

*Hon. W. Patrick:* Has this question been raised in another State?

*Hon. M. L. MOSS:* No, but it has to be raised somewhere first. I am quite willing if this Bill passes the second reading that it should go to a select committee, and I think that, instead of taking the opinion of a member of this House, we should subpoena before the committee three or four members of the Bar of this State, and get from them a definition for the guidance of the House when the Bill is in Committee, to see whether the opinions I have expressed are in accordance with their view of the law. I would start first with the Solicitor General, and we could have some other members of the Bar in private practice and get their opinions. However I have done my duty, not only to the members of this House but to members of another place. It is an unfair position to put members of Parliament in. While I do not say that the amendment of the Constitution should be on the lines indicated in this Bill, I think some amendment is necessary to put this thing on a sensible footing.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett:* You have said nothing about Royal Commissions.

*Hon. M. L. MOSS:* No. I say it is a moot question whether a gentleman acting on a Royal Commission holds an office of profit or not. I have this afternoon drawn attention to something that is of public importance, and I think I am entitled not only to the assistance of this House but also to the assistance of members of the Government and of another place, to correct what I think is a blot on our Constitution.

On motion by *Hon. W. Kingsmill*, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.8 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1908.

	PAGE
Questions: Savings Bank Loan, P. Stone ...	606
Blackboy agreement ...	606
State Battery slimes charges ...	606
Onkabella Estate repurchase ...	607
Papers presented ...	607
Bills: Stamp Act Amendment, 1s. ...	607
Bunbury Harbour Board, report ...	607
Vernin Boards, recommital ...	607
Bridgetown-Wilgarrup Railway, 2s. ...	607
Metropolitan Sewerage and Drainage, 2s. postponed ...	612
Permanent Reserves Rededication, 1s. ...	643
York Reserve, 1s. ...	648
Limited Partnerships, 2s. ...	648
Chairmen of Committees, Temporary ...	612
Annual Estimates 1908-9, general debate ...	612

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

### QUESTION—SAVINGS BANK LOAN, P. STONE.

Mr. HOLMAN (without notice) asked the Treasurer whether the land on which the money was advanced to P. Stone was valued by a Government officer, and if so by whom?

The TREASURER replied: The land was valued by a valuator named Earle, a gentleman who has on several occasions valued for the Government.

### QUESTION—BLACKBOY AGREEMENT.

Mr. CARSON (without notice) asked the Premier: Has the agreement been signed with Messieurs Wallace & Black in respect to the blackboy project?

The PREMIER replied: Yes, the contract has been signed.

### QUESTION—STATE BATTERY SLIMES CHARGES.

Mr. TROY (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: Has the Minister's promise made at Coolgardie some months ago been fulfilled in regard to retaining the old sliding scale for battery charges in respect to slimes?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: No it has not, the reason being that on account of the election I did not know but that somebody else might be filling the post I now occupy: conse-

quently I did not want to initiate a new scheme that might not have been agreeable to my successor. I preferred to wait a few days. The change will take place as from the 1st January next.

#### QUESTION—OAKABELLA ESTATE REPURCHASE.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, From whom was the Oakabella Estate purchased? 2, In whose names did the conditional purchase, grazing, and poison lease blocks stand when the estate was offered to the Government? 3, The acreage held by each of such persons? 4, What was the area of the freehold in the estate? 5, What was the price paid for the estate?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: The Government have agreed to purchase this estate from—1, Samuel Richard Lewes Elliott, 2 and 3, Emma Elliott, 5,816½ acres: W. E. L. Elliott, 924¼ acres: S. R. L. Elliott, 8,822 acres: Dalgery & Co., 3,234½ acres; Burges, W. & S. L., and Wittenoom, E. H., 100 acres; Burges and Wittenoom, 20 acres; W. A. Cornish, 2,094 acres: K. R. Cornish, 637½ acres; Rose V. Monger, 1,234¾ acres: total 22,883½ acres. 4, Freehold, 2,058¾ acres: balance made up by pastoral leases, 20,000 acres: total area of estate, 44,942¼ acres. 5, The price to be paid is £22,000, including all improvements.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Papers relating to breaches of the Early Closing Act by Brenan Bros. (ordered on motion by Mr. Johnson). 2, Plan of proposed Railway from Bridgetown to Wilgarrup. 3, Plan of proposed Railway from Nannine to Meekatharra. 4, Plan of proposed Railway to Upper Chapman. 5, Plan of proposed dock at Fremantle (ordered on motion by Mr. S. F. Moore). 6, Papers relating to provision of Railway facilities at Stoneville (ordered on motion by Mr. Jacoby). 7, Report of the Government gardener for 1907-8.

#### BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Treasurer and read a first time.

#### BILL—BUNBURY HARBOUR BOARD.

On motion by the Premier report of Committee adopted.

#### BILL—VERMIN BOARDS.

##### Recommendation.

On motion by the Honorary Minister Bill recommitted for further consideration.

Clause 13—Number of votes:

The HONORARY MINISTER moved an amendment—

*That all the words after "votes" in line 7 be struck out.*

Mr. JOHNSON: If the suggestion were adopted it would be open for a person holding several stations in one district to have separate votes for each station and, providing they were worked as one, he might have as many as nine votes.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the words proposed to be struck out were deleted, it would mean that no person could have more than three votes altogether. That was according to the scale that a man holding under 10,000 acres should have one vote only; exceeding 10,000 acres and not exceeding 100,000 acres, 2 votes; and exceeding 100,000 acres, 3 votes. If he had one hundred million acres he would only have three votes.

Mr. Johnson: Even if he had three separate stations in the one district?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That would make no difference; he could never have more than three votes.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported with a further amendment.

#### BILL—BRIDGETOWN-WILGAR- RUP RAILWAY.

##### Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) in moving the second reading said: The

proposal I now desire to ask the House to give their approval to is for the construction of a railway from Bridgetown in a southerly direction to Wilgarrup. This railway was contained in the proposals outlined by me in May 1906, and the line is to extend from the terminal point of the South-Western railway service at Bridgetown, southerly to Wilgarrup. I am prompted to commend this line to the favourable consideration of the House from the fact of the success which has attended the construction of a railway in a neighbouring district in very similar country to what this railway is proposed to serve; I refer to the Donnybrook-Upper Preston railway. That has proved the most profitable of any of the railways constructed during the last few years, that is, from a railway point of view.

*Mr. Taylor:* You refer to the agricultural areas?

The PREMIER: In any area. There is this exception to the similarity between the two lines, that the Wilgarrup line will serve a larger amount of unalienated country. So far as the Donnybrook railway is concerned, it will have been seen from the report of the Commissioner of Railways that on the last three months' working of the last financial year there was a profit of £913, after providing for the cost of running and the interest on the cost of construction. Undoubtedly, this proposed line, when completed, will form another link towards joining up the South-Western railway with the Denmark railway. This line, when completed, will open up a territory which is practically unknown, but which will undoubtedly be closely settled. The line, when completed, will bring the railway communication within touch of the most northern limits of the karri forests, and render available for work a considerable area of jarrah. While jarrah thrives in ironstone gravel and in country considered from an agricultural point of view practically worthless, karri does not flourish except on very rich soil, and the existence of karri and red gum on an area is sufficient evidence to the initiated that the soil is particularly productive, and the rainfall good. Karri grows to

perfection in the very best soil, and in the district to be served by the proposed railway, in the country a little beyond the head of the proposed terminus the timber is very fine and grows in rich soil, while the rainfall of the district is from 35 to 45 inches. The karri area is confined to that portion of the State lying between Wilgarrup on the north and Denmark on the south. The only patch of karri further south consists of a few hundred acres at the Porongorup Ranges, 25 miles from Albany. So far as the timber is concerned, those interested in the timber know that for superstructural purposes karri is infinitely superior to jarrah, and it is being extensively used in some of the railway construction works in the old country, while in Western Australia karri and red gum have been used exclusively in connection with the manufacture of trucks to carry timber for the trade by some timber companies. A preliminary survey, a horseback traverse, has been made from the terminus of the line to Denmark, to approximately locate the through line, and I trust it will only be a few years before this connection is established, and this huge area added to the productive territory of the State. At the present time the dense undergrowth in the country renders it practically valueless from a grazing point of view, while much of the timber, the growth of centuries, is deteriorating because it is more than matured. The problem of encouraging settlers without sacrificing the great wealth of timber becomes a more complex one here than in the other parts of the State, owing to the fact that the better the soil the better the timber. With regard to jarrah forests that remark does not necessarily apply, because we have good jarrah where there is not good soil. Where there are jarrah areas the good soil only lies in the valleys and pockets, and there the jarrah does not predominate, but the blackboy and red gum. In contradistinction to this are the karri forests. I propose in the future that for any alienation in this particular country, the land shall be alienated with the right retained by the Crown to take the timber within a certain time after the land has been sold.

In the areas recently ringbarked by the Government in this neighbourhood we are making provision for this, and all marketable timber has been distinctly marked, and the officers have been instructed not to ringbark any which is of marketable value. I am desirous of taking every step to conserve the timber, for in the past there have been abuses in this direction. In the neighbourhood of Collie, and, no doubt, the member for the district will be able to support me, a few years ago many blocks of land were alienated which carried a splendid growth of timber. The result was that the selector sold the timber on a royalty at a price which would more than pay for the land. Consequently, by taking this action, I maintain we are doing well, while not hindering the development of the country from an agricultural point of view, preserving at the same time the State's valuable timber asset. The Surveyor General, writing to me on this matter, states:—

"This line will afford transport facilities to a number of settlers who are engaged in mixed farming and stock raising, in conjunction with apple growing. 2, It will, undoubtedly render the present settlers' task of transporting produce to a profitable market much easier, as they now have to contend against great difficulties, carting produce long distances. 3, A large extent of the country that will be served by this railway is eminently adapted for the cultivation of root crops, the growth of introduced grasses and, in view of the abundant rainfall and mild climate with which it is endowed, is well adapted for dairying purposes, and must in the not distant future be largely utilised for that purpose. 4, The capabilities of the soil and climate for the profitable cultivation of apples, pears, peaches, and smaller fruits have been proved without any doubt. In addition it has proved itself well adapted for profitable sheep farming. Portions of it, especially the valleys and some of the hillsides, when improved and put under grass, will be capable of carrying up to four sheep to the acre, if grazed in small paddocks."

Undoubtedly those who have had an opportunity of visiting this particular district must agree with the Surveyor General in the remarks he has made in this connection, for it is an ideal district for dairy farming, being especially suitable for the growth of English grasses. As an indication of this, I may say in the district near the terminus of the line there is the homestead Manganup, the property of Mr. G. Giblett. When I visited there I ascertained from him that he had fattened no less than 80 sheep on four acres of clover, the sheep having only been grazed on this small area for a period of two months. As to the possibilities of the country in the way of fruitgrowing, I may mention as an instance what has been done at the Warren homestead, the property of Mr. Brockman. There were growing at that homestead two large pear trees which were laden with fruit when I was there, and which, he assured me, returned to him no less than £123 as the result of the fruit grown in one season. That is an indication of what can be done there in the way of fruitgrowing. The proposed line to Wilgarrup will confer very large benefits on a considerable number of settlers. Nearly all the crops in the South-Western districts this year are very good indeed. Many new orchards have been planted, many miles of fencing done and swamp lands cleared for potatoes, while those people now planting in the vicinity of Bridgetown are rejoicing at the prospect of the passing of this measure. One cannot go through this State as I have done and traverse settled portions without feeling that to the moist South-West we must look for the production of practically all our dairy products. This portion of Western Australia can be still termed the "Garden of the State," and from practical experience I know the trials and difficulties that have beset settlers there owing to the heavy clearing. Still I am optimistic enough to be satisfied that, properly handled, no part of this State will respond so strongly to the developmental policy as the South-West. The advancement has not been so rapid as in the

Eastern districts where a man can make a show on a large area in a short time. But a few shillings spent in the South-Western districts will be paid for tenfold in a few years. I feel sure that 5s. spent per acre in clearing and scrubbing will be worth £5 in a few years to come. We have evidence of what has been done in this direction at the Lower Blackwood in connection with the ringbarking that was carried out a few years ago at the instigation of Mr. Richardson, then Minister for Lands, where contracts were let with the result that the country has improved more than its most optimistic prophets could have wished for. As far as this district is concerned I am sure that to a large extent the fact that the people have not had much capital has kept them back to a considerable extent; and it must be some time before they are able to bring their land to that state which with the aid of capital and by more systematic effort of development, and where the land is not so heavily timbered, they would otherwise be able to do. In regard to the railway itself it will serve something like a population of 350 people. At the present time the resident occupiers on various lots number 110. The area held by those who are resident there is 41,000 acres, while there are non-resident holders who have an area of 16,000 acres. The land under cultivation this year in the area referred to in the Bill is 950 acres of orchards and vegetables, 113 acres of root crops, and 1,577 acres of cereals, while the area of land cleared and ringbarked totals 71,340 acres. The average yield of grain and cereals in this district is, wheat 18 bushels, hay 23 cwt., and potatoes 8 tons. These are last season's figures. The land open for selection within 15 miles of the railway is 180,000 acres, while that selected within that radius is 57,000 acres. The total of the large holdings within 15 miles of the line is 180,000 acres. The holdings are from one to five thousand acres in extent. The total area of land within the influence of the proposed railway will be 375,000 acres. The line is to be 22½ miles long, that is from where it will commence at Bridgetown, which is situated 186 miles

from Fremantle. The weight of the rails will be the same as those used in connection with other agricultural lines, namely 45lbs. The sleepers will be 6 x 8 x 4. The ruling grade will be 1 in 40 and the sharpest curve will be that of a ten chain radius. It is estimated that the cost of construction, exclusive of rails and fastenings, will be £20,100. The rails and fastenings will cost £14,901, the total being £35,001, being an average, including rails and fastenings, of £1,573 per mile. The interest on the estimated capital of £35,000 will be £1,400. This as hon. members will see is somewhat in excess of some of the lines built, but it is attributable to the fact that this line is to be constructed through more difficult country. Immediately after leaving Bridgetown considerable cost will be incurred in connection with the bridge which will have to be built across the river, while the earthworks for the first mile or two will be fairly considerable. These difficulties will exist until we get well away from the Blackwood river. Selections along the proposed route of the railway is progressing very satisfactorily. During the last 12 months some 27,666 acres have been selected under various sections of the Land Act within a radius of 12 miles of the line. In 1906 an area of some 5,000 acres was subdivided within the State forests near the terminus of the line. It was subdivided into blocks of 200 acres, and ringbarking was carried out on this particular area affording work for the unemployed, a work which will be profitable to this State. An area of 3,400 acres was ringbarked and cleared at a cost of £1,300. The work practically ceased in April last and it is intended to hold the land for two years from the time the work was completed before it is alienated. Of the 5,000 acres surveyed, Surveyor Terry, who was responsible for the subdivision, values half of it at 30s. per acre and the balance at from 10s. to 20s. per acre. He considers the whole of the country splendid grazing land. The timber on it is jarrah with a certain amount of karri at the most southern portion of the area. The heaviest part of the work

will be on the first three miles, and there will be a cutting of about 18 feet deep on a falling grade of 1 in 30 into the Blackwood river, which will have to be crossed by a large bridge. The balance of the work will not call for special mention. Provision is made for three sidings, one at the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles, one at the 8 miles 30 chains, and one at the 13 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and one will probably be required at some future time, at about the 18 miles. Surveyor Burnett in his report states:—

"The present survey stops on the edge of the karri country, and to my mind the centre line of the future extension should be definitely fixed as soon as possible so that the railway can be made the boundary of the survey of selections. The first eight miles of the present survey passes along a valley which is gradually being put down in orchards which, with the exception of one, I have not seriously interfered with, but which will necessitate compensation being paid for the land resumed, and the same thing will occur on the extension beyond Manjimup if the centre line is not fixed within a reasonable time. This district is eminently suited for fruit growing amongst other things, and in future years will be largely planted. Something should be also done to conserve these magnificent karri trees from being wasted. I have run and blazed a contour line along the extension from Manjimup for about three miles so as to show the 'get-away.'"

