a

deal for the Deity to do. As was pointed out by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, the Premier expects a deficit of something like £300,000, or to be correct, £280,000 odd, at the end of next financial year. We have closed the last financial year with a very substantial deficit, and it is indeed to be hoped that we will not have a bad dry season in our agricultural areas this year. If that be true and if it be also true, as stated by the Treasurer, that the last dry season was the cause of the shortage in our financial returns to the close of the year ended 30th June last, then if we have in front of us a good season, surely we, as reasonable beings in this Chamber, should be anxious to see the deficit, instead of climbing higher, reducing and getting less. Even before the last general elections, before the present Government occupied this side of the House, when we occupied that side, it was known that we were going to have a dry season. It was known before last general elections that in the new farming areas where the dry season obtained the farmers were going to have a bad time, and it was known also that unless the Government stepped in promptly by supplying water for those farmers they would have to leave their homes. Before I went to my electorate in October of last year I heard a conversation which was not intended to be private between the then member for Toodyay (Mr. T. F. Quinlan) and the late Minister for Works (Mr. H. Daglish). The late member for Toodyay, who was also Speaker of the House at the time, had visited his district, and before he decided finally to stand for the election he pointed out to the late Minister for Works that no matter who represented that part of the country the people in the new areas would be starved out for water, and the Government should immediately go to the rescue. Mr. Daglish intimated that he was having certain inspections made, and the late member for the district stated that it could not be done too quickly, and that no matter what happened, unless the Government were prepared to spend a lot of money there was going to be a disaster for those farmers in that area. We knew that. We recognised that we were going to be called

upon to fight a dry season, and I think the Premier and his colleagues should have made some effort, knowing what was coming, to safeguard themselves against it. There was certainly no possible chance of doing other than what was done with reference to supplying the farmers with water, but surely there was some way of husbanding the finances in some other direction rather than letting things drift as, evidently, so far as I can see, has been done. Can the Premier or the Treasurer, or any member occupying the Treasury benches show what change they have made in the administration to husband the funds this financial year which was not done in previous years, when we were not meeting a dry season?

The Premier: You ought to be speaking from the other side of the House.

Mr. TAYLOR: There is a plain statement, and the Premier will, I hope, be able to make the position clear to the House and the country in his reply. But I object to the hon. member telling me that I ought to be speaking from over there. I spoke from over there for eleven long years, and we will again unless the Government alter their tactics. Let me tell the hon. member that wherever I stand I will speak my mind.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He wants to gag you.

Mr. TAYLOR: I will not allow the Premier, this Premier or any other Premier, to speak for me. I am here speaking as the member for Mount Margaret, and speaking my own thoughts, and I am not going to allow anybody to prevent it. I hope such a day will never come. We boast of our freedom as a party. As soon as any hon. member on the opposite side attacks us with the taunt of our being gagged in caucus we repudiate it and say we have freedom of thought, and liberty of speech, and our motto is "Nobility of character." Where is it when one fails to support the Government in every particular? There is a chorus on every occasion when an hon. member desires to speak his mind, when it is not in keeping with the Government. While I am in the House I will speak my mind. I have spoken it at the risk of my seat before, when the Premier and his colleagues at-

tacked me in the House and in every Labour tribunal in the State, undermined me and attacked me at every corner. I went to my people and my people repudiated it, and put me at the top of the tree. Am I going to be gagged by the man who tried politically to cut my throat before the last election? For what I may say in the House I am responsible to my electors, and to my electors alone. I am a party politician, but am not so strong, or blind, as to allow my party feelings to sap my last spark of manhood. It will be a sorry day for any country when party politics reach such a state that a member of a party dare not speak his mind on a financial question affecting his country.

Mr. Green: Who is objecting?

Mr. TAYLOR: Why there are objections all round. The Premier says I ought to be speaking from the other side.

The Premier: So you ought to be.

Mr. TAYLOR: Because I dare to criticise his Budget. I will criticise it as I choose. It is time some hon. member on this side did. What has been done by the Government during their administration of office for twelve months to avoid a disaster which has landed us with a deficit, when we knew we would have to spend a lot of money in providing water? A very large amount of money expended in finding pipes to convey the water is loan money. I suppose the only loss of revenue is by railway carriage of water to the farmers. I venture to say the money to supply the water pipes to that area is out of loan funds. We have heard a great deal about the farmers, but we have not heard a deal about the mining areas. Not only in the House, but outside, on every State occasion hon. members try to make speeches to tickle the ears of the farmers, as if the farmers represented a vote that some body desired to catch. Why should there be so much interest taken in the farmers, more than in any other section of the community? We find, if the Premier was reported faithfully in the Press—he the same as other hon. members was visiting agricultural areas during recess, and dur-

ing the session, too, on occasions when speeches were to be made at the opening of agricultural shows—we find he said that the deficit was nothing. The Premier is credited with having said "To show my earnestness in the interests of farmers I care nothing for the deficit; my first thought is for the farmer, and the deficit afterwards."

The Premier: Where did I say that?

Mr. TAYLOR: The newspaper reported the Premier as saying it at Narrogin or Wagin, I forget which.

The Premier: Nothing of the kind; it is your imagination.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is in the report of the Premier's speech that his first consideration was for the farmers and his second the financial position. Those are the very words which appeared in the report of the Premier's speech in the *West Australian*. Of course if the Premier denies it I will withdraw, but I have made the statement on the strength of the report in the Press.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I saw it in the Press.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have not heard the Premier tell the House or the country that his consideration is for the goldfields where the leading industry is indeed in need of some support, that industry we have heard so much about as having done so much for the State. We know that the goldfields are not yielding what they were, that the output of gold is slightly diminishing, and that there is a very large area of gold bearing country which should be further prospected. This is owing to the fact that in the early days a number of those places were abandoned because there were fresh places to go to, and the prospectors did not return. It is necessary for the Government to use some means to try to increase the activity at these places and give the goldfields some further encouragement. I have no desire to make any statement against the hon. gentleman who is administering that department. So far as I am personally concerned we have discussed this matter. He and I travelled through a great portion of the goldfields a few months ago, and the Minister him-

self saw the position of what were once thriving towns, towns where a large number of men were once employed but which are now practically idle. I must say, too, that on the representations of the people there, and on the advice of the heads of the department, the State Mining Engineer and the inspectors of mines, the Minister has made advances to various people there to further develop the mines they have been working, small prospecting parties. That is the means, I say, the Government should adopt in trying to open up our goldfields and put them on a footing something like that of the past. Ever since I have been in the House I have readily cast my vote in favour of agriculture. But however much the House desires to support agriculture, when any matter comes before the Chamber dealing with the employees of the farmers, the members of the Opposition, or the representatives of the agricultural districts, are ever ready to prevent legislation giving a chance to the employees in the farming areas. Notwithstanding all the industrial legislation affecting other workers passed during the last 12 years we have failed to put anything on the statute-book affecting the agricultural employees. That is an unfair attitude to take up while the House has been and is still prepared to make conditions better for the workers in other industries. While the Government of this State are prepared to assist the agriculturists, the agriculturists' representatives in this House and the Government should be prepared to make some advance towards placing legislation on the statute-book that would be advantageous to the agricultural employees and place them under the protection of industrial legislation the same as every other workman in the land. We have the fact that members have opposed it—

Mr. Foley: And when I interjected the same thing, there was a howl of indignation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They can go to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. TAYLOR: We have tried to bring them within the scope of the Arbitration

Court and place them in the same position as other workers in regard to industrial legislation and have failed at every point. They are practically the only employees we have not protected by industrial legislation. I say it is a disgrace to this Parliament and a disgrace to this country that we have an Agricultural Department and an Agricultural Bank, prepared to lend money and prepared to practically give land away to the people to settle on it, and then when they employ labour the Government are not game and are not prepared—the present Government are prepared to do so but no Government have been prepared to do so up to date. It is not a fair proposition. Still we find every member of the Opposition going to the farming areas and making speeches to flatter the farmer and tell him what they are saving him and how they are protecting him. The farmer needs no telling; he can see it. There is no legislation to protect the employee.

Mr. Foley: I would like you to exempt me from that statement.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not aware that the hon. member has visited any of the farming areas.

Mr. Foley: I am not smoodging to them.

The Premier: You have visited the Opposition areas.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, I have not visited any of the farming areas but I have visited the Opposition camp. I say my criticism of the present Government is nothing compared with the criticism of the workers in this State. The great Labour bodies on the goldfields criticised the Government before ever the Premier presented his financial statement, criticised their administration, and criticised their Bills. Did not they criticise the Government at the Trades and Labour Council's meeting on the Eastern Goldfields? That branch of the Australian Labour Federation criticised the Premier and his Government and the supporters, myself included, and said that they hoped the Upper House would protect them from the legislation we were bringing down. They not only said that

in their meetings but printed it in the Press. That is the largest industrial organisation on the Eastern Goldfields. No later than Thursday last we had the metropolitan district council of the Australia Labour Federation criticising the Government for not giving their workers an extra shilling a day. Have not they said the Government were guilty of offences worse practically than private employers were guilty of, and yet the Premier is going into hysterics because I am criticising his financial statement which I say will stand criticism?

The Premier: Not at all.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier is quite angry. Why does he not get angry with the Labour people outside? They are indeed against many of the propositions which the Government are bringing down, apart from the finances at all.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He is angry with them.

The Premier: I would not be angry with the leader of the Opposition. He is straight enough to go out into opposition on his own, but you sit behind me.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Premier must know there is something which appeared in the *West Australian* on Friday last. A meeting of the metropolitan council of the A.L.F. was held on Thursday evening and the report, in dealing with the employees' request for an increase of wages, pointed out that the secretary, Mr. Watts, moved a motion. The report appeared in the Press and it is not necessary for me to read it.

The Premier: Read it.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the Premier desires it, I will.

The Premier: Read all the rest you have stowed away.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes, read it, let us hear it.

Mr. TAYLOR: The report stated—

Mr. Watts in moving that the unions proffer financial assistance to the workers concerned caustically criticised the Minister for Railways. It was unjust, observed Mr. Watts, that the Minister should be so pigheaded as to refuse the men an increase from 9s. to 10s. Several delegates added their quota of criti-

cism of the Minister. One delegate in commenting on the fact that a parliamentary inspection had been made of the work being done at the scene of the strike expressed disgust that the increase had not been granted, bearing in mind that the Ministers' salaries and Parliamentary inspection mentioned would cost far more to the country than would the granting of the increase.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He is supposed to be a sane man.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Go on.

Mr. TAYLOR: The report continued—

The bottom dog never secured justice and he was just about tired of it. Men could not live on promises; promises were of no use. He was 25 years in the Labour movement and lately his ideals had had some shocks. The motion was carried by a large majority.

Then the report goes on to deal with clerks.

The Premier: Read it.

Mr. TAYLOR: There is no necessity for the Premier to get angry. He has been criticised in the first instance by the electors of Ivanhoe who are members of the Kalgoorlie district council and has been criticised by the next largest organised section of workers in the State, the Trades Hall of Perth.

The Minister for Mines: You will admit these criticisms are not always well founded inasmuch as both parties passed resolutions condemnatory of yourself.

Mr. TAYLOR: Both bodies when they carried those resolutions were primed up by my friends who are now making mistakes. The conditions are wholly different. These are the arguments of those unions who have sent their delegates to the council. It was quite different when they had me charged with the whole of the Labour party's resolutions and when the Labour caucus made the only departure it ever made before or since that the proceedings of caucus on my trial should be printed and published in the Press: that never happened before or since.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Shame!

Mr. TAYLOR: With all that power behind them they failed to achieve the object they desired.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Hear, hear.

Mr. TAYLOR: I want also to say that when members of the Labour party were in Opposition we advocated certain conditions for the people of this State. We then made no secret of our attitude towards the Government of the day for not making some provision for dealing with what was known as miners' complaint, namely, miners' fibrosis. In and out of season while in the Opposition members of the Labour party, and especially the member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) moved motions having the support of the party denouncing not only the Wilson Government but the Moore Government for not making provision for the consumptives in this State. I want to know what has been done during the last 13 months to meet those views which were expressed while we were in Opposition.

The Premier: Do not you know?

Mr. TAYLOR: I want to know. The Premier will have an opportunity of replying. We know there are certain lands which the Government failed to get on one occasion in this Chamber. I want to know if there is any immediate relief being offered and in what direction.

The Minister for Mines: The land is being cleared.

Mr. TAYLOR: We cannot be too soon in dealing with this matter.

The Premier: Have you looked at the Estimates?

Mr. TAYLOR: I want to refer to a few remarks made in connection with the report of the Commissioner of Railways. The member for Canning (Mr. Lewis) and the member for Geraldton (Mr. Dooley) took exception to these words in the report of the Commissioner of Railways —

The various items improving the financial position of the staff at large as detailed above totalled £107,300. It is with extreme regret that I have observed no general increase of energy or effort corresponding with such a large increase of expenditure.

The members mentioned have objected to the Commissioner of Railways addressing his chief, the Minister, in that language. Considering the Act under which the Commissioner has been appointed and under

which he controls the railway system, as Commissioner, I hope the day will never come when any Government in power will be sufficiently strong or when any Minister controlling the department will arrogate to himself the power to edit any report the Commissioner might submit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Hear, hear.

Mr. TAYLOR: I hope the Commissioner will submit his report to the Minister untrammelled, a statement of what he, as the manager of that concern, believes to be right and true. It would be a very sorry spectacle indeed for the Labour party to be in Opposition and the Liberals to be in power if the Commissioner desired to make any comment contrary to the political views of his Minister or the Government, that he should be checked and his report edited. I say the report of the Commissioner of Railways submitted to the Minister and then to Parliament should be the report of the Commissioner and not a report to suit the Minister controlling the department, and I say that the charge made by the member for Geraldton combined with his desire that the Minister of Railways should have objected to that language being put into the report is indeed groundless and I am pleased that the Minister accepted the report of the Commissioner as submitted. I hope that no Minister and no Government would desire to do what I believe the people would not allow, that is edit the report of the Commissioner or any other Commissioner operating under Act of Parliament similar to the Commissioner of Railways. His report should be his report and should not be one to suit the political views of the Government of the day. So far as this is concerned, considering his report would be criticised, and that the Government of the day would also be criticised, the Commissioner of Railways must feel not too comfortable with regard to these views placed before members of the Government faithfully for their administrative guidance, and for members on this side to take exception to it I say is bad politics and bad principle. I do not care who thinks to the contrary. What does the Commissioner say? He says that the working expenses of the concern he is