As far as that is concerned that will be carried out. We propose to extend the survey some few miles in order that at a future date, if it is decided that this line should be extended, it will not be possible for anyone to make a claim for compensation. I have every confidence in recommending this proposal to the House. It is not new. Provision was made for this work in the Loan Appropriation Bill of 1906 and this, with the Upper Chapman railway, will complete the programme then promulgated and for which Parliamentary authorisations were obtained. I do not know that I can say anything further except to

bring under the notice of hon. members the success which has attended the Donnybrook line, which should be a factor in assisting them to come to a conclusion as to the desirability or otherwise of giving their support to this particular proposal. I would like to point out too, as far as this land is concerned: the whole of the forest area is unalienated, and that as hon. members are aware, under the provisions of the Land Act it is not possible for any large areas to be taken up and held for an indefinite period without working them. Provision is made that where a timber area is selected it is necessary, in order to hold sawmilling permits, that at least 60 per cent. of the timber shall be cut. That is to say, in the case of a man taking up an area on which he estimates he will be able to cut one hundred loads a day, the Crown will be entitled to collect from that area royalty for at least 60 loads per day. The tenure under those sawmill permits is only ten years, and as the area is cut out so it reverts to the Crown and becomes a timber reserve. As far as karri forests are concerned their growth takes place much more rapidly than jarrah. At present there is very little karri within reach of a railway line. The Denmark area has been cut out, and the only karri that is being cut is near the Margaret river. We are not able to take advantage to the fullest extent of the market that has been opened up for karri because we are not in the position to supply it. We have no railway lines at all in the vicinity of the karri forests. I need not give hon. members at this juncture any further information more than to say that I am satisfied that if the railway is constructed it will do a great deal to assist the agricultural development of that particular portion of the State. At the same time it will open up the karri forests in that district and a large area of jarrah country will also be made available. I have much pleasure in moving—

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

On motion by Mr. Taylor, debate adjourned.

# **BILL—METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE (TEMPORARY).**

*Postponed.*

Order read for resumption of debate on second reading.

Mr. WALKER: As there was a conference of municipal bodies proceeding relating to this Bill it would be well to have the debate further adjourned. He moved—

*That the Order be postponed.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In view of the sitting of the municipal conference there was no objection to postponement.

Mr. Angwin: A conference of the City council was not a municipal conference.

Motion passed, Order postponed.

## **CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES, TEMPORARY.**

Mr. SPEAKER nominated Mr. Foulkes (Claremont) and Mr. Taylor (Mount Margaret) as temporary Chairmen of Committees.

The PREMIER congratulated these hon. members on their appointment. The experience they had had would be of great advantage to the Chamber when they presided over deliberations. The member for Claremont had filled the position of temporary Chairman on more than one occasion with distinguished success, and the same would be said of him at the end of the present session, and the member for Mount Margaret had a wide knowledge of Parliamentary procedure, extending over a considerable time, so that the House was fortunate in having the advantage of his services.

## **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1908-9.**

*In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed on the 27th November on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and the Annual Estimates; Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Vote—His Excellency the Governor, £1,148:

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): We have listened to the very elaborate speech of the Treasurer on the finances of the State during the administration of the present Government, unfavourably contrasting it with the administration of the preceding Government. The tone of the Treasurer's speech was undoubtedly one of optimism, a spirit which has been characteristic of him since he has occupied his position. He has a remarkable faculty of making the worst appear better, making disaster, misfortune, and apparently coming ruination appear a desirable thing, something of which the citizens should be proud. Going back in our accounts, the failing of revenue to meet expenditure, extravagance in loan moneys, all these are mere instances in the currency of the life of a Government, are not things that should disconcert any business man, any citizen of the State, any occupant of the Treasury bench. If we were to take the tone of merriment or hopefulness, apparently, which I cannot help but think is assumed by the Treasurer, there would be no necessity whatsoever for us to lift our hands, or make any move in the direction of making our finances more secure. The complaisance with which matters drift, the lack of alarm, acuteness, discernment or care, or sense of responsibility on the part of the present Government is such that to one accustomed to more or less watch the progress of government or the state of Government institutions is simply unaccountable. As a matter of fact, in spite of this assurance that there is no need to fear, no need to dread, is not this statement made to us deliberately, that we are going further and further back in our finances, that the deficit grows greater month by month and year by year? Now, I do not know how the Government can account for this very extraordinary lack of supply in the wherewithal to keep the State going, unless it be in their bad administration. They have told us that we owe all our failure to meet our responsibilities, or our accruing responsibilities, to the Federal bondage. I have always said that the undertaking of that contract was not wise at the juncture when it was

undertaken, but having been undertaken it must be apparent to whoever governs or rules in this State that it is inevitable that the Federal authorities must take from us a share of our wealth, that we must contribute towards the general expenses of the Commonwealth; and it is also clear to everyone that power will attract to itself weaker power; in other words, the Federal Government will be as a lodestone to the wealth of the Commonwealth. Undoubtedly power will increase in that direction, greater expenses will arise as the Commonwealth becomes more settled in government, as its responsibilities increase, as it undertakes new ventures, as, indeed, it fortifies itself more as a national institution. And these things being conspicuous or transparent to whoever thinks for a moment, the marvel to me is that the Government in power for the last three years have practically made no effort to meet that drainage of Federal expenditure. It is no use crying out against that expenditure, saying we are simply robbed. The thing is, knowing what is inevitable, to provide for it. When we cannot help what is upon us it is our duty to make some provision otherwise, and I want to know what the Government have done in the way of making provision to meet the future, to keep abreast. The spectacle we have seen is a Ministry sitting in their place, content apparently to conduct the current administration of the affairs of the State, merely waiting to see what will be the end of it, satisfied if things last healthy enough while they are in office but doing nothing whatever in order to stem the tide of disaster that has fallen upon us. And this remarkable feature strikes me, that practically we are receiving as much revenue to-day as we were before Federation set in. It is true the Commonwealth Parliament has taken over our customs, true that it has taken other sources of revenue that were at one time in the possession of this State. But now we are receiving apart from all that, though the sliding scale has gone down, as much revenue as we did then. And what are the great expenses that make the difference between maintaining

our position healthfully now and then? What new great departments are there that are consuming our resources? I cannot see them. It is transparent on an examination of the facts that our money is being squandered in unwise and extravagant administration. There can be no doubt whatsoever of that fact, and this feature too must not be forgotten; that whilst we are thus extravagant—we are extravagant not alone from our revenue, but we are extravagant from our Loan Fund—we have been borrowing money since Federation became a factor in our State life, and the responsibility of the citizens now towards the national debt are two-fold to what they were when Federation came in. I believe I am within accuracy when I say the interest upon our liabilities in this respect was something like 13 per cent. when Federation was inaugurated, or just before that time, now it is 34 per cent.; twice the amount and more. We are now paying to the British money lenders what in fact would run a big department, and would considerably help in the development of this State. And whilst we are at the present time sorely taxed to meet our responsibilities, whilst obligations will be shortly falling due to the extent of over a million pounds, I see no provision at the present time how these obligations are to be met. The Treasurer has not told us how we are to meet the redemption of the loan that is falling due very briefly. I will give the hon. member the particulars; he will find them in the Auditor General's report. I am speaking of the loan of over a million pounds, and the Auditor General's report says:—

“Treasury Return No. 32 discloses that Treasury Bills to the extent of £500,000 mature on 1st January, 1909, and that a loan of £1,266,305 matures on 31st December, 1910. For the former sum there is no provision in the sinking fund, and for the latter only £81,000 (approximate) worth of investments is shown.”

*The Treasurer:* I told you that.

*Mr. Bath:* You only told us about the first one.

*Mr. WALKER:* I read that to try and find some evidence that the Treasurer



has prepared to meet that responsibility falling due.

*The Premier:* That is the first option.

Mr. WALKER: Undoubtedly. I want to know what we are doing; what the Government are doing to meet this responsibility?

*The Treasurer:* Certainly we do not make arrangements twelve months ahead.

Mr. WALKER: For a million?

*The Treasurer:* No.

Mr. WALKER: I am pointing out that what we are doing is this. We are borrowing money to pay ordinary current working expenses, to pay interest on the loans we have already raised, and we will have a continuous borrowing and borrowing in order to pay off the loans we have already borrowed and still further increase the burden of interest on the taxpayers of the State. That is the objection I am making, and whilst these loans are accruing, and whilst we shall have to make provision for loans, we have the Government telling us in addition, that in order that they may carry out their policy of development, as it is called, they will have again to raise money. There is nothing in the policy of the Government but the promise of borrowing. Now we all know that any of us can appear to be contented and flush whilst we have credit and whilst we can borrow. If we have our pockets full with loan funds we can appear to be generous and happy, but we know when the day of reckoning comes the evil follows, and every unwise penny spent in that way means to the people at large a tax and a burden placed upon them. It is burdening our people beyond their capacity to endure, and there is a cry from one end of the State to the other at the present time that this State is already overtaxed and unwisely overtaxed; overtaxed in the direction that pinches the poor and afflicts the struggling and small man who in the future is to make this State. He is the man who does feel, and has to feel the burden. We have had it admitted that in order to carry on the State from the beginning to the end of the financial year we shall not only have to borrow afresh, but we shall have to come on the public

again with the old iniquitous land and income taxes in their present form, and we shall also have to inflict another series of flea bites on the citizens of the country. We shall have indeed to carry out a pettifoggish scheme of taxation, an irritating scheme of taxation, that will not at all compensate in its advantages to the revenue for the grievances inflicted on the public. That is the position we are in at the present moment. The Treasurer talks of putting a penny stamp on the poor man's receipt of a pound, another kind of class taxation which cannot help but irritate the people. Every man who receives the small sum of £1 has to pay the penny tax on the receipt of it.

*The Treasurer:* Why the poor man?

Mr. WALKER: Because there is no proportionate increase for big sums. There is 2d. and that is the limit of it. The poor man is not receiving his £40, his £50, his £100, or his £1,000 as the case may be, but he has to pay on his one solitary pound a penny, and a penny means something to the poor man; it means nothing to the affluent, nothing to the middle class, but to the poor man a penny means something. It means a denial of some little portion of luxury. If there had been a tax of 3d., of 4d., of 6d. proportionate increase over large sums, as the receipts increased, so the stamp duty increasing, then there could not be the objection I am now making, but every change in taxation comes down one step lower on the poor man. That is the fact of the matter. And what kind of statesmanship is it to tax the man's theatre ticket when he goes to enjoy himself? It is a contrast between a civilised State and this; that in civilised States wise Governments make provision for free enjoyment and entertainments for the public. There are theatres in France and on the continent of Europe run by the Government, subsidised by the Government, actors and actresses are paid large salaries for the purpose of encouraging dramatic talent and the cultivation of dramatic literature, an appeal to the latent intelligent and emotional instincts of the people and for the purpose of cultivating dramatic in-

fluence as an educator. The contrast here is the very opposite. Our tickets for admission are to be taxed, and say what you will it comes on the poor man. Undoubtedly, who are they who require this kind of amusement more? Who are they who have no social comforts in their homes, whose circle of acquaintances does not allow them to indulge in these social pleasures and social unions and re-unions which the well-to-do indulge in and occupy their time, and to a certain extent cultivate their feelings and their minds? These things the poor have not. It is the theatre and the sports only that they can attend. You have no other enjoyment for the worker and the toiler in his homes which are not always too bright or too cheerful, too well furnished, or too well lighted.

*Mr. Collier:* They only cultivate his muscles.

*Mr. WALKER:* We have those who privately contract to supply them with entertainment, with theatres, and our Government can think of nothing else. A good company comes round and who are the great bulk of those who go? The wage earners; it is their respite from toil; their little sunbeam of happiness in life; they go there to have some glimpse of what the mind may enjoy. It is that very spot the Government are down upon and tax with their taxing hand. Go anywhere, where wealth could well be taxed; perhaps that is answered by taxing the banks. But there the Government show no discrimination between the bank that is placed away back on the goldfields, that scarcely does a day's business, perhaps more than an hour or two a day, and sometimes not that in the course of the week. The bank is there for the convenience of settlers; it is a boon to the miner and gold getters in these small townships; but this small bank has to pay £30 equally with the bank on the Terrace. Why? Is it fair, is it just, is it encouraging the development of the country? These banks are almost a necessity in the back-blocks of the country. At all events they are an immense convenience, but these branches have to pay

the same tax, £30 per annum, as the bank in St. George's Terrace.

*The Attorney General:* The banks are all the same.

*Mr. WALKER:* True, they are all branches, but the branches have to pay the same as the head office; surely the Attorney General must admit there is a distinction between a branch bank, at Whim Creek we will say, and the bank on the Terrace. One has its volume of business—one has its profits enormously developed day by day here amongst the commercial men and the general dealers of Perth; whereas the other is merely an outpost, a convenience, a hope of good things to come if the country develop. Let me say it seems to me that the policy of this Government is to crush every way-back enterprise of every kind, and to destroy every way-back comfort amongst the pioneers.

*Mr. Holman:* Not only comforts but hospitals; absolute necessities.