controlling have increased by a certain amount per annum, but he does not notice a corresponding energy put into the work, and the hon. member for Canning (Mr. Lewis) holds that the Commissioner said these men were loafers. The Commissioner did not say so. The hon. member might as well have read into these few lines the idea that when these men were working for a previous Government they were worked at top speed and that when an increase of wages was given to them the very life had been sapped out of them and they were unable to respond to the call for more energy. One might just as well read that into these lines as to say that the Commissioner declared his men to be loafers. The Commissioner has not said so. He has pointed out his views and he is quite justified in addressing to his Minister a true and accurate statement of the position. I do not know that there is any necessity to go on any further. I believe the Treasurer is prepared to reply and I believe the House having been disappointed last week are somewhat anxious to hear him reply to the criticisms which have been offered on the Budget. Before I resume my seat I would like to refer briefly to the position of the mining industry. The Minister for Mines has pointed out that he cannot do more for the mining industry than he has already done because of the tightness of the financial position. There is no doubt the finances are tight, and that is a good reason why perhaps he cannot do as much as he would like to do, but I hope he will use his very best endeavours and influence with his fellow Ministers to spend money on the goldfields with the object of assisting the small prospectors. I do not desire that there should be money spent in providing camels, horses, and provisions to prospect new country for alluvial gold or reefs. I say that there are a number of old workings on which some money might well be spent. These are shows which when the water level was reached the original prospectors abandoned, principally because of the absence of crushing facilities. There are many of these shows, and there are many men still in the State who know where they are, and if the Government would offer

certain assistance to these men, I am confident they would open them up. All that would be required would be for unwatering to be done and then, as I indicated on the Address-in-reply, for their equipment with machinery to keep down the water and for winding and doing development work. If the Government could see their way clear to spend some money in this direction, I am sure they would be well rewarded. I would be prepared to support the Government in spending £50,000 in that direction alone in this year.

The Premier: If we did you would sit silent.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would support the Government to spend £50,000 and I indicated that during the early part of the session. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to, at any rate, do something in that direction.

Mr. WISDOM (Claremont): I am afraid, in rising at this stage, I run the risk of having very little fresh to say, but I am sure that what I have to say will not keep the Committee very long. At the same time there are one or two points on which I feel I would like to make a few remarks, and consequently I am going to inflict myself on the Committee.

The Premier: You are only doing what you have been told to do.

Mr. WISDOM: The Premier has had experience of at least one of his own party who has sufficient pluck to refuse to do as he is told. Fortunately for our side we are not in the position of having to do what we are told. We do what we like.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Have you been on the carpet to-day?

Mr. WISDOM: Perhaps the hon. member knows more about carpets than I do. I have no experience or little experience of budgets and I am not prepared to argue on the details of this most marvellous Budget. I am not even prepared to argue the important question as to whose fault it was that the Budget was not brought down earlier. The member for Bunbury has stated that the late Premier shirked his responsibility as Treasurer and when he found things



were bad he took a little trip to Japan in order to get away from trouble, but it is a significant fact that I understand the late Premier left at the end of the year and returned in March, and in spite of that he brought down his Budget earlier than the present Premier has been able to do this year. The question of the time of bringing down the Budget is one of a certain amount of importance to the business community. Naturally the people want to know, and a great deal of business is based upon the financial position of the Government and the financial proposals for the ensuing year, and the Premier appreciated that fact in promising that as far as he was concerned he could see no reason why the Budget should not be brought down early in July. However, he did not bring the Budget down until the 17th October. I do not think that is a serious matter, and I only refer to it because of the excuse the Premier made that it was his desire to include in it the fullest details with regard to the trading concerns. We have been promised that with regard to these trading concerns we should have full business accounts. I have tried very hard throughout the financial statement and in the public accounts to get these fullest details but have absolutely failed. I shall be glad to hear from the Treasurer where those details can be obtained. As far as I can see at the present time they are not available. Not only are members entitled to them, but we have had the assurance of the Government that these statements would be supplied. They have not been supplied. Therefore, the excuse that the Budget that was brought down so late in order to include the fullest details regarding the trading concerns will not stand. No data has been supplied upon which any idea regarding the true position of these trading concerns can be based. Certainly the Premier has stated that everything has been charged which should have been charged in an ordinary business concern. That may be true, but what we want is a balance sheet and a profit and loss account in order that we may form our

own opinion as to whether that is the case or not. If we do not get such a statement we will not be able to ascertain the true position of affairs regarding these concerns. If the State accounts close on the 30th June, surely it need not have taken from that time till the 17th October to produce the detailed statements of these concerns. This Budget has certainly upset all my preconceived ideas of public finances. Probably that is my fault. It may be due to my ignorance on the question of public finance, but I have always been under the impression that it was the Treasurer's duty to endeavour to make both sides of the ledger balance. I have always been under the impression that the Treasurer should estimate his expenditure and then provide revenue to meet it.

The Premier: That is a new canon in finance.

Mr. WISDOM: I have also been under the impression that such things as deficits were due to unforeseen circumstances more or less during the year, but I think it is an extraordinary proceeding for the Treasurer, who already has a deficit, to deliberately arrange to have a further deficit to pile on top of the first one. If the Treasurer cannot find revenue sufficient to meet the expenditure, I think it should be his first duty to keep down the expenditure, but if he cannot do that, then I think the Treasurer should at least show some of that lion-heartedness of which we have heard, and raise revenue to meet the expenditure he anticipates. I agree with the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) and other members who have spoken that this should be the time when an endeavour should be made to reduce the deficit. Instead of that we find the Government piling up expenditure without any hope of being able to get revenue to meet it. The expenditure forecasted in the present Budget has reached the enormous amount of £600,000 in excess of the expenditure last year. I could quite understand that if we could see any corresponding increase in the revenue to justify it, but I have yet to find that there is

anything more going to be done of advantage in the ensuing year, than last year, which will justify that expenditure. The Treasurer apparently is relying on the merest chance to reduce his deficit within 24 months. Surely that is a Micavber-like attitude, waiting for something to turn up. As the member for Wagin has said, we shall all be very glad if that something does turn up, and if the Treasurer is justified in his hopes that circumstances will enable him in 24 months to reduce this large deficit of £287,000, but it is a very flimsy hope to rely on, considering, as has been pointed out, that in spite of the fact that the Premier is confident of a bumper season, he still anticipates having at the end of that season a hugely increased deficit. To carry that out to its logical conclusion, if we should have another good season in the following year, we may anticipate that the deficit will rise by another £200,000. It is all very well for the Premier to say that he wants no little Western Australians. I notice that he carefully and wisely qualified his remarks in that respect—wisely because of the position he occupies in the House facing the ladies' gallery.

The Premier: Get on to finance; you are better at that.

Mr. WISDOM: This is important finance, £5 per head. What I do think we want in this country is a little more caution with regard to our finances.

The Minister for Mines: Mark-time.

Mr. WISDOM: I notice that people are inclined to run to extremes in these things.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Would you economise at the expense of the civil servants?

Mr. WISDOM: I should not economise in their rate of pay, but there should be some justification for economising in the number of civil servants.

The Premier: Do you mean retrenchment?

Mr. WISDOM: Yes.

The Premier: You take fright too easily.

Mr. WISDOM: I was not surprised to hear the Premier admit that the

work of administration is too great for the Government.

The Premier: Who said so?

Mr. WISDOM: I think that I heard the Premier said that. I understood the Premier to say that the country is too large for one Government to manage. The "one Government" is the present Government. The country has never had dual Government, and the present Ministry are the only Government who have realised that they are not capable of administering the country. The admission is very pathetic, and could only have been made by those who realise their limitations. At the same time I welcome the admission from the Government, because it shows that their original estimate of their own powers has been considerably modified, and really it is about the only gleam of sunshine we have in an otherwise particularly dark financial and industrial sky. It also shows that the Government are beginning to realise their modest limitations, but what they do not realise are the limitations of the country with the modest population we have here. They do not realise that the present is certainly not a time for wild-cat schemes and socialistic land experiments. They have not realised that it will take the whole of the time, energies, and powers that the Government have to attend to the proper, legitimate development of this country. The State's greatest needs are capital, land settlement, and immigration, and apparently the Government are doing their best to keep capital away, to limit land settlement, and to stop immigration. By harassing industrial legislation and interference with private enterprise they are doing their best to keep investors out of the State, and not only investors, but also selectors with capital. It is not necessary for me to deal at any length with the land question, because it has been very closely debated recently in this Chamber, but I would like to ask why the task of preparing the land for settlement has been discontinued? I understand that the late Government were in the habit of preparing land for settlement in order that the settlers

might be saved a good deal of the pioneering work on that land—

The Premier: Where?

Mr. WISDOM: In the South-West.

Mr. Underwood: At Karrakatta.

Mr. WISDOM: I am informed of that fact, and as my informant is one on whose authority I can rely, I believe the statement.

Mr. Thomas: He is pulling your leg.

Mr. WISDOM: It will stand a lot of that. It is obvious that the Government with their resources and the implements at their command can do this work at a fraction of what it costs the settlers, and the money that is at present being spent on these wild-cat trading schemes would be a hundred times more profitably spent in the preparation of the land for settlers, because it would hasten the stage at which that land can be brought into productiveness by many years. That brings me to a question upon which I feel very strongly and keenly, the question of immigration. I would like first of all to welcome the member for Albany into the fold of those who favour immigration. It is a pity that, in this case also, as well as in regard to raising sufficient revenue to meet the expenditure, the Government are not so lion-hearted as the member for Albany. We know perfectly well, and I do not think it can be denied, that the land settlement in this country depends almost entirely upon immigration. It does not matter what we do, even if we prepare the land and build railways, unless we get people on the land, all our efforts are absolutely useless. We will have to compete with other countries for immigration, and I think it is absolutely suicidal at the present juncture to attempt to make experiments in land tenure, by introducing a policy which will make the land less attractive to the settler. There is no doubt about that. I say that, at the present time, when other countries are actively competing for population against us, that policy is absolutely suicidal. We know of no country in the world in which

such legislation exists at the present time.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting away from the Estimates. He is dealing with legislation, but he must deal only with administration.

Mr. WISDOM: I am sorry, but the digression is due to my inexperience. The Government in their land administration have endeavoured to discourage as much as possible the freehold system with the intention of bringing in a system of leasehold. It seems to me that there is no country in the world which has adopted that principle, in spite of much greater experience than can be claimed by the present Government in the matter of land settlement.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member knows that they cannot adopt that principle by administration.

Mr. WISDOM: In that case, I am afraid that I must switch on to something else. I was speaking on immigration, and remarking that this country has to compete with other countries for population, and anything which will militate against the bringing of population here must have a serious effect upon land settlement. I need hardly enlarge on that point, because it was sufficiently dealt with by other speakers. Dealing with immigration, brings me to unemployment. Of course we know that every country has unemployed, and amongst those unemployed we always find some who want work, and some who do not. I believe amongst the unemployed in this State there are many men who are really looking for work, but those men are mostly labourers, unaccustomed to farm work, and they do not want to go into the country. I wonder if it has ever occurred to the Government that the best way to find work for those people would be to satisfy the wants of the State in regard to skilled labour? It is notorious that artisan labour is scarce in this State, notwithstanding what may be said to the contrary by interested persons. We know there is a shortage at the present time and that we could absorb numbers of plumbers, carpenters and

men in pretty well every skilled branch of the building trade.

Mr. Foley: Would you find room for 12 good blacksmiths to-morrow if I produced them?

Mr. WISDOM: I am not an employer, but am making a statement on the authority of employers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Send them to the loco. workshops; plenty of blacksmiths are wanted there.

Mr. O'Loughlen: A royal commission sat on that question you know.

Mr. WISDOM: One skilled man can make work for probably half a dozen labourers and in the matter of railway construction for probably 20 labourers, but it appears that the Government are deliberately retarding progress in the interests of a few. I commend this aspect of the question also to the workers' unions to whom these unemployed belong. There is no doubt that whatever may be said, the Government are antagonistic to immigration. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) interjected a little while ago asking that one member who was antagonistic to immigration should be named. I had not time to name all the members on the other side of the House with the exception of the member for Albany (Mr. Price) but it is significant that when a certain scandalous letter was sent to the London Press by Mr. McCallum—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Is he a member?

Mr. WISDOM: I say when a certain letter was sent to the London Press by Mr. McCallum, not one member on the Government side repudiated it.

Mr. Underwood: We were not on this side of the House then.

Mr. WISDOM: If the present Government and their supporters believed in immigration, why did they allow that most damaging statement to go unchallenged?

Mr. Underwood: Because it was true.

Mr. WISDOM: They tacitly admitted the statement made by Mr. McCallum and backed it up. Then we have the words of the Premier in reply to a deputation from the unemployed re-

garding the question of immigration. He said "We have kept a steady hand on it." What is a steady hand on immigration? Have they kept it back and retarded it?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Figures do not say so.

Mr. WISDOM: The Premier also said—

We are taking almost wholly nominated passengers, mostly women and children.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Are not they a good asset?

Mr. WISDOM: I admit it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The best you can get.

Mr. WISDOM: Able bodied men who can go on the land and work are a better asset.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): No, they are not.

The Premier: What about some of you farmers over there giving them a job?

Mr. WISDOM: The Premier said—

We are taking almost wholly nominated passengers, mostly women and children. We have almost closed down on assisted immigrants and there is nothing to fear.

What did the Premier mean?

Mr. Underwood: That they would come in without assistance.

Mr. WISDOM: Did the Premier mean there was nothing to fear, that able bodied men would not be assisted to come into this country. There is not the least doubt the object of the Government and of the Labour party is to form a close corporation, practically a trust, to restrict output in order to keep the price of labour up and in that respect they are not doing more than any other combine or trust. When we hear so much about beef brigands and shipping rings and that sort of thing, it would be well to remember the Labour brigands, who have not language vile enough to describe any other trust but who are doing exactly the same thing only in a much more bare-faced and insolent manner.

Mr. Monger: Hear, hear.

Mr. WISDOM: I would remind the member for York (Mr. Monger) that this

is a serious matter. My belief is that the Government are deliberately, no I will not say deliberately because they know not what they do, but they are positively endangering the existence of Australia as a British community. What I consider the most important argument in favour of immigration as far as Australia is concerned and the first and most essential consideration is the defence of the country. In Australia we have an enormous country, a country of enormous wealth and of enormous possibilities and with an extensive coast line.

Mr. Underwood: You keep close to the main road.

Mr. WISDOM: I would like to say that the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) has never been as far off the main road as I have been in this country. He has not had to put up with the hardships which I have, and if I have come out of it better than he has it is because I have a little more brain. This is a country with an enormous coast line to defend, and I believe an extremely vulnerable country for a power strong enough and determined enough to attempt to occupy it.

The Minister for Mines: That is why you Liberals opposed an Australia navy.

Mr. WISDOM: In speaking of immigration I am not a Liberal or a Labour supporter but I hope I am an Australian because it is a subject of importance to every man, woman, and child in this country, and one that we cannot afford to allow to become a question of party politics.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You use it pretty strongly in that way.

Mr. WISDOM: I hope I shall never use it from the party aspect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Seeing we have brought out 2,000 more than your friends you had better come over here.

Mr. WISDOM: The contracts for those immigrants brought in by the present Government were made by the previous Government. I have yet to learn that any fresh contracts have been made by the present Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Yes, they have.

Mr. WISDOM: Except as regards nominated immigrants.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They were all ours.