*Mr. WALKER:* The Government have taken away every kind of convenience. The hospitals are to be wiped out of existence. I shall be told they will have some little support; but some of them have been treated in such a way that they cannot possibly survive the ordeal. And I want to draw the attention of the Committee to this fact, that a hospital in a mining centre is the equivalent of school, church, theatre, and meeting house. It is a social centre. It brings the people together; gives rise to entertainments, socials, dances, and concerts. It creates good feeling amongst the people, and engenders in them a kind of lingering love for the place in which they live, despite all its privations. That is what the hospitals do. Yet the Government are wiping them out. The branch banks also help to make the people contented with their lots in these way-back towns. Only make life tolerable, and these people will stay there in the hope of making themselves a little richer—and with themselves the country. But the policy of the Government is to take every little comfort away from them. In consequence, when a man is not doing well he clears out and goes far away rather than remain in

that place where all his comforts have been taken from him. The Government are constantly doing this under the name of economy. The consequence is they are destroying the life of these small townships. There is nothing in them to cheer the life of the men upon the goldfields. That is due to the attitude of the Government, an attitude strikingly seen in the treatment meted out to these hospitals which, say what one will, constitute a mark of the civilisation of the State. Hospitals are the high-water mark in our moral and intellectual development. We shut up these; we starve them; we put a blight upon them. What else is there to bring the people together, to make their hearts warm one to another, to arouse in them those noble qualities of humanity—sympathy with the suffering and with the injured? What do the Government do? They have nothing but pounds shillings and pence in their minds all the way through. And they seek to keep a balance of their books by this kind of wretched, inhuman economy. It is not economy; it is rash wrong done to the citizens. Yet it is part of the policy—part of the pettifogging notions of the Government. What big idea have we ever had from the Treasurer to better the condition of the people? The education fees was another sample. In every direction it is the same. The hon. member has the idea that humanity is little more than those animals that occupy the sty—than those which possessed of devils ran down into the deep sea and were drowned. The Government imagine that all that human beings have to do is to get to the trough first; and the man who can get to the trough first and keep all others out is the ideal of perfection in the Treasurer's mind. We are in no wise to be considered as one great family in a great State; but as independent units grabbing for all we can get; and the hero is the man who can grab the most and cause the largest number to go without. That is the kind of financing we have had. Everything to encourage individual selfishness, individual avarice. In effect the Treasurer has said to the way-back townships, look

after yourselves; build your own roads, provide your own hospitals, keep them at your own expense: make your public officers perform your own public duties, and do not trouble this Government. And yet it is to those who have gone out back, leaving the pleasures of the coast; who have risked the heat of the sun and all the trials of a severe climate, of the solitudes of a wilderness; who have gone out back, fighting their way in the face of death and danger, and who have been heroic enough to withstand all the trials, the ordeals and the difficulties, and have made a success of it, and have dug out wealth from the boulders—these are the men to whom we owe everything in this State in its modern aspect. Were it not for the pioneers who opened up the gold veins this State would be little more than it was when Sir John Forrest was a member of the original Council before we had Responsible Government. There would be two or three places known to the outside world—York, Perth, and Paddy Stone's residence. Beyond these a wilderness of sand, a desert the abode of the blacks and the kangaroos. That is all we should have had if it had not been for the enterprise of those who risked as genuine heroes their health, their very lives in opening up the country. If it had not been for their efforts we should have been in that position to-day. And yet it is to these people we are so niggardly in the name of economy. We deprive them of all considerations in the way of a just and equitable water supply. We injure their hospitals and take away their public institutions and refuse to contribute to the improvement of their roads to bring them into closer proximity to their civilised brethren. We go so far as to refuse to the miners' institutes the privilege of having a free copy of *Hansard*; we refuse to send them the *Government Gazette* or other official documents. We are positively chary of making these men contented with their lot. And whilst we put burdens upon the people in every part of the State, we are sending home glowing advertisements of the liberality of the Government; of their enterprise and of their love for the citizens. We

try to bring men here from all parts of the world.

Mr. Heitmann: And we bury them with borrowed money.

Mr. WALKER: Quite so. Undoubtedly while we try to bring these men here from outside we are treating our own pioneers in this thoughtless and inhuman way. Thus we treat these hunters for gold—these men who are not only helping to support this State, but who are supplying wealth and luxury to the citizens of London; who are paying through dividends enormous sums of money annually. And in the Mines Department, following this very policy I have indicated, we have everlastingly a consideration of the company, of the director, of the man who lives on the banks of the Thames; to the neglect of the prospector, of those who are struggling upon a small scale. That is the policy pursued. We have even had it suggested that to the rich company, the freehold, the fee simple of mining areas should be given; but from one department to another all kinds of impositions are placed upon the man of small means or the man who has had good days but fallen into disastrous paths. That is the policy. You see it in the taxation the Government are proposing. Licenses for this and for that. It is a school-boy's method of taxation. There is no great principle involved in it. It is merely a rush, a go-as-you-please kind of collar-everybody whether just or not. There is no statesmanship about it; nothing upon which the State may grow; nothing that can hide the burden the people have to bear. It is one constant stream of irritating imposition upon every class of the community without getting much from any particular source. Is the tax upon sports worth the annoyance that it will create amongst the people when it comes into force? Is it even worth the cost of collection? If the Treasurer desired merely to have a big staff over which he could lord it as master of that branch of the civil service I could understand all these departments of taxes. Tiddly-winking taxes here and tiddly-winking taxes there; all kinds of tax gatherers and assessors. It makes one

feel humble that we in a State so large, so wealthy, with such grand resources with untold possibilities; that we should have to descend to this school-boy, miserable type of taxation which would occur to the first lad in the street without his having to give it a second thought. There seems to me to have been no consideration whatever, no endeavour to fit the burden to the bearer of it; all purely capitious, irritating taxation. The point is that we are making this country the laughing stock of the outside world. We are making it appear that we have no men of public spirit, of enterprise, of great capacity; that we are governed by a lot of careless, indifferent lads who have no sense of the responsibilities they have incurred towards the citizens of to-day or of the future: who live in the enjoyment of the emoluments of office, contented in that sunshine paradise for an hour. What spectacle do we behold? A country like this whose lands, whose agricultural areas have been tested and proven to be equal to those of any other State; whose possibilities in that direction are so enormous that one has to look through the history of centuries for a parallel. There are areas, vast and to the mind immeasurable, for the feeding of our flocks and herds, and farther North than that, under the tropical sun, soils that will grow aught that ever the history of man recorded; everything that luxury can dream of or the desires of man might wish. And what are we? A handful of people, merely dotted like ants upon this enormous continent. Wealth is there awaiting us, inviting the touch and the arts of man, and this spectacle confronts us. With this country so promising, and with such resources, our steamers are taking from us more than come to us. They are taking people who have come here and have given this State a trial; who have lived amid our institutions, who have felt the burdens placed upon them and the fetters to development and enterprise created by the Government. Rather than bear these ills, even with the higher wages, with the unmatched climate and riches here, they go back to the East, where wages are smaller, because there are better conditions of life

prevailing there, not the same irritation, not the same discouragement. That in itself is a sufficient test of the Government; the very fact that they cannot keep their own people here, and cannot get newcomers to replace the old, absolutely condemns them. More of those who have come to this State and have given it a trial are leaving us than there are newcomers arriving here now. That is not a matter that need be enlarged upon as it speaks volumes for lack of enterprise on the part of the Government. It is true they profess to be developing the country, but in what sort of way? In the most slipshod manner possible, merely saying what any man can say, what requires no gift to say, no insight, no mental powers beyond the ordinary, and that is that we have lots of country and that anyone who likes can go and take it up. Also that they have great confidence in the country; they make maps of it, showing what has been done, and they do a little bit of tickling the earth, clearing and ringbarking.

*Mr. Underwood:* Very little.

*Mr. WALKER:* Yes. These are, however, steps in the right direction, but what energy is shown in doing even that work? How much real work in this direction has been done? We had a record last year in the Lands Department, and I believe that last month was the record month for applications for land settlement. Are these settlements, however, such as we should desire for the development of the State? What are the dry facts? There are people in Perth who have been discouraged; there are people in Kalgoorlie also who have been discouraged, because no further openings are looming ahead. Things have settled into a groove where no fresh hopes can come to men, and we find that the people who cannot do any other work in Perth are taking up land as a last alternative. There are men in business in Perth who are sparing from their business a certain sum to pay the preliminary fees for the taking up of selections, for they realise this, that their time is coming, that they will be crushed out of business in Perth, that they can no longer hope to hold their own as the condition of things now ex-

ists, and in order to make a refuge for their old age they are now taking up land in the country. Others are sending their sons on the land, for they see no prospects in the City of being able to give their lads safety from debt. Then there are speculators who take up land for speculative purposes. When we see the returns we might fancy the country is going ahead, but what do they argue? That in the principle centres, in this metropolis, the depression is such that the people are being driven to the country because of the poverty there is around them.

*Mr. Underwood:* They are not settling the country.

*Mr. WALKER:* In these remarks I am dealing with bona fide cases, the cases of men who go on the soil for a variety of reasons; some because they love that kind of life, but others as an alternative. I am speaking of many who, to my knowledge, have gone on the soil for that reason; there are men I can name to this Chamber who are running their businesses now in Perth and doing it as a losing game, but sparing what little they can to get a block of land to keep them in their old age.

*Mr. Underwood:* They are very slow about getting on the land.

*Mr. WALKER:* No matter how slow; a good deal of our settlement is due to the depression existing in Perth. This state of things cannot be termed an honest development in land settlement, for it is due, not so much to the desire of men to go on the land because they love the life and are qualified to make a success of it, but because it is the last resource left to those who are suffering from the depression existing in the metropolis. This is not the expansion we would be led to believe from the utterances from the Treasury benches. It is not expansion at all; it argues depression, and I say that in the work done there has been really nothing remarkable accomplished.

*Mr. Underwood:* Nothing has been done.

*Mr. WALKER:* I will not go quite so far as that, for there has been some good done if only in putting the hon. member in possession of a block of land. I ask,

what is really being done to put our working population upon the soil? What is being done even to settle those chosen by Mr. Paterson before he left the State?

*Mr. Angwin:* A good deal.

Mr. WALKER: Are they all settled on the soil?

*Mr. Angwin:* Forty of them.

Mr. WALKER: Ten short of the number. How long is it since they were chosen?

*Mr. Angwin:* Last February.

Mr. WALKER: And they are still waiting. There has not been that expedition, that business preciseness, we should expect in a real earnest Government. Everything is still allowed to go on at the old jog-trot; everything is still permitted to take its own course, that is their policy, that is their way of opening up the country. Give them all the credit desired, for an intention to encourage land settlement, but what more is there outside of that? What have the Government done to make this country a real advertisement in itself for the inhabitants of other lands? The policy of the Government in every direction has been one of slipshod immobility and inactivity.

*Mr. Heilmann:* "Let her rip."

Mr. WALKER: That is the vulgar expression that describes it. There is no department in this State that can be said to be administered by the Ministerial head. We know that. I need not point to any specific instance. One can deal with the Ministers one after the other. Let us first take the Minister for Works, who sits opposite. I venture to say there is no administration coming from his inward thoughts. The administration is the work of the heads of his department, and everything is left to them. They decide what shall be done here, or what shall be done there; they fix what money shall be received from the public, or what shall be paid out. The duty of the Minister is evidently to pretend to agree and to sign all documents. That is his work.

*Mr. Collier:* And that is his capacity.

*Mr. Monger:* What would you do?

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. WALKER: There are many departments under the control of the Minister for Works all modelled on the one

plan, and we have an engineer required for this work, and an engineer for that work. Matters of administration that run in the same groove are governed from two or three different departments. Take one of the departments under the direction of the Minister. Look at the water supply.

*The Minister for Works:* About which you made a complete set of misstatements last session.

Mr. WALKER: I did not.

*The Minister for Works:* Absolute misstatements.

Mr. WALKER: The Minister is telling an untruth and he knows it.

The CHAIRMAN: I must point out that both the Minister, when he said the hon. member had made misstatements, and the hon. member, when he said the Minister was telling an untruth, acted improperly and their remarks must be withdrawn.

*The Minister for Works:* I withdraw mine. I do not wish a withdrawal from him, for I have too much contempt for him.

Mr. WALKER: I withdraw, and I ask you to correct the Minister for his disorderly expression as to his contempt for "him."

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister was not in order in using the expression.

*The Minister for Works:* I withdraw.

Mr. WALKER: I do not desire to exhibit personal spleen, even to the Minister for Works. I was pointing out, when his irritability caused him to interrupt, that in the water supply there are two or three heads directing one set of affairs. I will allude to the goldfields; and it is now possible that in the one town they might have to apply to the Minister for Mines for a water supply; in another town not far away to the Minister for Works, and in a third to the Commissioner of Railways. There is no uniformity. There is no judicious administration possible under such circumstances, consequently there is irritability of all sorts existing among those dependent upon this water supply, and, what is more, the lack of uniformity is a source of constant friction.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Mr. WALKER: I was pointing out that the administration of the departments is often jumbled by overlapping; by different departments doing the same work. The consequence is that in these departments there is a staff of clerks necessary for the purpose of carrying on correspondence. Time is consumed and money is wasted, and disappointment often follows in consequence. When an applicant for a specific service applies to the Government for it he finds very often that though he wants a specific thing that is in the department he applies to, that department does not deal in that kind of thing; another department does it. The correspondence has therefore to be handed over to someone, and sometimes too it happens that while one department can deal with it, the credit for it is in another department, and one department therefore can check the legitimate operations of another. Repeatedly this phase of the thing occurs with the Minister in whose department a certain service is possible. The department having a duty to perform, that duty of performing an obligation to the State, is to ask permission because it would interfere with the bookkeeping of another department, and it has to go to another Minister for his approval. That Minister, who is concerned only in his bookkeeping and desires to show a credit on his side of the ledger, will refuse the service which may be absolutely necessary for the welfare of the State. This kind of thing between departments is not the only unseemly but deleterious, and, moreover, expensive. When we talk of economy there is splendid room for it here. If we have a Government with some concerted action, if they only so arranged the department that one Ministerial head could have everything under his purview, that came within its scope, we should have the least expensive way of management. Staffs have to be maintained to correspond on the same matter, and the expenses of administration are thus increased, and inconvenience follows to

those who have to consult or importune those departments. It is this that one has to complain of in the way of administration. Then we find that departments have under their survey, and under their management, duties entirely inappropriate to the general scope of their office. An instance of this is found in the Colonial Secretary's Department. This Minister has multifarious duties to perform, it is true, but to add to those duties that of attending to the harbours and rivers, is surely an anomaly. These matters belong properly to the Works Department, for the Works Department has to provide the officers for dealing with those very departments. The Works Department must have their engineers to supervise the works in the harbours and rivers; they are obliged to have other officers connected with the public works in different parts of the State, and yet, as a department dealing with entirely different things, harbours and rivers are pinned on to the Colonial Secretary's Department. There is no consistency in this. We cannot have cheap or easy administration under such circumstances. The whole Government requires remodelling. If those departments had been remodelled by Ministers, if they had done that instead of picnicing in the country, they might have earned their salaries. They have entirely neglected these self-evident requisites for the well government of the State. In their methods of administration there has occurred what, if it occurred in a private firm and in ordinary business relationships of life, would have been a serious matter. They have ignored the laws of the land. They who make the laws and are the guardians of the laws have deliberately refused obedience to the laws. Year after year they have been brought to book by the Auditor General; every issue of the Auditor General's report has contained serious charges against the administration of the State, and against the Ministerial heads responsible for the mismanagement of these departments. Not one glance is made at these reports by the Ministers, and they have not improved their position one fraction. They

still adhere to their own systems, and, if anything, they are a great deal worse. They have escaped scot free so long that they imagine they are entirely immune, but no Government, I take it, other than the one in office, could rest satisfied under the charges that are made by the Auditor General. Let us take one instance of the way they are dealing with public matters. On page 123 of the Auditor General's report that officer draws attention to the Loan authorisations, and he says:—

“Treasury Return No. 28 shows balance of loan unraised as £3,342,900. Of this amount £3,323,365 is earmarked against Local Inscribed Stock, thus leaving a net balance of £19,535. The audit disagrees with this, as stated in previous reports,”

—so that it is no new thing, it cannot come upon them by surprise—

“as stated in previous reports, and the statement hereunder shows the amount actually raised to be £287,290 in excess of authorisations by Parliament.”