Mr. WISDOM: This country is very vulnerable to any power strong and determined enough to take an opportunity to occupy it. That contingency has not occurred for the reason that the country has been under the protection of Great Britain and it cannot occur in future while that protection lasts, but it is a very significant fact that British statesmen and admirals and generals, and those best able to judge, realise that by rapid changes in the situation in Europe it is made necessary that the dominions should provide for their own defence. That has been made plain to the dominions recently, and if that implies anything it is the possibility that Britain may become so involved in her own defence as to be unable to assist in the defence of the outlying dominions.

Mr. Underwood: We would get cheap labour then.

Mr. WISDOM: Australia is in a more dangerous position than any other part of the Empire, owing to its distance from the old country, and its proximity to great powers with whom we have a difference of opinion on a question of vital importance to this country. Under the cover of the power of Great Britain we have been able to dictate terms to these powers, terms upon which we will admit the subjects of those powers. In addition I may say we have been foolish enough to adopt a habit of speaking of and treating subjects of those powers more or less contemptuously. When the opportunity occurs, as it may occur, and these powers demand that we shall give to them what they were forced to give to the British people, that is the open door, what reply is Australia with her handful of people going to make? Diplomacy can only be strong when it is backed up by a sufficiently strong armed force, and unless we have population, there is not the least doubt that we cannot have an

armed force sufficient to enforce our policy of a white Australia. I do not want to be misunderstood. I know that probably an attempt will be made to misunderstand me, but anyone who knows me is aware that I am out and out a supporter of a white Australia.

The Premier: That is a question.

Mr. WISDOM: Because I believe in a white Australia policy, and because I believe that some day that policy will depend on our having the strength to enforce it, I consider that a vigorous immigration policy is absolutely vital to the safety of Australia.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Combined with the York artillery.

Mr. WISDOM: That interjection is what we might expect from the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) when such an important question is being considered.

The Premier: What about letting off one of the guns: you have been three-quarters of an hour already.

Mr. WISDOM: We are always hearing the cry that we are trying to overcrowd the labour market and attempting to bring down wages. I do not think we could go so far as that as I have sufficient faith in this country to believe that it can absorb thousands where we are now receiving hundreds of people. There must be and always will be failures. We will always have a certain proportion of wasters, someone must suffer to a certain extent but we cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs. The general who is afraid of sacrificing life must inevitably lose the fight. The Premier has this duty as much as any other duty of preparing for the share of the defence of our country, and I say without hesitation that he is not doing it. I would like to conclude by quoting some very wise remarks on this subject made by one who is undeniably an authority on the question of defence, and who has studied the matter on the spot from every point of view. I refer to Admiral King-Hall. Speaking in Melbourne on the 10th November in reply to the toast of the "Army and Navy" he said—

The Royal Navy was never more efficient, the officers and men were never more zealous, never harder worked, and never more sleeplessly on guard, than at the present time, both in the home waters and elsewhere. The Royal Australian Navy, its younger brother, though still small, was in a most healthy state, full of energy, zeal, and intelligence, a service of which every Australian must be proud, and which was so popular that there was a superabundance of candidates for the privilege of entering it. He could not speak too highly and in too complimentary terms of the manner in which during the last 18 months the defence naval authorities who, under great difficulties and much criticism, had had the enormous task the heavy responsibility of developing and bringing this force into being, had succeeded.

The Minister for Mines: It was given to you by the Labour party.

Mr. WISDOM: I give the Labour party every credit for their defence policy, and I will say that the present Minister for Defence is the most efficient—

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member were in the Federal House his remarks might be appropriate, but I do not think they have anything to do with these Estimates.

Mr. WISDOM: I am speaking now on the question of immigration.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is dealing with the question of the Australian Navy.

Mr. WISDOM: I am trying to show that immigration is really the basis of an efficient defence force for Western Australia, and I am trying to show the necessity for vigorous immigration from a defence point of view. In that way I am trying to show that it is the duty of the present Government to have as part of their policy the encouragement of immigration. Am I in order in doing so?

The CHAIRMAN: But not to encourage immigration for the purpose of defence. That has nothing to do with this Parliament.

Mr. WISDOM: Am I in order in quoting Admiral King-Hall in his reference to immigration?

The CHAIRMAN: I have already drawn the hon. member's attention to what he can deal with. If he gets out of order again I shall very soon stop him.

Mr. WISDOM: Thank you very much. Admiral King-Hall said—

The whole international conditions had vitally changed during the last 10 years, in consequence of which the Royal Navy was practically confined to the vicinity of home waters *en visag* to other great fleets, which, as far as one could see, would always be in existence. Thore the bulk of the British fleet must be more or less concentrated in the future.

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member to deal with the question before the Committee. What he is reading has nothing to do with the Estimates.

Mr. WISDOM: Am I in order in speaking on immigration at all?

The CHAIRMAN: I have allowed the hon. member every latitude with regard to immigration, but I am not going to allow him to transgress as he has done during the last few minutes.

Mr. WISDOM: I can only say in conclusion, seeing that I am not allowed to read the very excellent statement by Admiral King-Hall with regard to the importance of immigration to Australia, and consequently to Western Australia, that the gist of his remarks is that Australia cannot possibly defend herself unless she has a sufficient population; and for that reason I think it is the duty of the present Government, as well as any other Government in Australia, to encourage immigration not only for the riches it brings to the State—for it cannot be denied that every able-bodied man, woman and child is an asset to the State, and increases the wealth of the country but because we know that we cannot carry on the development of the State, which is the most important part of the policy of any Government, without a vigorous immigration policy. For that reason, and also for the reason of defence, I consider that any Government or any statesmen in this country or any other

State of Australia who lay themselves out to retard in any way healthy immigration are traitors to the country, and are doing wrong; and the day will come, I feel certain, when the people of Australia will call to account those who have engaged on such a suicidal policy as the restriction of immigration. It is a policy that is absolutely vital to Australia, and the people of the country will point with the finger of scorn and derision to any statesman who dares tinker with this policy from purely selfish and paltry motives.

Progress reported.

#### BILLS (4) RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

1. Shearers' Accommodation (with requested amendments).
2. Inebriates (with requested amendments).
3. Supply (£492,225 without amendment).
4. Industrial Arbitration (with requested amendments).

#### BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Crown lands not to be granted.

Mr. MONGER: Could one deal with Clause 1?

The CHAIRMAN: No, it had been disposed of.

[Mr. McDowall took the Chair.]

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Clause 2 embodied the whole principle of the Bill, which for all time was to make it illegal for Crown lands to be disposed of in Western Australia except under leasehold conditions. The principle of the Bill from its inception came before us in this clause. On the previous occasion members were forced by a fit of pettishness on the part of the Premier to consider the principle of the Bill through the late hours of the evening

and the early hours of the following morning, and so it was to be presumed that to-night, because members had had the audacity to exercise their undeniable right to discuss the Estimates fully, they were to be penalised by being kept in the House until the early hours of the morning to discuss this important measure.

The Attorney General: That is presuming before the fact.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was simply following the example set last week, and building on what members had to suffer last week.

The Premier: Discuss the Bill.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier had behaved in a disgraceful fashion on both occasions on which this Bill had to be discussed. The Premier had been told on more than one occasion that the Opposition intended to have a say in the carrying out of legislation passed through the House. Of course when it came to a division the Opposition could not help themselves. Numbers would tell. The Premier would exercise his brutal majority and apply the lash to his followers.

The Attorney General: That is unparliamentary.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Attorney General had used the expression and he was merely following that hon. member's example. The clause provided that Crown lands should not after the passing of the Act be issued in fee simple. In other words we were to have no more freehold in Western Australia. Hon. members opposite knew that he was entirely and absolutely opposed to that, and that he had never on or off the hustings, in public or in private, hesitated to point out to the people of Western Australia how detrimental this plank of the Labour platform would be to the country. He had realised on many occasions that the members of the Labour party were bound down by Labour congress to put into their platform the non-alienation of Crown lands with a view to the ultimate nationalisation of all lands.