Mr. Bath: They have exceeded their authorisations?

Mr. WALKER: Yes, to the extent of £287,290. No one can understand the pleasing and smiling attitude of the Treasurer who has a charge like that hanging over him, and without any compunction at all he goes on as if this charge had never been raised; absolutely ignores it. I would like to know of what value is the report of the Auditor General, who, year after year, has pointed out that the Government are not acting honestly with the funds of the State? What is the good of an Auditor General? We might as well be without one and give the Government *carte blanche*, for, as a matter of fact, in the matter of exceeding authorisations, transgressing the laws of the land—they are getting worse than ever. And that is not the only reference the Auditor General makes. On page 168 he says:—

“It is worthy of consideration that no charges be allowed to Loan in respect to the permanent or ordinary staff of a department as there is always a temptation to reduce the ordinary revenue expenses if loan is

available. It is noticed in some other places that this is now the rule.”

What does that signify? When the Treasurer is talking about the buoyancy and the possibilities of the State; when the Auditor General says that the working expenses of the departments of the State are being paid out of Loan Funds; then, I submit, it shows that we are in a very critical way indeed. It is not the Opposition, not myself that makes this criticism in this instance, it is an independent non-party officer of the State, a gentleman who is placed there to correct the errors and mistakes of those concerned in administration; and he points this fact out to us, that the Ministry have, during their term of office, been defying the laws of Parliament; not only in the matter of expending unauthorised loan money, but it would be almost difficult to state in what way. I was dealing a little while ago with the civil service. We will let the civil servants speak for themselves. We find here in their own journal, the issue of October, 1908, there is an article, a long article for this journal, under the heading “*Ultra vires* appointments.” I will read this article to the House:—

“The question is asked: is there still cause for complaints under the above heading? Unfortunately, yes. No law was ever made proof against violation of its guiding principles. For to make stable provisions is bound to inflict injustices in some cases, and on the other hand, whenever the necessary elasticity is allowed someone is sure to avail himself of it for illegitimate purposes. It is held by the majority of civil servants that appointments are still now and then made for which there is no apparent justification of seniority or properly defined merit. The reason for such appointments can only be surmised, and it may be sincerely hoped that if, in these cases, those who are responsible have been unduly influenced this has been done neither deliberately nor even consciously. The only course that can be adopted by civil servants who are aggrieved by these occurrences, unless they are content to remain



supine, is to protest and even appeal. If this is not done the evil is undoubtedly liable to grow, whilst vigilance, and a constant assertion of the rights conferred by the Public Service Act must necessarily act as a deterrent to those who are inclined to interpret its provisions with too much latitude. The appeal boards continue to exist even after the classifications are settled, and it is for civil servants to avail themselves of the only court of justice the Act provides for them. In addition to the above, the Government, on the plea of poverty, has adopted a regular system of infringing the Act by appointments contrary to Section 22, officers being regularly placed in certain positions without receiving the remuneration definitely fixed by the Act and the regulations. Increases, too, are not made payable till the 1st January, in direct contravention of regulation No. 143. If the Government can thus openly flout the law, why should not private citizens do so also on the plea of poverty or other incapacity? Or is there one law for the citizen and another for the Government? These are grievances to which the association should once more draw attention. In fact, the dictates of justice demand their constant ventilation until such time as will see their complete removal."

Now if the civil servants can bring against their masters—which means this country—a charge of that kind, either the Government are spiritless in not bringing them to task for their untruth or they admit the justice of the comment and are silent under it as the best way of escaping criticism.

*The Premier:* I have never seen that paper you talk about.

Mr. WALKER: I am not accusing the hon. member, I am accusing the Government generally. It is the civil service paper.

*The Premier:* We do not get it.

Mr. WALKER: Surely it is the duty of the Government to see what their servants are saying about them in their monthly journal. Let any member on this side of the House suffer some criti-

cism in an out-back paper, and it is cut out and posted into the scrap-book of the Ministry. Then we hear of it. Time and again it is quoted to us. Whenever the Premier himself desires to make an impressive speech, to scale the ladder of oratory, he culls some extract from an address made by some hon. member on this side of the House and reads it. But the point is that the Government are keen enough in trying to cull every little thing the Opposition says. But supposing the Premier has not seen this: now that I have read it to him can he deny the charge?

*The Premier:* Certainly.

Mr. WALKER: But can he do it truthfully? Is it not a fact that the appointments spoken of have been made and that the increases have not been forthcoming?

*The Premier:* What is this Section 22?

Mr. WALKER: It has reference to the method of making appointments. I am told that even in the Mines Department only a week ago a temporary appointment was made. The illustration I am giving is that of the Superintendent of State Batteries. That position has always been regarded as being the head of a sub-branch. The salary comes before us repeatedly on the Estimates. But just now, to evade Section 22 of the Act this Superintendent of State Batteries is appointed there as a temporary hand who has to be paid a weekly or a monthly wage.

*The Minister for Mines:* It has been done with his acquiescence.

Mr. WALKER: I care not; I am complaining of the breaking of the Act and the continuing of the breach. The misfortune in this country is that whenever one does a wrong, he attempts to shield himself behind others. If the laws are bad, let us alter them. I have myself repeatedly condemned the Public Service Act for its inequalities and for the injustice it perpetuates; and I believe that there are Ministers who regard that Act as extremely deleterious to the civil service. Yet no move is made towards repealing it, or putting it in working order. But whilst the Act is there it should be respected. The Ministry should not

give us an example of law breaking or law evading. Yet that is what they are doing. Is not this an evasion of the law? The law never contemplated—and the Minister for Mines knows it full well—the law never contemplated that the Superintendent of State Batteries should be a weekly hand.

*Mr. Bath:* They have had to get the Governor-in-Council to abrogate two sub-clauses in order to achieve the object they are after.

*Mr. WALKER:* Whatever the Executive Council has to do with it, the Minister knows that such an appointment was never contemplated. We might as well get over the Act by dismissing the heads of every department, and appointing them as weekly or monthly hands.

*The Minister for Mines:* I could have had this appointment made permanent if I so desired.

*Mr. WALKER:* What has been done is against the spirit of the Act.

*Mr. Bath:* Not the appointment that the Minister wanted.

*Mr. WALKER:* Very possibly not. But there are in existence regulations made under this Act which are equally ignored and violated. The Government have broken faith with the civil servants; they have ignored their just and legal obligations. They have got certain men classified as if they were apples or pears or fresh eggs—this class in one basket and that in another. I am bringing out this point, that the Government if they have any obligation at all are in duty bound to keep their promises to their servants, to those who have been induced to come into the service under the guarantees of Acts of Parliament and the promises of Ministers; under established custom, under assurances the like of which prevail in no other department of life. Now there is scarcely a Government department where promises of this kind are not found to have been broken. And what is the effect upon our public service? We cannot go through any department without finding discontent. The member for Boulder reminds me that the very best of the men are leaving the service. And can one blame them? There is no hope for them:

no chance of their betterment here; no encouragement to put their best qualities into the work they are expected to do. The merest drone stands on the same footing with the brightest intellect. The weakling, the drone and the weed can often get ahead of the man who has manliness and capacity about him; because the man who is manly will not crawl; he will not go cap in hand with humility to get the recognition his merits deserve and should receive. But the pet, the favourite, the man who will lose his engagement for a week; who will leave his billet to go and help a Minister at an election—he may have some chance. The man who will leave the Mines Department to become a canvasser—a man in a good position in the Mines Department spared from his work to go and buttonhole electors, to talk with them in the hotels and bar parlors, to make them insidious promises where they cannot be revealed, and where their insinuations cannot be answered—the man who does that has some chance of consideration.

*The Minister for Mines:* Make a statement, not an insinuation?

*Mr. WALKER:* Who was in the electorate from the Mines Department when the Minister for Mines was canvassing Menzies.

*Mr. Collier:* Dunstan.

*Mr. WALKER:* Can the Minister deny that his officers were there?

*The Minister for Mines:* He had to be there.

*Mr. WALKER:* Of course he had. Had those men to get leave from the Railway Department? Had they to go to Menzies? Leave was granted to them to go.

*The Minister for Mines:* They had their leave and could go where they pleased.

*Mr. WALKER:* They got leave for the purpose. That is the position. These are the possibilities in the service as it exists. This is what is done by those who want advancement. The others who attend to their work, who do their duty, who seek neither applause, nor undue rewards from any source; who enter upon their avocation with a mind supervised by conscience, and who diligently

attend to their work as in duty bound—those are the men who may toil year in and year out and who are not even up to the level of the lowest grades classified. A wage promised, a wage which it is their right to get; to which they are entitled by every fraction of justice: this they are denied, they are refused. Therefore, it is perfectly true that the best of these men are resigning. They are going back to the Eastern States. Only those who have attachments here, who have been able to make some investment and who have obligations that they cannot forsake; only those among the best are staying. And this parsimonious and almost inhuman spirit on the part of the Government results in this, that the large departments of State are left to the management of inferior men. Its consequence it is impossible to foresee. We do not seek the best men possible to do the great work of this State; because we either will not or cannot offer them the salary, and we are so recklessly indifferent to the well-being of the State that we are satisfied with any make-shift article so long as he is with us and will help us to get along. What is the consequence? The very building I am speaking in to-night is a proof of it. A wretched abortion of architecture, a miserable product of fevered ambition. There has been no instance in any State, with all the world to copy from, of putting up an abortion, a miserable brick enormous sort of pigsty for a Parliament House.

*The Premier:* Why there is a lot of stone in it.

Mr. WALKER: I do not care what stone is in it. Never was stone put to worse use. Where is the accommodation? What kind of a building is this to inspire patriotism or anything else? If it be desired to give legislators the blues, to fit them for perpetual melancholia, put them in a Chamber like this, and compel them to speak to the other side of the House. Our Supreme Court is another example. It is only because the State has not looked to the getting of the best men available for the great undertakings of the State, because it is satisfied with pettifoggers. And we are perpetuating it everywhere. The Government cannot undertake a

little bit of sewerage work at Burswood Island without showing absolutely the incompetency of the State, without making the State a laughing stock. They cannot build a lunatic asylum without spending the money of the State out of all proportion. Everywhere it is the same. But there is one thing remarkable in this State; we have one or two fairly good attempts at permanent architecture, fairly good I say, and what they are lacking in is excusable. These efforts were made by the early convicts. Since then we have degenerated abominably. If we want to return to the condition of the blacks, if the climate is enervating, reducing us to the aboriginal intellect and level, then I can understand what we see around—change and decay all round and no promise of aught better. It is not in one department alone, not in architecture alone; in other departments the same slovenly recklessness exists.

*Mr. Collier:* The Beaufort-street bridge for instance.

Mr. WALKER: Yes, the Beaufort-street bridge is another example, and yet another is the sewerage works in the streets. Look at the slipshod manner in which these are done. Look at the money the Government have had to pay and will have to pay in consequence of the unskilled management of these works. What can we then think about a Government that talks about the glorious country while it is neglecting the plain essentials, taking the hope from everybody, making the place a place fit to get out of instead of a place fit to live in? The Attorney General looks at me as if he was amused. But I say it is not alone in one department, it is in all departments, and the administration of justice is just as slipshod as the control of any other department in the State. The Crown Law Department over which the Attorney General presides has repeatedly misled this House.

*Mr. Scaddan:* The Attorney General is the Minister for the miscarriage of justice.

*The Attorney General:* When has the department done this?

Mr. WALKER: Do I need to go further back than that ill-fated proclamation about the Saturday half-holiday?

*The Attorney General*: It is all right.

Mr. WALKER: Is that not an instance? Was not the proclamation issued on the strength of the advice of the Crown Law officers?

*The Attorney General*: The proclamation the hon. member took exception to is all right: the one he did not take exception to was all wrong.

Mr. WALKER: They were both all wrong, absolutely so.

*The Attorney General*: You say so; that settles it.

Mr. WALKER: What a beautiful and dignified way of getting out of a difficulty! It is more likely to be correct if I say it than if the Attorney General says it. Judging by the specimens of the hon. member's accuracy on points of law raised in this Chamber, and his accuracy as afterwards adjudged by the judgment of the Court, we cannot have very much belief in the hon. member's accuracy.

*The Attorney General*: That is to be regretted.

Mr. WALKER: I am not blaming the hon. member altogether. He is just about on a level with the ordinary stuff of the Cabinet. It is the *tout ensemble* I object to. If the hon. member wants me to give other illustrations I can.

*The Attorney General*: I have no objection.

Mr. WALKER: Of course the hon. member cannot have objection. But I am not particularly desirous of rousing his Hibernian blood—

*The Attorney General*: There is no fear of that.

Mr. WALKER: Which is very notable I presume in Ireland, but which somehow when it comes to Western Australia and comes to this House gets rather corrupted.

*The Attorney General*: Through bad company.

Mr. WALKER: Undoubtedly; the Government side is bad company I admit. It is this I object to. There is a pettifogging littleness about all the Ministers. There is not that patriotism for the country that is willing to make sacri-

fices for it. There is not that brain power that sees beyond the moment. There is nothing but a swimming with the tide in all the Government's operations. It is that I object to. And to show how reckless Ministers are, how thoughtless in the management of the affairs of the State, they cannot pay the civil servants the salaries they promised, but at the same time they are gadding around the country for political purposes with all kinds of refreshments.

*The Attorney General*: Good, bad, and indifferent.

Mr. WALKER: Exactly, and the Attorney General is a good judge. In the Auditor General's report for the year ending June, 1907, we have an account of some of these little items to which it might be interesting to once again refer.

*Mr. Collier*: Very interesting.

Mr. WALKER: There are two or three pages of them in the report and I am going to ask a question. There are: travelling expenses to Bunbury, the Premier, 29th June to 2nd July, £2 10s.; wages of conductor with Premier to Bunbury, 16s. 10d.; wages of conductor with the Treasurer to Kalgoorlie, 14th June to 19th June, 1906, £5 3s. 6d.; wages of conductor to Bunbury with the Premier, 2nd June to 5th June, 1906, £2 9s. 11d., and wages of conductor with a Parliamentary party to the South-West, 8s. 1d. Then we have: refreshments supplied, Attorney General, trip to Mundaring Weir, 2nd June, 1906.

*The Attorney General*: That was for the fire brigade.

Mr. WALKER: Then there are travelling expenses from the 5th September to the 11th September for the Parliamentary party visiting Northam, and then we have the hire of drags and horses for the conveyance of the Governor on his visit to Kalgoorlie—as if the member for the district would not oblige the State in the trying circumstances. Also there is the hire of horses for the Premier on the 20th October, 1906. I am not taking every item seriatim, but there is later on a special train from Perth to Mundaring Weir for a distinguished visitor and again a box of cigars for Mr. Jull's party to Mundaring Weir. Then there is a

charge for cab hire when the Hon. Alfred Deakin visited Perth, 12s., the Colonial Secretary apparently advancing the money. If I were to weary the committee I could keep members about an hour, just reading nothing else but these items. Here is an item: Hon. Frank Wilson, out-of-pocket expenses visiting Katanining. Where was the member for Katanining? These out-of-pocket expenses were £1 5s.

*Mr. Taylor:* The Treasurer was pretty moderate.

*Mr. WALKER:* Also we have wages of conductor with the Treasurer to Northam, £1 8s. 10d. I want to point out that it was not the only expense. There were, in addition, travelling expenses provided for elsewhere, and incidental travelling expenses, and there are three pages in the report with nothing but expenses of that kind.

*Mr. Collier:* You will not find them in this year's report. They have dropped those items out.

*Mr. WALKER:* Now, I will call attention to something in last year's report. "Ministerial and Parliamentary Visits, State Ceremonials, etcetera, £1,127 7s." I want to know why the item was not itemised as it was in the previous year.

*The Treasurer:* Ask the Auditor General.

*Mr. WALKER:* We need not. But Ministers have had something to do with it. The Auditor General if he chose to speak would tell me something like this—that the Ministers insisted—

*The Treasurer:* Nothing of the sort.

*The Minister for Works:* It is absolutely untrue.

*The Treasurer:* The Auditor General can do as he likes.

*Mr. Holman:* Is the Minister for Works in order in saying that what the member for Kanowna said is absolutely untrue? It is fair that both sides of the House should be treated the same.

*The Minister for Works:* Then I ask that the member for Kanowna should withdraw the remark he made that Ministers had instructed this method of entering up expenditure.

*Mr. WALKER:* I withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: I may say that I heard neither the remark of the Minister for Works nor that of the member for Kanowna.

*Mr. WALKER:* In deference to Parliamentary procedure I will withdraw the remark, but I will stake my life on the fact that the Auditor General was interviewed about the itemising of these matters, or the non-itemising of them. In spite of what the Minister for Works says, that is the fact, and I want to know what the Minister for Works knows about these items.

*The Minister for Works:* He knows about his own department anyhow.

*Mr. WALKER:* Perhaps he knows what his officers tell him and that is about all. He has not one scintilla of originality about his character, and that is one feature of this Government that in itself marks them for public reprobation, that if they are criticised at all from this side of the Chamber—

*Mr. Taylor:* Read what the Auditor General says about travelling expenses.

*Mr. WALKER:* I will come to that. But I was saying that if there was one thing more than another that subjects the Ministry to the dislike of the public, it is that if they are criticised from the Opposition side, no matter how truthfully or justly, it creates personal enmity between them and the Opposition. Now the Auditor General, on page 133, reports:—

"Item 29.—The charges to this vote include in some cases the expenses of Ministers and their secretaries whilst travelling, and apparently the expenses of the hon. Premier and his secretary are charged in all cases. On the other hand, expenses of Ministers other than the hon. Premier are frequently met from the incidental vote of the department controlled by them. It is noticed also that Ministerial expenses in connection with visits to the other States are charged to 'Incidental,' Item 56. Therefore travelling expenses are met from three sources."

That is what he says now.

*The Minister for Works:* What I took exception to was your saying that we instructed him.

Mr. WALKER: I have not said that. That is the hon. member's warped construction of what I had to say.

*The Minister for Works:* You did say so.

Mr. WALKER: I did not. I said that the Auditor General would probably say something after the style of what I was saying. I was quoting what the Auditor General would say, and I will say now, and stake my life on the fact, that Ministers have interviewed the Auditor General with regard to the setting out of these items in detail.

*The Minister for Works:* Well, you will lose your life.

Mr. WALKER: Then I would be satisfied, because it is a good cause. That is the way in which the Minister always speaks. I regret that we have not on the Ministerial benches those of great capacity of heart as well as mind, those who can take a magnanimous view of human conduct and human relationship, those who are not so warped in spirit and character that the least criticism makes them shrink up like worms and like the worm bite back while turning. I regret that we have this bitterness in our public life.

*The Minister for Works:* Your natural history is not very correct. I have never before heard of a worm biting.

Mr. WALKER: The Minister cannot take a big view of anything. Here is the point I want to make. These details are not set out because they would reveal a still more striking account of the irresponsible peregrinations of Ministers, because they would show something of those Ministerial trips made just prior to the last election; because they would show the use that motor car of theirs was put to; because they would show that the money of this State has been spent on what I cannot help but designate as to influence the electors preparatory to the last elections. That is why these things are not detailed now, and we have this spectacle; that one member of the Ministry, who happens to be a member of another place—which knows, or should know no party for it is not divided into Ministerial and Opposition ranks, being supposed merely to sit in criticism, and in judging upon

matters issuing from this Assembly, unperturbed by the quarrels, recriminations, bickerings, and bitterness of members here—going about the country as an advocate for political purposes, and taking with him other members of that House, the non-party House; influencing, behind the backs of those concerned, the electors, to the detriment of members holding seats in this Chamber. That has been done repeatedly. One trip was made by a member of the other House in a motor car, doubtless with refreshments hidden in this vote of £600, to bring out candidates against Opposition members, working up opposition to this side of the House, using the Government prestige, the Government money, using his position as a Minister in order to effect that aim. I can stand criticism that is open, any day of my life. I care not who attacks me or this party, if they are open and straightforward, and upon the public platform. Be the charges true or false, they can be answered, but when surreptitiously, from place to place, stealing almost like a thief in the night, the motor car passes from township to township, rousing up prejudice against the party in opposition to the Ministry, these actions are, I say, bringing about a position when politics are degrading, and reaching absolutely to the lowest depths.

*The Minister for Works:* Lower than the street corner speeches?

Mr. WALKER: This is the democrat who once sought to be a member of the Labour party, but who, when he was ignored and scouted and could not be trusted, hoped to win the women electors of Fremantle by exhibiting an illuminated photograph. Talk about street corner speeches; has the Minister never made street corner speeches?

*The Minister for Works:* Not, of the style you do. They are a bit more accurate.

Mr. WALKER: There is one thing about the Labour party, and that is they do not want the Government motor car, the dubious advantage of the cracking of champagne bottles, the perfumed boxes of cigars, or the attendant accessories of wealth, in order to succeed.

They do go down to the street corners, they do go down to the man who is on the lowest scale of the ladder of life.

*The Minister for Works:* In going to those street corners they prefer to have no reporters.

Mr. WALKER: If the reporters go they will not report us.

*The Minister for Works:* They are afraid of libel actions.

Mr. WALKER: They are not afraid of libelling this party, and when we reflect that we have to go to street corners in order that we may reach those we are trying to benefit, our clients, the poor in the land, the helpless in the land, I regard it as a credit to the party, as one of its ennobling features. The Minister scorns these people, and since he gained the sceptre of Minister for Works by a fluke, since he happened to steal into Cabinet honours on the coat-tail of the mercurial Don Quixote, the Attorney General, there is no regard whatsoever for the poor, the humble; they may "go hang."

*The Minister for Works:* It is the fortunate absence of reporters from those meetings that you like.

Mr. WALKER: When have I ceased to speak strongly and fearlessly? When have I ceased to utter what I have to say in the presence of reporters or of Ministers? It is not my fortune that the reporters should always be at the street corners when I speak; but as to those very street corners, I do not scorn the poor whether there are reporters present or not. This is a new accusation against me, for as a rule, I am accused of speaking with the object of being reported. I am glad of the testimony of the Minister for Works, if it is worth having, that at times, at least, I can go where the pure honour of the work is my only reward.

*The Minister for Works:* How about those misstatements you make?

Mr. WALKER: The Minister is one of those little characters who deals only with little accusations. Let him bring forward what I have stated against this Government to-night, or at any other time, that I will not take up.

*The Minister for Works:* I take up your challenge.

Mr. WALKER: There are occasions when misinformation may be my lot, as it is the lot of every public man; no man can in every instance escape perhaps exaggeration or some lack of information which may be necessary.

*The Minister for Works:* You do not want to be informed. That is the matter with you.

Mr. WALKER: Now is this not a street corner statement?

The CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the hon. member that he is getting wide, even of the latitude of discussion allowed him. It is quite open to members to discuss the general administration of the Government on this vote, but at the same time the hon. member has, for some time, been discussing the Minister for Works as an individual, and himself, the member for Kanowna, as an individual.

Mr. WALKER: It is perfectly true, and I regret it; but was it not obvious to this Committee that in every instance the incentive to that was produced by the interruptions and the puerile sneers of the Minister for Works. I am sorry I have dealt with him so much. Now I will leave him. I am speaking of the general administration of the Government in this respect; how they have above all things neglected their departments, ceased to rule; have used their positions not to further the interests of the State, but to further the interests of their own party. That is the charge which I think can be proved by more than one reference to facts. It is time we got a Ministry above these low party levels, that we got those who would look after the interests of the State instead of after their particular offices, and it is a regrettable feature that the Ministry, as a whole seem to show no competency in the judgment of what is necessary for the development of this State. In every instance they have done the wrong thing; Take the case of immigration. If it were possible to pick the worst men from abroad, then the Ministry have picked and brought them here. We remember in the history of England the efforts to

settle Virginia, and how repeated were the failures for want of proper selection of men; and so too with us. We are failing because there is no judgment exercised in the immigration policy; we are suffering because there is no judgment exercised in the general administration of the State; we are suffering because we have a Government not over-scrupulous as to the way in which they violate the laws of the land; we are suffering because, indeed, the Ministers themselves leave the concerns of the State to be managed by the heads of departments instead of directing them themselves; we are suffering because they have put a chilling blight through the civil service; we cannot obtain the best services from the men who are there. As I have said before, the very best men are leaving, but even those who remain are crushed in spirit, ruined in ambition, mere automata, who fail to do the work as they ought, who are so crushed that they no longer take interest in their work. The mistakes that have been made are all due to slipsbod methods. One long avalanche of disaster is overtaking the country. I do not want to prolong this debate, but the Government, if they desire to continue in office, must change their front, must do something that will show they have the real welfare of the State at heart. When I say the welfare, I mean the welfare of the people, particularly the welfare of the toiling sections of the community. The great aim of Ministers apparently is to encourage the rich, and give special and favoured opportunities to them to exploit the general wealth of the country. Time after time monopolies have been given over to private enterprise, and if there is one thing more than another that the Government of England have for centuries past tried to prevent it is the granting of monopolies to public bodies. Monopolies have been held illegal from the days of King James to the present time, and yet it seems to be the delight of this country if it can only get a monopoly. Look at the money we should have had in the Treasury if our timber concessions had been managed and directed by State en-

terprise, as our railways are, if all the assets that have gone out of this country to the benefit of people abroad, and of the plutocrats of this State, had been retained and distributed among the people; look at the advantage that would have accrued. This is particularly the case in connection with the timber industry, and what applies to that applies to the railway concessions granted to timber concessionaires, and it applies in like measure to mining operations. Every step has been taken to aid, encourage, and foster the company enterprise; the disgraceful speculations on the part of the Government and others at Ravenshorpe are an example in point. We are ever forgetting the bone and sinew of the country and thinking only of the favoured few. A country like this, in the earliest stages of its growth, cannot thrive upon such methods, cannot progress with weights placed on its shoulders from the beginning, which make of the State a Sinbad with the old man weighing him down at every step he takes. The Government is in no instance helping the labouring classes or encouraging them; their cry for assistance, if heard at all, has only been partially heard, and if there has been any yielding it has only been in response to public agitation. We have as I have said, monopolies in this State which could be managed by the Government. We have had trust after trust, ring after ring, and combine after combine. If a meat ring threatens an attack upon public food what do the Government do? Do they seriously take it in hand; do they seriously battle with the difficulty? No; they get out of it as Governments have got out of such difficulties in past times. They appoint a Royal Commission, which sits on day in and day out, and allows these people, the members of the rings, to go there and tell their specific story in their own words and precisely as they like; and when the Commission has finished and the doors are closed we shall have a story that is not worth anything when it is told to this House. That is how these things are controlled, how evils are hidden, how ulcers are salved over, how disease creeps into the body



politic without any regard to correction, without any care of the skilled physician. It is to me a sad spectacle that this should exist. I ask hon. members would it exist if it were not for the persons upon these benches, and who are called the Labour party? It is the Labour party that is the bugbear to conscientious voting upon the other side of the House. The name frightens them—the very fact that we are called the Labour party. There are sitting on the cross-benches of this Chamber men, who, if their hustings speeches are to be trusted, do not believe in the present Government, who distrust those who are managing the affairs of the country. There may be those who themselves are ambitious yet to be the rulers of the land, and they may be more qualified and better fitted than some of the present Ministers are. But this Labour party stands in the way. What a benefit to the Government the Labour party has been; not on their own merits, not on what they have done to advance the interests of the country, not that they have been the cause of creation, but because this Labour party might happen to come into power if that side of the House were to be defeated. Supposing it were so, supposing what is in their minds should happen, the disaster of disasters, and the Labour party should happen to triumph? We are the champions of the people, we are their messengers to this House, we give to the people who cannot speak, who are voiceless in their sufferings, we give to the wronged and oppressed, who are deprived of their rights, rendered hopeless in the State; we give their case a hearing in this great tribunal. That is our mission. It may be that this may be our function for years to come. Personally, I am well aware of just a little blacksliding that goes on. I might be patted and encouraged from that side of the House. I might receive a welcome into the bosom of that select family. I know those who have been traitors have been so honoured, those who have shown a willingness to desert their principles, who go to the flesh-pots of Egypt rather than face stern duties and the battle for principle. But our plain duty is to fight wrong-

doing, to fight incompetence, to fight slovenly finance, to fight law-breaking upon the Ministerial benches, to fight the disregard of the interests of the people. That is our duty, and this I will predict, that if ever the time comes when the people themselves shall be properly represented in this House, in the representatives they have chosen they at least will have clean hands in administration; they at least will think of the welfare of the workers who create the wealth of the land; they at least will stand steadfast to principle, and will not shift here and there with every change of wind, merely for the sake of office.