Mr. Munsie: We believe in it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member did not believe in it. If it meant ruination to the country to-morrow hon. members opposite were so hide-bound and so afraid of congress that they would vote for it. It was idle for the Minister for Lands to tell the Committee that this did not mean the ultimate nationalisation of all lands. It was idle for the Premier to think that he could exercise his judgment in respect to one portion of the plank and not the concluding portion, and it was certain that the Premier was not going to persuade the people that he was going to stop at preventing freeholds in the future, and was going to close his eyes to the fact that his masters had already hinted to him what the policy in regard to all lands was to be. The members of the Labour party during the election campaign tried to pooh-pooh the statements that were made by the Opposition, pointing out what this would ultimately mean to the country. They tried on every occasion to allay any unrest which was apparent in regard to this plank.

Mr. Heitmann: We actually contradicted Mr. Mitchell's statement that we were going to steal the farmers' homes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Sooner or later there would be no option, and if the Labour party remained true to their platform they would steal not only farmers' homes but freehold property which many owners happened to possess at the present time.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Absolutely incorrect.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What were the facts with regard to the clause? We were asked to provide that no further freehold should be issued, that no Crown lands should be given in fee simple, and we were asked to legislate in that direction because this legislation existed in some far away country that we had not seen any record of in history and where members had been told it had been tried and had proved a great success.

Mr. Munsie: Have you never heard of New South Wales? The leasehold



principle there has proved a great success.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It had been shown that hardly any applications for leaseholds were being made in New South Wales. We had been told in vague terms by the Minister for Lands of some far away portion of the civilised world where the system had proved a huge success and hence he asked the Parliament of Western Australia to follow that example and legislate accordingly.

The Attorney General: This is a second-reading speech.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The whole principle of the Bill was in this clause. How would the Attorney General deal with it?

The Attorney General: I would stick to the text.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That was the course that he was following. He was pointing out that he had never yet been able to ascertain from the Minister where this legislation had proved so successful. Members had been told that it had been a huge success in New South Wales and in New Zealand—the latter, a country which had set an example in all democratic matters. When we looked at New South Wales we found that there was no legislation such as the Minister wished us to believe there was. They had passed legislation there which permitted the Minister to set aside a certain area and lease it, if applicants wished to take it up under such conditions. But the original powers of selling the freehold of these lands still existed in New South Wales. In New Zealand it had been such a huge success that the present Government, backed by a majority of something like 40 to 17, quite recently repealed their legislation. While the Minister for Lands was discussing this measure they were busy in New Zealand passing legislation to repeal the Act. The Minister must have been cognisant of what was going on in New Zealand. It was published in the cabled reports, and if it was not, he could have ascertained the position. He could quite understand that the Minister in his enthusiasm did not wish

to know exactly what was going on in the Dominion, because the Minister had advanced their legislation in regard to land tenure as a reason why we should legislate accordingly here. Western Australia was about three years behind the rest of Australia and New Zealand. As a rule we came along about three years late, and whatever the sister States or New Zealand had enacted which was bad, and had made up their minds to repeal, we took up as something new at about the time the other States were repealing it. We did it with our politics. The Eastern States had tried Labour politicians and found them wanting, and now we came along and gave the control to a huge Labour majority. We were never content to learn by the experience of others, but were determined to pay for our own experience; and we were paying for it pretty dearly at the present juncture. What was going to be the result of this legislation if we passed it? Was it going to conduce to the well-being of the State? At the last elections the Premier had declared that there would be no stagnation, no unemployed, no financial difficulties, no confiscation, if his party were returned to power. Was this legislation going to conduce to the fulfilment of that boast? It must be apparent, even to those with the smallest experience, that if we prohibited freeholds in Western Australia we would accentuate the stagnation we already had, we would accentuate our financial difficulties, and would certainly bring about a depression which might mean rather a decrease in our population than an increase. Our very progress and prosperity depended almost entirely upon the maintenance of a constant and continuous stream of immigrants to our shores, and the successful settlement of our lands. That was the policy that had brought Western Australia out of the quagmire of depression seven years ago, which enabled us to-day to point with pride to the immense strides of progression made. If that policy was dependent, as he maintained it was, upon the granting of freehold of the soil to the individual, then what he depicted was bound to be the result of this disas-

trous legislation. He could not conceive of any body of men in their sane senses endeavouring to legislate to hang up the country, nor could he conceive of his friends opposite trying to blind themselves to the result this legislation would undoubtedly have. How could the Government hope to square their finances if they refused to sell Crown lands, and have these lands cultivated in order that they might produce the wealth now lying latent. He could not understand responsible men expecting the members of the Opposition to render assistance in passing a Bill of this nature. We were being asked to experiment. It seemed that hon. members who had taken up this matter as a fad, as a theory, were desirous of making Western Australia the experimental ground, and that we were to hang up our progress in order that we might experiment for the benefit of other portions of the Commonwealth and of the civilised globe. Was it right that we should hang up the country for the next ten years? Because it would be a good many years before the evil effects of this legislation were dispelled. The clause meant a very great interference in our progress and prosperity, and would require some better justification than the Minister had been able to advance heretofore. We had been told the motherland was aiming in this direction, that dear old Ireland, and other countries, were also aiming in this direction, and that the only method of getting away from the curse of landlordism was to prohibit the sale of Crown lands. We had been asked, so long as the State had the land here and could raise the necessary revenue from it for purposes of administration, we had been asked what did it matter whether the tenure was called freehold or leasehold. But it mattered a lot; it mattered that one could hold something that could not be interfered with, it mattered that one could have an indisputable title to his land, that there should not be conditions put upon the land, that the land should only be liable to uniform taxation for the purposes of the administration of public affairs of the country. All freehold was liable to be taxed with a view

to raising necessary revenue. If it was necessary the land must suffer the taxation, whether the owners went out or stayed in. That was justifiable.

Mr. Green: You proposed to do away with that—catch votes, you remember.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member ought to catch flies. Whilst land in times of distress, in times of national danger, must suffer its full share of taxation with other property, whilst the owner took that necessary risk in his transaction, the owner knew that so far as his tenure was concerned it was there to remain undisturbed. But what of the leasehold that was going to take the place of freehold? Not only had we here all the disabilities of taxation if a Government came in who deemed it necessary to tax the land, notwithstanding that the Minister had inserted in the Bill that it should be free of taxation in order to put a glamour round the principle, but we had the leaseholder coming up every 20 years to have the value of his land reassessed; in other words, to have his rent raised. What sort of tenure was that to give to any man? Would hon. members be as good as their words and convert their freeholds into leaseholds when the Bill was passed? He doubted it. They would stick to their freeholds and let the other man come in and take up the leasehold. It stood to reason that any man going out on virgin country to fashion his home out of Crown lands, to commence a life's work in improving a property, to put all his energy and enterprise into his land and invest his capital in it in order to have an estate which might be worth handing down to his children after he was dead and gone, was not going to improve his estate to the same degree for the sake of a leasehold which might not be his after the first 20 years. It was against human nature and against the practice and desires of the British people wherever they were found. A person taking a property on lease had certain conditions to carry out, but he did not improve the property beyond the conditions he had signed, and could the Government expect that their leaseholders, who were to be assessed every

20 years, would improve their land as the farmers did under the freehold system, knowing full well that they were putting their capital into the property and that ultimately their efforts would be duly rewarded and that even if the individual of to-day did not reap the full fruits of his work yet those he left behind would have that value to fall back upon? He could not conceive any common-sense individual expecting that settlers would put anything like the work into estates under the leasehold system, that they did under the freehold system.