Mr. NANSON (Greenough): There is perhaps no subject to which the maxim "So many men, so many minds" more fitly applies than that of public finance, if one needs an illustration one has only to take the speeches of the Treasurer on the other hand and the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kanowna on the other hand. I confess, that after listening to those speeches, one realises more perhaps than ever what a very wide gap separates not only the principles, but the political actions of members who sit on this side of the House and those who sit on the other side. So far as my own opinions are concerned, I cannot say that I endorse altogether the financial proposals put forward by the Treasurer, and, on the other hand, I find myself equally in a difficulty in endorsing all that has fallen from the speakers on the other side. As the truth is said to lie midway between the two extremes, perhaps in the present instance it has found a resting place in the particular portion of the Chamber where I sit. I can only hope that in what I have to say I shall succeed in convincing hon. members, although I cannot hope to employ the flowers of oratory that have embellished the speech of the member for Kanowna; I hope, I say, I shall succeed in convincing members that the views I shall put forward, though not perhaps heroic, have the saving grace of moderation, and are such that would make for the prosperity of the country, and might very well be

carried out, no matter what Government were in power, whether a Government chosen from this side of the House or from the Labour benches. There is one point in the speeches of both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kanowna which must have attracted the attention not only of members in this House, but the public at large, and I refer to their references to the policy of public borrowing. It would be difficult if we reflected upon the progress that has been achieved by Australia, the remarkable material advancement of the country, and the high general average of prosperity and contentment among its people: it would be difficult, I say, to lay our fingers upon any one single agency, and say that alone was responsible for all that has been achieved in the century of colonisation in this continent. But I think we may say this much, that admitting how much we owe to the courage and to the enterprise and the indomitable pluck of the pioneers, yet it would have been impossible for those men who went out into the wilderness, whether in the present time or whether in the earlier days of Australian colonisation, it would have been impossible for these men to have raised that full edifice of civilisation that we have, had we refrained from using that great resource of modern civilisation, credit to increase the wealth and establish the prosperity of the people upon a sure foundation. There are members who can look back a great many years into the history of Western Australia. I myself can remember the time when we had not Responsible Government in this country, and when it was almost an impossibility to obtain permission from the authorities in Downing Street to raise a loan of the smallest dimensions. And what was the condition of Western Australia in those days? A condition of unrelieved stagnation; a condition absolutely of progress so small as to be almost invisible; and a condition that would have been without hope but for the knowledge this small community then had, that by bringing their claims before the Home Government, they would secure the right to administer their own affairs, and having secured it would be able to embark

upon a policy of courage and enterprise, qualities so lacking in the timid policy that characterised the administration of the State before the era of Responsible Government. In the making of a colony more than one quality is required; there is the courage of the pioneer, and the courage of the statesman; both of which are equally necessary. And when we look back upon the earlier history of this country under Responsible Government, I think we must recognise that it was because we had as the first Premier one who while he had in the past exercised the courage of the pioneer, when he came upon the political stage, did not hesitate to exercise that still greater courage required in pledging the resources of the country to secure its development. If there is one reason why I regret having in some respects to criticise the actions of the present Administration, it is because I recognise how much is due to them for their enlightened policy of borrowing and public works, and I recognise that it may seem ungracious to pick out what I believe to be flaws in their administration. Before this Government came into office we had another Administration in power only for a few short months, for twelve months I believe; and one of the great if not the great guiding principle of that Administration was to mark time—to refrain from going upon the loan market, to initiate an era of rigid economy in regard to loan expenditure. And what was the consequence of that policy? Be it good or bad, there can be no doubt what the verdict of the country was in regard to it. The Government could not continue; because it is recognised, at any rate outside this Chamber by the great majority of the people in Western Australia, that if this country is to advance, being as it is in the position of a huge and only partially developed estate, it can only be by a wise expenditure of borrowed funds on works which will help in the creation of new wealth and therefore in bringing people to this country who will in turn bring prosperity to those already here.

*Mr. Angwin:* Perhaps you are not aware that that Government borrowed

more money than any subsequent Government.

Mr. NANSON: It is not a matter of great importance how much be borrowed provided the money be wisely expended. And although there may have been some directions in which that expenditure might very well not have been allowed to go, yet we must admit that as a whole the loan money spent by this Administration, as by previous ones, has been wisely expended. I do not suppose the member for Kanowna or the Leader of the Opposition if they were speaking, not in this Chamber, not in this State, but in London would for a moment be found advancing the thesis that the loan funds of this State have not been wisely expended in a way that not only conduces to the prosperity of this country but gives ample security to the English lender. It was refreshing to find in the speech of the Treasurer a vein of cheery optimism; and the more refreshing perhaps after listening to the speeches that followed. I noticed in some parts of the Treasurer's remarks a feeling perhaps of weariness, a feeling of regret that his lines had not fallen in more pleasant places; that he had not been Treasurer in times when surpluses were ruling instead of deficits. And one can almost imagine him, like a financial Hamlet, saying the funds "are out of joint, Oh! cursed spite that ever I was born to set them right." It was much more cheerful to see how that was but a passing phase and how he assumed the character of a political Micawber; Micawber in his best days—not when living in England in a perpetual state of impecuniosity, but the Micawber who came to Australia, and arrived at a stage of prosperity and consideration in this new country where the conditions are so different and where things which are out of place in an old country may be classed as political virtue. Now, if one turns to the speech of the hon. member who has just sat down, one really begins to wonder whether after having been absent from the State for three years, as I have been, I would not be wise in immediately packing my portmanteau and returning whence I came. Because what is the condition of the country

as pictured by the member for Kanowna? He tells us in one part of his speech it is a good country to get out of. In another, that one long avalanche of disaster is overtaking the country. Then we are told also that the great object of the Government of this country is the enriching of the men already rich. But if we go to the rich, so few of them as I have met, we find that their complaint is rather that by their methods of taxation the Government are making the rich poorer instead of richer. Then the hon. member says that trust after trust, ring after ring, combine after combine is raising its hydra head. He is not describing the United States of America; not taking a leaf out of the books of Roosevelt or Bryan or of Taft: he is describing the state of things alleged to exist in Western Australia, if that be so it seems that there are but two alternatives. The best thing to do would be as he suggests to leave the country. There is the other alternative, and that is putting the hon. member into the position of Treasurer. But fortunately on this side of the House we have a more robust faith in the country. And if some of us on these cross-benches have not that profound faith in the political wisdom of the Government which would make us regard them as infallible, yet we cannot regard them with those feelings of political repugnance which the member for Kanowna would have us entertain. What after all is the issue that we have to put before ourselves in dealing with the question of the public finances? The issue in itself is not difficult to state, although perhaps somewhat difficult to answer satisfactorily. The position of this country is very largely that of a large and only partially developed estate. The Government are trusted by the taxpayers with a certain amount of revenue—in my opinion a very handsome sum—and as far as their financial policy stands or falls it stands or falls according as the majority of the people are able to answer the question are the finances wisely administered? In a country like Western Australia where there are far more objects for the expenditure of public money than can im-

mediately be supplied it stands to reason that the functions of a Government and of a Parliament, as far as a Parliament can control the finances, is to pick out those works and channels of expenditure which are the more urgent, and to expend public money upon them, and to put on the other side or to put away till a more fitting season the expenditure that is not of this same urgent character. If we look at the policy of the Government so far as regards the expenditure of revenue—because after all we are not perhaps discussing so much the question of loan expenditure as of expenditure of our own revenue—we must admit that there does exist a need for the utmost care in the administration of the funds at the disposal of the Government. The Government are faced with difficulties, greater perhaps than confronted their predecessors. The money that used to come to us in plentiful supplies from the Commonwealth Government is no longer coming forward in such volume, and before very long, we may expect it will still be further lessened. But I do not know that that can be regarded altogether as exclusively responsible for the trouble in which the Government find themselves. Because it is a contingency which has long been recognised, and for which it was the duty of the Government to make adequate provision. Now in allocating the funds at the disposal of the Government in a time of financial stringency there is one principle, it seems to me, which should outweigh all others. It is this: that so far as is possible the funds at the disposal of the Government should be devoted to works of actual necessity; to works which after providing for the ordinary purposes of administration will be of such a nature as will help in creating new wealth in the country. I lay down that proposition as axiomatic. There is a very great deal of expenditure which, if one takes it singly, one must admit is desirable. It is not a question in regard to any particular work, whether it is *per se* desirable: but the question we have to ask ourselves is whether that work can hold its own in competition with the many other demands

for expenditure with which the Government have to deal. The Government have done very much to encourage land settlement, and nothing is more agreeable than to note the success that has met their endeavours. They are entitled, I think we must all admit, to very great praise for the energy they have shown in that direction even although in some instances it has not been quite wisely directed. But while the Government have embarked upon this enlightened policy of agricultural development—in which I include their policy of building agricultural railways—we find that in one other equally important respect, that of providing means of road transport, the Government have cut down the roads grants with an absolutely relentless hand. For the three financial years 1903-4, 1904-5, and 1905-6 the sum annually provided on the Estimates for roads and bridges averaged £123,000 per year. For the two last financial years, and the current financial year, that is 1906-7, 1907-8, and 1908-9, the sums provided for roads and bridges averaged only £70,000, or a decrease in the average of £50,000 per year. Now, during the latter period land settlement has been going ahead at a greater rate, I assume, than during the earlier period; and one would have thought that, seeing that land settlement is going ahead, the Government would have been following up the settler and giving him every possible assistance in the way of road construction. If in the earlier periods to which I refer there was a necessity for liberal road grants to the extent of £123,000 per year, how much greater has been the necessity for that assistance with land settlement going ahead so very much faster? And yet that is precisely the time the Government have chosen for cutting down those grants.

*The Treasurer:* We have given them railways instead.

Mr. NANSON: They have built railways instead. The railways are one part of their policy, that part relating to loans. But when a railway is built roads are required to feed that railway; and the very fact of building those railways is capable of being put forward as an additional argument why the Gov-

ernment should have at least kept the roads grant up to the old level. I might have argued indeed that instead of keeping the grants at the old level of £120,000 per year, they should have increased them to £150,000 per year. But recognising the financial position I do not make that claim, but I assert unhesitatingly that it is a very serious blot on the policy of the Government, a very serious reflection upon their statesmanlike capacity and administrative ability, that they should have chosen this particular time for dealing so serious a blow against country districts, upon whom at present the hopes of Western Australia are so largely fixed for the future development of the State. I have no doubt that the Government will contend that in this matter of cutting down roads grants they have virtually had no choice, and that the state of the finances is such that the most vigorous economy must be exercised. That is a contention that people in the country districts would more willingly recognise if they could feel that it was not only their districts that were called upon to exercise economy, but that economy was being exercised by the Government to an equal extent in other directions. Take a constituency like mine, which I suppose is in many respects a typical agricultural constituency, where it is almost impossible to have any really large expenditure upon public works of national importance, but where it is of vital importance to provide those primary necessities of settlement, roads and bridges. In my district the special grants this year for three roads boards controlling many hundreds of roads amount to less than £400. I do not suppose the Government have treated my particular constituency any worse than others, and whether they have or not the case is equally strong against them, for if they have treated my constituency unfairly, their conduct is iniquitous, and on the other hand if they have treated all the country districts unfairly, their iniquity is simply multiplied by the number of the constituencies they have so treated. Therefore they are in the awkward position of having neither excuse available to them.

I can remember some time ago, soon after I arrived in the State, it became my duty as member for the district to interview the Minister for Works, and with ill-concealed impatience, I am afraid, I submitted to a somewhat lengthy lecture from that hon. gentleman upon the duty these country districts have of taxing themselves. I was able to point out to the honourable gentleman that the particular roads board whose case I was pleading had had a peculiarly unfortunate experience as to the merits of the ratepayers taxing themselves when dealing with the present Administration. This board had not perhaps done everything it might have done in taxing its own ratepayers, but no doubt stung into action by the reproaches of the Minister for Works and the Honorary Minister, this roads board did succeed in raising more revenue than it had ever raised previously, and it fully expected after having made that effort it would have its enterprise fittingly rewarded and that the Government grant would be larger that year than in any other year. But perceive the dismay of this unfortunate board after making this effort, after extracting this money out of the ratepayers—perceive its dismay on seeing that the general grant made to it was lower than in the preceding year and that it had sunk to a sum of under £200, only a nominal sum per mile for every road in the district.

*The Minister for Works:* What was the board?

Mr. NANSON: The Northampton roads board. That is the experience of one board, and I can quite understand if many boards have had that experience that they ask themselves whether it is altogether a wise policy to increase the amount they raise by local taxation, when they find that instead of it being accounted unto them for righteousness, it is rather regarded as a reason why the annual grant should not be increased. If the Government could show that any considerable amount of economy had been exercised in expenditure in the more favoured portions of the State, down in the capital and immediately ad-

jacent to the capital, no doubt it would be easier to persuade the people in the back country that they were receiving as much as they were entitled in the existing financial circumstances to expect. But while I admit that the Government have made some important economies, I do not know that they have exercised all the economy they might have exercised. At any rate I should like some further proof upon that point, and no doubt we shall have statements from different Ministers before the debate closes. I notice that in the Budget the Treasurer pointed out that during the last financial year the expenditure had been overestimated by some £92,000. So far as my memory serves me, he pointed out that savings had been made to that extent; but when we come to see what were the savings effected, we find that out of the £92,000 the principal reductions were in railways £54,000, and works £36,000, leaving only £2,000 for other departments. Therefore so far as the other departments are concerned, while one may give the Government every credit for what they have done in the railways and every discredit for what they have done in regard to the works, at the same time we cannot give them much credit for the economy in the purely administrative departments. There was provided on the Estimates for the Governor. Executive Council, Parliament, Premier's Office, Treasurer's Departments, Attorney General's Departments, and the Colonial Secretary's departments during the financial year 1903-4 a sum in round numbers of £653,000. During the present financial year, taking the estimate for the current year, we find that the estimate for these departments is £673,000, an increase of about £20,000 in the expenditure this year as compared with that in 1903-4, while the condition of the State in 1903-4 was, I take it, one of less financial stringency. It seems to me, though I am open to correction, that the Government might have made a greater effort in regard to economy beginning at the top of the tree. I noticed when the debate on the Address-in-Reply was progressing that the member for Beverley (Mr.

Hopkins) made a very admirable suggestion that when the term of office of the present Governor expires the successor appointed to the position should receive a smaller salary. Though the amount of economy in that direction would not be in itself a very large sum it would be beginning at the top of the tree, and if we exercise economy and cut down a thousand here and a thousand there, a few hundreds here and a few hundreds there, I think the Treasurer would be surprised how the amount would soon total up, and he would be able to make a considerable saving. There is certainly a duty cast upon us to set our house in order. The conditions of this State under Federation cannot be precisely the same as they were before Federation; and the best way, I contend, to resist unwarrantable encroachments on the part of the Federal Government and Parliament is to show that we are exercising every possible economy. And when we recognise that Federation has brought about in many respects an altered condition of things, there is no need to have all our State establishments on quite the expensive scale we had in the old days, and I do not think there is any great demand from the public in regard to the matter. It must be some six years ago since I first advocated a reduction in the Governor's salary in view of the altered condition of things under Federation, and since that time a new Governor has come here and his term of office is just about to expire. I hope that before another Governor is appointed the Government, beginning at the top of the tree, will see whether they cannot effect economy in that direction. Although it is not my duty to prescribe in these matters, I might go further and point out other directions in which the Government might economise. I do not know that in regard to this House it is not possible to considerably reduce the expenditure. Although the member for Kanowna seems to regard it as one of the cardinal sins of the Government that they have not supplied the people of the back blocks with copies of *Hansard*, I do not know that the country at large

would not treat it as a matter for approbation if *Hansard* ceased altogether. I think that considerable economy might be made in that direction; and if we can save a few thousands there and put them into the roads in the country districts, we would perform more essential service to the country than by spreading broadcast the record of speeches of members in this Chamber. But if hon. members are not prepared to take measures quite so heroic as that, at any rate they might take counsel with Parliamentary authorities in the other States and see—I am referring particularly to South Australia—whether it is not possible to arrange for the publication of the debates in a form that will be less expensive and at the same time will still readily reach the people who are interested in them. Now take another direction in which it is possible to exercise some economy. We all must have sympathy for expenditure on objects such as the Public Library, the Picture Gallery, the Museum, and the Zoological Gardens. All these things conduce to the education of the people and in some respects to their amusement no doubt. They tend to make life more pleasant in our midst, and they give Dr. Hackett and the *West Australian* an unfailing opportunity of pointing out in the silly season how great are the advantages these institutions bestow on the country, and how they prevent Western Australia from becoming deserted and the population from flocking to the Eastern States. They therefore perform some useful purpose, but in times of financial stringency we are bound to ask ourselves, if we take on the one hand the amount spent on roads grants and on the other hand the amount spent on these articles of luxury-cum-education, if I may use the term, whether the proportion spent on the roads is not unduly small and that on these objects like the Museum and Picture Gallery too large. To take the figures. Compare the year 1902 with the Estimates for the current financial year, and we find that for the Public Library in 1902 there was a sum of £3,000, while this year, at a time of financial stringency—in 1902 there was financial plenty—

there is £3,250. For the Museum and Art Gallery there is a sum of £3,800, the same as was voted in 1902.