Mr. Green: The tenantry are doing it all over the world.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The tenants were not doing it. Tenants took all they possibly could out of an estate, and left the improvements for the landlord to make, except such improvements as they were legally bound to carry out under the terms of their lease. That had been the cause of all the trouble in the Mother Country and in Ireland. The trouble in Ireland was that the tenants were ground down by the big landlords and they were unable to improve the land. All they could do was to make a bare living. The whole of the transformation in Ireland to-day was due to the fact that the men who tilled the soil were becoming the owners of it. The British Government had provided millions of money in order to repurchase the land for the tenants, not to lease it out again, but in order to make the tenants the owners of their own blocks of land, in order that they might improve it up to the hilt, increase the value of the land, and get all out of it that labour, energy and hope in the future would spur them to do. In Western Australia it was proposed that we should do the very opposite, and that the small landowner should be encouraged no longer. A policy had been adopted in New South Wales, sent across to Bunbury and adopted there, and had become as the law of the Medes and Persians to the caucus-ridden members of the Labour party. But in New South Wales they had not rushed to make the reform like a bull at a gate, for, while providing for the leasehold, they had still left power to dispose of the free-

hold; and notwithstanding the benefits that had been so often emphasised by hon. members opposite, especially during the last general elections, notwithstanding all the stories that had been woven round the magic word leasehold, the majority of applicants in New South Wales were still applying for the freehold and a small minority were taking up leasehold, presumably because of some special conditions attaching to the land offered under those terms. Why should we not do the same thing in Western Australia instead of providing that no estate should be acquired in fee simple, except in the performance of an existing contract?

Mr. Dwyer: That is what you used to deny.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That denial had never been made. The hon. member twisted one's statement and did not play the game fair. Like his leaders, when he got on the platform he put a meaning into the words of his opponents in order to give a bad effect and make the people believe that he was right and his opponents wrong. He defied the hon. member to deny that he had pledged himself to stop the alienation of Crown lands with a view to the ultimate nationalisation of all lands.

Mr. Dwyer: Of course I have, and I believe in the principle, but we will nationalise the land without confiscation or repudiation.

The CHAIRMAN: These interjection are most disorderly.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The promises made by the hon. member were like the promises made by the Premier twelve months ago when he delivered his Budget Speech, that by the end of the financial year the deficit would be a thing of the past. The deficit was now to be trebled. There was to be no stagnation or unemployed, but the stagnation was going on rapidly to-day and the unemployed were with us.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member should confine himself to the clause. There is no occasion to get into the Budget.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The clause was an objectionable one.

Mr. Monger : I do not like it either.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : No one liked it. If the Minister was honest to himself and true to Parliament he would admit that he too did not like it. In fact the Minister viewed this clause with something like dismay and in his inmost heart realised that the results indicated certainly would be brought about.

Mr. Green : You do not think that.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Yes he did, but the Minister was bound down by pledges made for him and other members at the Labour Conference.

Mr. Green : You are stating what you know is not correct.

The CHAIRMAN : Order. Really we must get on with the business of the Chamber. These interruptions were disorderly.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The hon. member ought to withdraw his remark.

Mr. Green : The remark was withdrawn.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The clause would be disastrous to Western Australia and supporters of the Government viewed it with some concern. He could not realise that the Minister believed he ought to exempt leasehold lands from taxation. Was it just that people should be tempted to take up leaseholds by telling them they would not be taxed ?

The Minister for Lands : That is not in this clause.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : Yes, the whole Bill was covered by this clause.

The Minister for Lands : The taxation comes under Clause 20.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The Minister could rise to a point of order if he was not satisfied. The question of leasehold or freehold came under this clause. Under the Bill there would be no more freeholds in Western Australia, and the inducement offered to the people was that they should be released from land taxation. How would the Minister raise revenue ? He was going to charge two per cent. on the ascertained value of the land. He would ascertain the value of the land to fix the two per cent. by taking the prices at which it might reasonably be supposed to sell. Where

would he get any selling price when the sale of freehold was stopped ?

The Minister for Lands : On a point of order the question of the valuation and percentage of rental was provided for in Clause 7, and not under this clause.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The argument he was advancing was that leaseholds were detrimental and unworkable because of this very provision.

The CHAIRMAN : Clause 2 must be interpreted very widely and it was competent for all parties to argue for and against the measure on this particular clause. The hon. member was in order ; at the same time, he should keep as close to the clause as possible.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The clause embraced the whole of the Bill. It was proposed to charge only two per cent. by way of rental on leasehold lands. Two per cent. was not the value of money. The Treasurer could not borrow at four per cent. and probably would be glad to borrow at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Should we give Crown lands into the keeping of individuals for twenty years at a rental of two per cent. ?

Mr. E. B. Johnston : What about town lots ? , , , ,

Hon. FRANK WILSON : The hon. member knew all about town lots. Even those lots in the sand dunes of Esperance would increase if the Bill became law, so the hon. member had something to look forward to. If we charged by way of rental less than the value of money to-day we would depreciate the income of the State and reduce the revenue which the State was entitled to derive from its land.

Mr. Green : And have it for all time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : We would have it for 20 years if the poor beggar could pay the two per cent. Two per cent. was to be based on the value at which the land would reasonably be supposed to sell. Never had he heard of such a mixture. In New Zealand, which had been held out as a shining example, the charge was four per cent. The law of supply and demand came in as regarded money, land and every other commodity, notwithstanding the sneers

and scoffs of the supporters of the Government. Hence we had the position that the Minister for Lands was making inroads on the Treasurer's revenue. If the Bill was passed, the revenue through the Lands Department would decrease enormously, in fact it would not only decrease but it would cease almost altogether. If we took the experience of other countries as a guide and warning, that was what we might expect. In those countries where even the dual system had been tried, there had been a decided slackening off of settlers under the leasehold principle. Were we justified in passing this legislation under those circumstances? Were we justified in endeavouring to create what had been considered the greatest bugbear of recent history in the motherland and elsewhere—the big landlord grinding down his tenants? Were we justified in carrying on this system in the name of the State and putting up the State as the sole landlord, creating the biggest monopoly that perhaps Australia had ever heard of, because members supporting the Government wished to experiment in connection with what was the greatest principle underlying the advancement of any country and the building up of the nation? Were we justified in experimenting in Western Australia with our small population and limited resources? There was vast undeveloped wealth in the State, but were we carrying out our duty to posterity if we hobbled the people in this direction? Were we carrying out our duty to the State and to the Empire? Members should think twice before they passed the clause, and if we had to legislate in this direction, the Minister should recast the clause and make it optional. He should give the applicant the right to take out a leasehold or a freehold at his option, and perhaps we could then see the result of this legislation to some moderate extent without causing a vast "injury" to the country which must ensue if the clause was passed as it stood.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE moved—

*That progress be reported.*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	21

Majority against .. 9

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. A. E. Piesse
Mr. Broun	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Layman
Mr. Monger	(Teller).
Mr. Moore	

#### NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bath	Mr. Munslie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Dooley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Heltmann
Mr. McDonald	(Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The suggestion made by the leader of the Opposition was very reasonable. If the Minister succeeded in getting the House to grant him power to lease land he would do all that he aimed at, but if there was no land to be sold we would be the only State in the Commonwealth where it would be impossible to obtain land under the freehold. Few members, even on the Government side, desired that our land system should be changed straight away. Even to-day the Bill had bad effects, as land was not easily obtainable and work was scarce. No reasonable man would agree to the provisions of the Bill, and so the clause should be amended to make it optional to acquire under the freehold or the leasehold system.

[Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.]

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The Minister ought to report progress because this clause was the kernel of the Bill. As many country members had been absent from the House during the discussion on the second reading, and unfortunately had no opportunity for discussing the

Bill, it was only natural there would be some little amount of discussion around this clause; and seeing that country members had only arrived in the City during the morning after travelling all night long distances under rather trying circumstances, the Minister would admit that they were physically unfit to go on with the discussion of an important measure like this at this late hour. The clause would bring about an entire change in our land settlement policy of the past. Even at this late stage the Minister should see the necessity for eliminating the clause entirely so that it would be optional for selectors in the future to take up holdings under leasehold or under fee simple conditions. The leader of the Opposition had already pointed out the ill-effects of doing away with the past policy of land settlement. Admittedly the conditions under which land selection had been conducted in the past were not without faults, which were only to be expected in a country like this, taking into consideration our vast area of second and third-class land and our unfortunate position in that a great quantity of the land was infested with poisonous weed. For years past great difficulties had presented themselves to the Governments of the day in satisfactorily settling these lands. As far back as the foundation of the State in the early days of settlement in Western Australia, land was practically given away or granted for a very small consideration and very often in large areas, and it was with very great difficulty that settlement could be induced to come to this country. There were instances on record of settlers having emigrated to Western Australia, and owing to the vast and almost insurmountable difficulties presenting themselves, eventually giving up their holdings and going to the East of Australia. After that we had land laws in which the conditions were not quite so liberal: lands were granted for perhaps a little increased consideration, rents were higher; and then at a later date certain restrictions took place in regard to area. It had been found, owing to the altered conditions of

the State, that it was necessary to place further limitations upon the area to be selected. It was only reasonable that any Administration should seek to bring about that end. At the same time when we attempted to make such a serious change as this, to alter the whole principle of the tenure of land, we were treading upon dangerous ground. We had large areas already selected under the freehold system, and others under leasehold conditions which in the ordinary course of events would become fee simple property. It must be admitted that in the granting of those areas already alienated some of the best of the country had already been taken up under freehold conditions. Therefore it was unwise to alter the system of tenure, especially when we came to take into consideration the fact that now only the poorer of the lands were available for selection. If it were difficult to satisfactorily settle the best of our lands under those more liberal conditions which prevailed to-day, he contended it would be much more difficult to settle poorer lands and to bring about that utilisation we all desired to see under leasehold conditions. Take our poison lands. It would be difficult indeed, so far as he could see, to get people to take up those lands and develop the limited area and eradicate the poison plants. As a leasehold measure this was very liberal, and he congratulated the Minister upon the consideration which he had given both to the early settler and to the settler in the initial stages of the eradication of the poison weed. At the same time, if we did away with the privilege of allowing a selector to take up freehold we would do away with the incentive to build up and make a permanent home upon the land. No one knew better than he did the difficulties that surrounded the country which was infested with the poison weed. It was only during the past seven or eight years that it had been possible to successfully eradicate the poison and stock the country. He had visions of this land which had already been idle for many years remaining unimproved, if we did

away with the possibility of a selector being able to obtain the freehold. It would take at least ten years for a selector to feel that he was safe. It really meant that at the end of 20 years he would be positively assured that his land was free from poison, and that he had made an asset from something which he had taken up in virgin country, and which was previously an absolute menace to the State. There were many improvements which the selector might put upon his holding and which at the time of the re-appraisement would not be taken into consideration. A visible asset might not show a visible value, and that danger existed in connection with these lands in particular. The same thing might not apply to such a great extent to other lands which were poorer in character, such as sand plain and lands containing poorer or lighter soils. We found that settlers had improved those soils and had made the unimproved value considerably greater than when the land was first selected, and then we knew if we did away with the freehold conditions altogether, we had the objection which would be endorsed by every right-thinking person, and that was that the man who took up land as in the past had an asset which when improved would enable him to get certain assistance from financial institutions, whereas under leasehold conditions, it was questionable whether the security then would be as good. The Minister might have taken the House into his confidence as to the attitude the Agricultural Bank would adopt in regard to these leasehold lands. We had no information on that phase of the question, and it was most important that the House should know the attitude the trustees of the Agricultural Bank were likely to take or the attitude of the Government in regard to future legislation in dealing with the Agricultural Bank so far as this measure was concerned. He had visions also of the freeholder living in the towns, the worker who wished to retain his freehold and be able to call the little piece of land his own. We would not encourage permanent development and substantial improvement of property by agreeing to the

clause. He hoped the Minister would see fit to modify the clause, or have it eliminated altogether from the Bill, so that settlers might have the option of still taking the freehold.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** It had been entirely presumption on the part of the leader of the Opposition to declare that it was intended to compel hon. members to sit on till the small hours of the morning. Such was far from being the intention. On the previous occasion there had been justification for sitting right on, because the Bill had been before the House for a fortnight and members had had sufficient opportunity of considering the principle and marshalling their second reading arguments. It was not fair on the discussion of the clause to repeat the second reading speeches which had gone before. The leader of the Opposition had merely repeated his remarks of the previous occasion, building up a speech entirely on misstatement of the speech delivered by him (the Minister for Lands) in moving the second reading. As an instance, the leader of the Opposition had declared that the Minister asked hon. members to accept the Bill because its principles were in operation somewhere in some far distant land. As a matter of fact the mythical land referred to was New South Wales, and his (the Minister's) remarks in this connection had been based on the authority of Sir Joseph Carruthers, who was responsible for the introduction of the principle into New South Wales in 1895 and who, in a speech delivered in 1912, had summed up the magnificent results which had accrued therefrom. The principle of the Bill, as contained in the clause under discussion, had been established and confirmed on the second reading and he had no intention of asking members to sit till the early hours discussing it. All he asked was that opportunity should be given of making some reasonable progress.

**HON. J. MITCHELL:** Certainly the second reading had to an extent established the principle which the Minister sought to introduce. Still there was a good deal more to come. Further information was required. If the land was

merely to be leased how were the finances to be recouped, how did the Minister propose to balance if the revenue which came to us now under the system of selling the land was to be denied to us under the system of leasehold? Again, it was provided that holders of conditional purchase land might convert. If those people were to convert, much of the revenue the Minister now derived would disappear. Then the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) had raised the question of private finance, and asked how the leaseholders were to obtain advances. All these were important questions and should be minutely replied to by the Minister. It was essential that a man who went out into the backblocks to develop the country should be able to borrow money for improvements. What would the Minister do to make it possible for the leaseholders to carry on the work of improvement now that they would not be able to go to private financial institutions? We could not believe that the Minister had not in some way made provision to meet the difficulties that would be occasioned by the substitution of leasehold for the freehold. The Committee should be informed on this point.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.32 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 13th November, 1912.*

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

### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Annual report of the Woods and Forests Department to the 30th June, 1912.

### BILL—JETTIES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

### BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

#### *Second Reading.*

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister) in moving the second reading said: The Bill which we have before us is one to amend the law with reference to compensation for injuries, and its object is also to try to bring this State into line with the legislation of some of the other States and some of the other English speaking parts of the world. Last year at the Imperial Conference a resolution was carried affirming the desirability of bringing about uniformity in regard to the law for compensation for injuries, and that resolution was sent to the various English speaking parts of the British Empire, and an endeavour made to bring about uniformity. I am not going to say that the Bill is entirely uniform with all Bills that have been introduced in various parts, but at least I can say that in many respects it is uniform. The Workers' Compensation Act at present in existence was passed in 1902 and its purpose was to remove the disabilities which workers were suffering from in respect to the Employers' Liability Act and