*The Treasurer:* There was no Art Gallery then.

Mr. NANSON: We were spending it on the Museum, but it must not be forgotten that at that time the institution also embraced the Art Gallery. There was a small room in which pictures were placed, and it has been reserved for the present Administration to set the pernicious example of erecting a picture gallery from loan funds. We find one direction in which a small amount of economy has been effected. The grant for the Zoological Gardens this year is £3,600, while in 1902 it was £3,900. If the Government are to economise, why do they not do so more in regard to these grants rather than to the unfortunate roads boards? The Treasurer is a practical man, and so are the Ministers, and they have the cause of land settlement at heart, and surely they must know they are doing untold harm in checking expenditure in this very necessary direction, and yet leaving practically intact the votes which none would feel much if they were cut down. Let us go through the expenditure on roads. We find a total on the Estimates for this year of £17,800, but out of that sum no less than £5,000 is to be expended on main roads within a radius of 20 miles of Perth; that is that nearly one-third of the grant is to be spent on Perth-Fremantle, Perth-Guildford, and similar roads. That is not the policy to adopt at a time like this. Those roads have received most liberal grants for many years past, and if the Government are in favour of a policy of cutting down grants they should have begun at the Capital and worked out if they must do so, to the back country. The development of the back country creates wealth, and there is nothing that will give a better return than fostering that part of the State. We find on the Estimates this year the grant for roads and bridges is £60,000; while the grant for Library, Museum, Art Gallery Zoological Gardens, parks and recreations totals £15,000; that means that 25 per cent. of the amount voted for roads and bridges is devoted to what I

might call more or less ornamental objects. The ratio is undoubtedly too large. I would not complain if money were plentiful, but in times like these the Government should have had the courage to reduce that ratio.

I want to deal with one other question for a few moments, the taxation proposals of the Government. The Treasurer is the possessor of the very natural ambition—an ambition, I suppose, belonging to all Treasurers—to make both ends meet. In order to bring the financial year to a close with a small balance, instead of a deficit, he has made certain proposals, and it will be the duty of this House to decide whether they should be accepted or not. It is proposed to tax land agents, tobacco vendors, stock brokers, bankers, amusements, and in addition to raise the stamp duty. It is always a serious matter to increase the burdens of the people, but I cannot think the Treasurer, or rather the Government—for I suppose they have acted in a collective capacity—have shown their customary wisdom in seeking to draw revenue from these particular sources. In the first place, the results anticipated by the Treasurer are altogether out of proportion with the labour, for he expects, during the six months to raise only £17,500 by the taxation, and for the year £26,000. I cannot help thinking that if the Treasurer had exercised the same amount of care in economising expenditure about the Capital, as the Minister for Works has done in cutting down the roads grant, it would have been possible for him to have made a saving equal to the amount he proposes to obtain from this taxation. It may be said that there is among the persons more immediately affected no opposition to the imposts, that in some cases in fact these people are actually welcoming them. I think I saw in the papers the other day that the land agents, tobacco vendors, and stock brokers were actually thanking the Government for levying this taxation. That must be a most refreshing experience to the Treasurer; but I very much doubt whether it is a good indication of the wisdom of this sort of taxation; because what does it mean when one finds that the persons who are to be taxed kissing the rod, so to speak? Does

it not mean that they look on these taxes as assisting in the formation of monopolies rather than as making for competition.

*The Premier:* Would not the same apply to auctioneers' licences?

Mr. NANSON: Yes; but I am not here to justify the auctioneers' licences. I can understand members on the other side of the House, with strong trade unionist principles, thinking it wise to limit competition in certain circumstances; but I do not know that I should expect a gentleman like the Treasurer, who has always stood for giving the fullest play to competition, for the sake of such a small revenue—the stock brokers are only expected to pay £500 a year altogether—imposing these taxes, which will tend to restrict the choice of the public in regard to the employment of people in those various professions proposed to be taxed. Then there is the tax on amusements. I was speaking on this subject the other day to a member of the House and he said, "Oh, I think it an admirable suggestion to tax amusements, for people go to theatres far too much; it is wise to tax them." If such a state of affairs as that is going to arise, I ask myself who is safe. If I am to be taxed, because in the opinion of the Treasurer I go to the theatre too often, it may be that another Treasurer may come along and tax the people because they go to church too much.

*The Premier:* Not much would he received from a tax of that kind.

Mr. NANSON: It is not a valid argument in favour of a species of tax such as that, to say that persons should have to pay because they indulge more freely than they should in certain forms of amusement. It seems to me that in this country we are suffering from a tendency to interfere too much in these matters, in the affairs of individuals. The most fortunate country is that in which there is the largest amount of individual liberty. I resent a tax on amusements, which has to be justified on the ground that people are too often at amusements. After all, that is their own business, and they should not be punished on that account. Then take the tax which I have left



to the last, namely, the tax on bankers. It is perfectly true that the banks are well able to afford the sum the Treasurer proposes to draw upon them for and I do not suppose it gives them a very large amount of anxiety, for instead of it coming out of their pockets they can, by a simple method, draw the tax from the pockets of their customers. I ask the Treasurer whether it is wise to impose a tax of this kind, the effect of which may be to check the enterprise of banks in pushing out into the smaller towns of the State and the back country.

*The Treasurer:* You might argue that way against any form of taxation.

Mr. NANSON: With double force as to this form of taxation. The Treasurer may be able to tell us later on what precedent, within recent times, he has for imposing taxation of this kind. If one goes back to the period in English history at the time of Pitt, when England was in the throes of a great struggle with France, and when the financial conditions were as desperate as the condition of Western Australia, according to the member for Kanowna, is to-day, there might be justification for imposing a tax of that kind; if we were actually threatened with that avalanche of disaster the member for Kanowna has referred to, there would be some justification; but conceive what the effect will be outside Western Australia when they find that the Treasurer, a business man, and a Government, with the prestige of the Moore Government, impose a two-penny-halfpenny tax of this kind in order to bring in the paltry sum of £26,000 a year. A policy of that kind is bound to give rise to unfortunate conclusions outside the State. I do not think it will improve our credit; and as regards the particular case to which I was referring, that of the bankers, it will tend to check their enterprise in providing banking facilities for the smaller towns in the back country.

*The Premier:* You do not think that will stop the establishment of new branches, do you?

Mr. NANSON: Not only that, but it will possibly lead to the existing banks being closed. We know, as a matter of

fact, that a bank will often open a branch in a town, not with the anticipation of immediately gaining profit, but in the hope that their enterprise will be rewarded in a few years. It stands to reason that the imposition of a tax of this kind will not tend to make the banks more enterprising. That brings me back to where I started, that on the whole the financial policy of the Government does not, so much as one could wish, assist in the development of the back country. It is disappointing to find that when economies are proposed they should be rather at the expense of our back country than of the centres of population. I know the Government have difficulties to contend against, and that it is easier to talk about cutting down expenditure than to do it; I know that if expenditure in large centres is cut down there is sure to be serious complaint, but after all it is the duty of a strong Government, to risk such opposition, and I fancy if the Government made the attempt they would find they would also receive a considerable degree of support in the large towns themselves, for the people in those localities are sufficiently intelligent to realise that the ultimate prosperity of Perth, and the large centres of population depends upon the prosperity of the country behind them. Now, as regards economy in the public service, I wish that the Government during the past three years they have been in office had been more successful in abolishing that pernicious system of circumlocution which seems to be the bane of all Government services. One hoped that when the Public Service Commissioner was appointed we would achieve some considerable measure of reform and economy in the service. Although I have the highest opinion of the capabilities of Mr. Jull, the Commissioner, I am rather inclined to think now that it might possibly have been better if when the Commissioner was appointed the choice had fallen on some gentleman who instead of having been trained in the public service had been brought up in a large commercial undertaking and had the administration of a business house and been accustomed to manage it in a businesslike rather

than a bureaucratic way. Only yesterday I happened to be looking through a file of papers, and quite accidentally I came across an illustration of the extraordinary way in which circumlocation flourishes in the Government Departments. I was looking through the file dealing with the Old Men's Depôt at Geraldton, and I came across a minute by the Colonial Secretary who had seen a letter in a newspaper contrasting the cost of administration of the Old Men's Home at Claremont with the cost of a similar institution at Fremantle. The Colonial Secretary wrote a minute asking the Under Secretary to have the letter cut out. That instruction went to the Under Secretary. He gave instructions to someone who signed himself "D.B.O." "D.B.O." gave instructions to O.K. The extract was procured; then D.B.O. minutes the Under Secretary, then the Under Secretary gives instructions to put it on another file; then somebody minutes accordingly. Meanwhile, the Colonial Treasurer has discovered the same letter and he starts writing minutes to have this letter brought under the notice of the Colonial Secretary. Then the same process is gone through again, and at last we have a minute from the Under Secretary to the Colonial Secretary sending the letter on to the Superintendent of Charities, and mournfully explaining that while he (the Under Secretary) was calling for the letter to obtain the remarks of the Superintendent of Charities, the Colonial Treasurer had got in ahead of him. This is an example how things are done in the Government Departments. That is not an isolated case, but it goes on every day of the year. One had hoped that with a Government of business men in office, that in three years they would have been able to attack the system of circumlocation, and impose some sort of check on the "Tite Barnacles" of the civil service. If one can judge from that casual example, they have not been successful. If they had been successful I do not think it would have been necessary to economise in the direction I have mentioned in the earlier portion of my speech, and I doubt whether the Treasurer would find him-

self under the necessity of introducing this new taxation. I think there is still considerable field for economy in the service, and I do not think it is beyond the capacity of gentlemen like the Treasurer and the Minister for Works to so deal with these matters as to secure the carrying out of the business of the country as it would be carried out in an ordinary commercial institution.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning): After listening to the stormy speech of the member for Kanowna which immediately preceded that of the member for Greenough, a calm and deliberate delivery couched in language which conveys to our minds the true meaning of the speaker in regard to the affairs of the country, I think we should congratulate ourselves that the storm has passed, and that a calm has come over the deliberations of this House. I have listened to many speeches from both sides of the House, and I have listened to speeches from the opposite side of the House which have not in my opinion conveyed any encouragement. They have conveyed condemnation in their charges of degeneracy, charges of dishonesty, charges which I think should not be made, charges which are not borne out by fact, charges which go a long way to deter men of ability and of good intention who desire to do their duty to the country from taking up offices which they are filling and which it will be found difficult to fill in the future, unless some credit is given for the good work done. I do not say for one moment that there is no room for criticism. I think it is the duty of the Opposition and members on this side of the House to criticise if they find fault. It is expected of them that they shall do so, but in criticising let them not forget they owe a duty to the country in being careful that they do not damage its interests. The words uttered recently convey to the outside hearer much which will cause restlessness, which will make people about to come to our shores hesitate before they actually do so. Those who have had to do with the business concerns of the country and the building up of it must admit it can only be done

by exercising courage and care in administration, and by not fouling our own nest. Why should we speak of this country in the disparaging way in which it has been spoken of? Simply because there is a tendency on the part of hon. members to do all they possibly can to make out their case, regardless of the country's interests. What I am saying is from my heart, and as one who has an opportunity of travelling in this country and judging of its capabilities, judging of the expression of the public and the opinions of the commercial world, and judging too what is being done in our midst, anything said which is not fair and just does the country a tremendous injury. We have heard so much of the depressed condition of things, and we have heard so much of the necessity for careful administration, for the exercise of that caution and good statesmanship which should do so much to help us. I think when those land taxation proposals were placed before this House, I then said I objected to them for the reason that I did not think it was a good policy. I persistently opposed them, and ultimately they became portion of the laws of the country, and to-day we are called upon to pay these taxes for the carrying on of the affairs of the country. I am not going to raise that question of taxation now, but I would only justify the remarks I made at that time. A good deal has been said about the deficit. A country such as this should not be afraid of a deficit of £200,000. I think myself we are childish in the extreme when we look round and say that we fear the result of that deficit, what it will do to us in regard to the finances, and how it will prevent us from borrowing satisfactorily. I say as I have said before, there are many business firms in this country carrying a greater liability than that amount, and carrying on their businesses, and doing much towards the development of latent industries. I do not wish to say that we should encourage the deficit, but I repeat I would have preferred to have seen a deficit of even £500,000 rather than I would have seen the introduction of the land taxation pro-

posals. That is the reason why I say I am not afraid of a deficit, because I feel that although we are saddled with that deficit, yet the conditions of this country are so buoyant and the prospects so good that the deficit does not frighten me. What I say is, there is necessity for great caution, but do not let us send those words forth to the world that we are trembling as it were on the balance, and upon the verge of a precipice. We have heard words uttered to-night by the member for Kanowna which, if published and if read by those outside the State will convey an impression which will do us an injury. It is these words which go a long way to prevent us from making the headway we desire.

*Mr. Bath :* Supposing the Auditor General's report is read outside?

*Hon. F. H. PIESSE :* The reports of the Auditor General have been issued to my knowledge for 18 years, and each report has contained objections in regard to certain things, and the reports will continue to do so. I do not care what Government comes into power the Auditor General will find fault. It is his duty to find fault, but there is one thing about it; it does not devolve upon the people to magnify those complaints. The opportunity is taken by the daily Press to make extracts from the report of the Auditor General. They do this because they want to create some sort of furore and make the people talk about the management of the country. The Auditor General is quite right in drawing attention to these matters, but they do not convey what hon. members would wish this House to expect. There is another thing in regard to the finances. If we are to hand over the affairs to our friends opposite, are we to be guided by the judgment of the Leader of the Opposition? What condition will we find ourselves in if we are to listen to the remarks he made a few evenings ago about the borrowing policy? He told us that if we had ceased to borrow in 1898, the year in which there should have been the least borrowing, and if instead of borrowing we had set aside each year a portion of our revenue, it would have reached by this time the enormous sum

of 10 millions which could have been expended and we would not have had a penny addition to our public debt. Now I would ask members, how on earth can that be accomplished? Because we are bound to proceed with development, and if we had not borrowed this money we would not have had the ten millions to spend. If this is the finance we are to expect from the hon. member, and if this is to be the way he would carry on the work of this country, I say we would be in a worse position than ever.

*Mr. Bath:* We had £700,000 to spend on works that year.

*Hon. F. H. PIESSE:* In regard to the borrowing policy, we will want presently another three millions of money for works. That money must be found for carrying on these works. The hon. member, while agreeing that we require these railways has, with many others, fallen into the grievous error of declaring that there is an abundance of land along our existing railways which is not being developed. Although that may be so in many instances, it must not be forgotten that it requires time to develop these lands. There is no more practical man than the member for Pilbara, and he knows in his own heart that at least two or three years is needed to make the smallest commencement on any property. No better evidence could be given of the great development of this country than is provided in the annual statistical return. We find that five years ago the State produced a little less than a million bushels of wheat, whereas last year the yield amounted to nearly three million bushels. And notwithstanding that the season has been perhaps unfavourable, I am satisfied that this quantity will be exceeded this year, and that in five years from now the tale to be told will be of a nature most encouraging to this country. Nor must it be forgotten that the people who are coming here are going to help us pay the public debt of the country. Each time we carry on any developmental work the wealth of the country is thereby increased. I wish to impress upon hon. members the necessity of believing in their country; of having faith in it, and of doing their best to push it forward. At no time in

the history of the State has there been greater necessity for men of energy, for men who will encourage the carrying on of our developmental work. There is nothing so calculated to cause a depression as the belittling of the affairs and prospects of this State. Take the position to-day: everything is buoyant. Gold-mining has not been better for years. There has been a great improvement. Agriculture has improved, and prices are going to be maintained on a level with those of last year. We find a great increase in the production of stock. Sheep have increased by about a million during the last five years. Along the Great Southern line alone, from York to Albany, they have increased from 350,000 to 880,000 in five years. That can only be regarded as a tremendous increase. This is the outcome of farming; and these small men of whom we have heard so much are the men who are going to carry small numbers of sheep, from 100 to 500, and who will thereby rapidly increase the wealth of the country. Increases of this kind do not come in one jump, but by the steady development which has done so much to make this country prominent. With our certain rainfall and our assured agricultural conditions we have everything to congratulate ourselves upon, and nothing that we have done in the past to regret. What we require is a continued belief in the resources of our country, a desire to help it forward. And I say that words uttered, not only in this House, but in different parts of the country; words uttered and words printed in newspapers commenting in disparaging terms on the possibilities of the future, have done much to bring about that depression talked of by hon. members opposite. That depression is the result of overtrading—the bringing into this country of too much competition. Business after business has come here to open up trade in the State, and the result is that we have to-day more people to do the trade than we have to do the trade among. However, that will right itself as time goes on. Then again, in regard to the unemployed difficulty, it is not so acute to-day as it has been, though I am satisfied that there are many cases which need help. In 1898,

the year the hon. member referred to, I received a deputation from the unemployed asking that the Government should carry out works on the foreshore below the Supreme Court. As I was averse to this they awaited the return of Sir John Forrest. On his return an application was made to him; but the works were not commenced, although we did in other ways what we could to help the unemployed. I think some 140 people attended that deputation. This unemployed difficulty will always be with us. I am sorry to say that recently there have been greater evidences of it than we have had for a long time; but it will disappear and will lessen from time to time. We have the harvest now being carried on, and shortly we will have the clearing of the country to follow. Both will afford avenues of employment for men who are really desirous of obtaining work. Hon. members will agree that in many instances numbers of the men are not capable of carrying out the work, and that some who are capable are not willing. So in every walk of life you will find the noisiest of all are frequently the least inclined to work. In regard to the remarks of the member for Greenough concerning the distribution of the funds of the State for the purpose of carrying on the works of the State, I agree with him that there is a necessity for doing everything possible to open up our back country. Our roads require attention, and we need them now more than ever for the development of the State. There has been a remark made to the effect that the railways are being built and will take the place of roads. I do not think the Treasurer could have been serious in making that statement. There will be a necessity for making roads in a different direction from that of the existing roads. The roads of the future will have to run out at right angles from the railways instead of running parallel to them as many of them are to-day. A new order of things will arise and we will require money for the carrying on of these works. That being so, I believe it is the duty of the Government to place at the disposal of these

roads boards as much as possible from the public funds. I wish to say in regard to the local taxation proposals that while some of them will have a good effect in certain directions, yet in many instances those already in existence have been most burdensome upon residents in the newer portions of the roads boards districts. Many of these people have only recently gone on the land and the finding of this money has been a great burden upon them. And to-day with the land tax and the income tax added to the imposts their lot is rather an unhappy one. I think we should do all that is possible for the development of the country. I am sorry to see again repeated that vote for the maintenance of main roads in and around the city of Perth. Last year when this matter was brought forward I said I hoped this would disappear from the Estimates by the following year; and added that surely the Minister must be convinced that the vote should be reduced and must ultimately cease to exist. I think it ought not to be continued; because the money is required in other parts of the country for more important works. Moreover there are other means for obtaining this money, as for instance by local taxation, and I think some relief should be given to the people out back. In regard to new works I hope something will be done in the near future to help forward the freezing works promised; and that the Government will do something to set up in the principal ports the freezing works so much required. The remarks I have made about the increase of stock point to the fact that the demand is not equal to the supply. As a matter of fact we shall have to depend greatly upon export for the disposal of the surplus stock. Now if we are to compete with the Eastern States this can only be done by having these freezing works provided in the principal ports. I hope this project will receive the careful consideration of the Government and that we shall see something done in that direction. In regard to the Agricultural Department I am convinced that everything is being done that can be done to assist agriculture, and I am pleased to

note that the post of Director of Agriculture has at last been filled. This department has been without a recognised head for some time, and although we have had good work done by those temporarily in charge, still I felt that something definite should be done in the way of the appointment of a director. We have coming to us a gentleman who is looked upon as one of the first men of his class throughout Australasia. He will supply a long felt want here and I am sure we will have no occasion to regret his appointment. In regard to railways I must congratulate the Minister upon the success which has been accomplished; and the Commissioner also for the work he has done. In no period of the history of this country has there been such a satisfactory statement made as that presented in this latest report of the Commissioner. Hon. members opposite say it has been accomplished by the cutting down of wages. What I wish to say is that it is not due altogether to the cutting down alluded to, but largely to the conditions accruing because of the improved condition under which work has been carried out. The duplication of the lines in some directions; the improved rolling stock; the heavier rails, and many other improvements effected during the past few years show that those who introduced these methods were wise in their day. We are profiting by the result of their policy in the very development I have spoken of in the agricultural areas. So with the railways. That money which has been expended largely in the past is now returning good results, because of the economy consequent on improved conditions; and the charges that have been made against the administration for undue reduction of hands and cutting down in other directions cannot be attributed entirely to this, but are largely due to the improved conditions resulting from the expenditure of public moneys on the railways in the past. With regard to the sinking fund touched on so much, I may say that it is an inheritance of the past. It did good in those days: no doubt it has helped us in times gone by; and when we made provision for the 3

per cent. sinking fund on the Goldfields Water Scheme I think we were well advised, because we see there is some cause for uneasiness in that direction, and there is a likelihood we will have to spend a large sum of money for repairs to the work. So I cannot see that the creation of the sinking fund on that work is a matter for censure. On the other hand I cannot see why we made provision for one-half per cent. sinking fund on the money borrowed to purchase the Great Southern Railway. That purchase was one of the best things we have done, and it has been justified by events—by the settlement that has followed the purchase. At any rate, we have discriminated in regard to the sinking fund in certain instances. It was desirable to do so in the case of the Goldfields Water Supply, though in other cases it was not. We knew we would have to carry the burden of sinking fund, and, of course, we cannot complain; but I think that in future, if we follow the practice which is to be universally adopted throughout Australia, and which the Commonwealth are to adopt in connection with their loans, I think we can safely accept the suggestion of the Government in regard to the reduction of the sinking fund on future loans to one-half per cent. I have never much favoured the sinking fund, believing that our works are of such an improving character that the country should not be called upon to pay sinking fund on them. Take our railways. We find that we have expended something like £10,000,000 of our loan moneys upon them, but to-day they are returning to us sufficient to pay working expenses, interest and sinking fund, proving that they are works of a reproductive character and of an improving character. If we were to offer these railways as a going concern we would have numberless applications to purchase them at a price even beyond the most sanguine anticipation of members of this House. It has been said that they are worth £30,000,000, or that they could be sold for £30,000,000. Of course, no one would dream of parting with such a great national work as our railways, be-

cause of their close association with the development of our country. They have done more than anything in the way of public works in the development of the country, and while we can keep control over them in the way we now do by arranging rates and fares and policy, they will do great and good work for us. They have already done much to enhance our standing in the States of the world and to increase our progress. Having this in view, I think we should not worry about the sinking fund. It should never have been started in the way it was, but having been arranged for we cannot go back on it, and we must provide for it. However, in the case of future loans we can safely follow the proposal outlined by the Treasurer. I merely rose to give expression to these remarks in regard to the finances of the country. I hope we shall see eye to eye in carrying on the work necessary for development. I deprecate all those allusions made to the condition of the country. Some of them are true in regard to some parts of our country, but I feel that a wholesale condemnation such as has been made, unless it is contradicted, does much to damage us in the eyes of the world. People who seek advice look for it from the leading men of the country, they look for advice and assurance from Parliament; and though party government has done much to engender this spirit, though party government will continue for a longer period than the youngest man in this House will live, yet I feel that it has often been responsible for much disturbance, and much trouble, and for much of the spirit of opposition in certain directions. I cannot say that I would join in what might be termed an entire coalition, that is, to do away with party government altogether, because I think it does good in certain directions. The need for keeping a watch on the Government side of the House is necessary I admit in many ways, but I say that often we depart from what we call fair criticism, fair judgment, and fair dealing. These references to degeneracy, and even dishonesty, and all such remarks that have been made in

regard to administration, do much to belittle Ministerial office, do much to belittle us as members of Parliament, and do much to take away from this House that dignity it should have in the eyes of the people.

*Mr. Troy:* That is a very good sermon.

*Mr. Johnson:* We have had three big speeches to-night; it is not fair to ask us to sit later.

*The Treasurer:* It is only 10 o'clock; go on till 11 o'clock.

*Mr. JOHNSON:* It is not fair. I move—

*"That progress be reported."*

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	21
Majority against				1

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Troy

(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Carson	Mr. Male
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Davies	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Layman
Mr. Jacoby	

(Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

*Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie):* I rise with considerable diffidence to speak on this question to-night. I am so new to Parliamentary life that I have scarcely grasped its nice little ways, and this evening I have listened to the eloquent oration of the member for Kanowna, and the calm speech of the member for Greenough, and I must confess that I have been considerably impressed with many things in

connection with life of this sort. I think that one thing that does strike a new member more particularly than anything is the considerable amount of recrimination that goes on in connection with both sides of the House. I should hope we may strike some happy medium in that direction, but I do not think that happy medium was exactly reached by the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) inasmuch as he at once accused this (Opposition) side of the House of making misrepresentations with regard to the country.

*Hon. F. H. Piesse :* Be fair.

**Mr. McDOWALL :** I am always fairly accurate, even if I speak without any preparation, and I can say the member for Katanning deliberately accused members of this side of the House of making misrepresentations with reference to the country. Even the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) with all the interjections, with all the temptation in the world to be inaccurate, never uttered one sentence against this great State of Western Australia. What the member for Kanowna did was to condemn the Administration of this State. He always pointed out the great resources of Western Australia, and he showed by his speech implicit confidence in this country. I am just as emphatic in my opinion that this is a great country. I have no desire or intention to condemn it in any way. When one finds there is so much of this cross-firing, one is apt to say, "After all, Parliamentary life or Parliamentary work is not exactly what one would expect, and the principle of elective Ministries might really be passed in the interests of the country." I have only risen to-night to pass a few remarks. My mind is perfectly open, and I certainly do not feel that I am now in possession of sufficient facts, or that I have a sufficient grasp of the various affairs of the State, to be able to speak with any effect upon these great questions. I cannot be expected to know all the little details in the minds of Ministers, to be conversant with matters dealt with by the member for Kanowna, but at the same time I think I might mention one or two matters that I feel convinced about. The member for Kanowna in his speech stated

that the Government had not kept faith with the civil servants. I am not prepared to say whether that is accurately the case, but I am prepared to say that there is one little matter in my own electorate in which the Government have not kept faith. It is not mentioned in the Estimates. It is only a small matter, but every time it has been mentioned we have been informed that it was passed by the James Government and that as soon as funds were available the work would be carried out. This is the kind of Administration that makes a promise, repeats a promise always immediately preceding an election or any important occasion, and therefore such an Administration, when it fails to keep such promises, is open to criticism. I now desire to ascertain from the Government whether we are to receive a definite promise that this small work at Coolgardie, which has been promised so many times and by different Governments, is going to be carried out. Is the money which was promised for this work to be spent as the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson) pointed out, in the parks in and around Perth. Are all these large sums of money going to be spent on the purposes indicated by that member to the detriment of the country places? It must never be forgotten, as pointed out in a speech a few minutes ago, that the ultimate prosperity of the State absolutely depends on the country. That prosperity is brought about by the great agricultural resources of the country. What has given this State its great impetus, brought to it its population? It is, more than anything else, the gold mines of the Eastern Goldfields. It was the gold mines which caused the population to increase from 50,000 to 250,000 in a few years, and I maintain that, when places on the gold-fields are promised works which only involve a paltry £200 or £300, the promises should be kept. It should always be borne in mind that the prospects of the State are dependent first upon the mining and then upon the agricultural industry. I trust that having mentioned this matter the Minister for Works will not give us any more of his flowery promises in connection with it.

*Mr. Heitmann :* He is noted for them.



Mr. McDOWALL: I will say nothing about him that I do not know to be correct, and I trust that while I am a member I shall make no accusation against a member on this side of the House or on the other unless I know it of my own knowledge. Therefore I will give the Minister credit and say that I do not know whether he is noted for flowery promises or not, but I trust that he will not sustain that reputation but will give us this footbridge.

Mr. Holman: What about the Fremantle dock now?

Mr. McDOWALL: I think it a mistake that anyone should come to Parliament and mention altogether parochial matters, but on an occasion like this, when an adjournment of the debate has been refused, what on earth is a person to do? However, difficulties are made to be overcome, so let us proceed. With regard to the petty taxation which the Government are now introducing, the new taxes have been attacked by the member for Greenough and I think with considerable justification. One has only to look at the details of the Estimates of revenue to observe that there are a number of petty taxes, such as auctioneers' licences and land agents' licences. I do not object to the former, but I do not think auctioneers should be forced to obtain a double licence, one for the auctioneer's business and the other for the land agency business. If such have to be obtained I think it is decidedly unjust. Anyhow, that matter will be dealt with on a future occasion. I wish to draw attention to the fact that a little higher up on the Estimates appears the sum of £42,400 to be raised by land tax. What we as a Labour party contend is that if the Government put on a proper land tax sufficient money would be raised to make good the deficit. In addition to that, large estates would be broken up, while land contiguous to the railway, which is at present unworked, would be utilised. In that event, all the petty taxes which are now brought down would be unnecessary and the affairs of the country would be able to be dealt with in a statesmanlike manner. We are told by the member for Katanning that he

has the very strongest objection to land values taxation and he then goes on to glorify the agricultural railway system. He admits that he voted for the land tax because the caucus directed it. That was the reason.

Mr. Bolton: Explain that you mean the Ministerial caucus.

Mr. McDOWALL: I recognise that each side of the House has a caucus and that the so-called Ministerial meetings are practically not a whit different from the Labour caucus. When the Ministerial caucus demands from the supporters of the Ministry a vote, then it has to be given. The support which is demanded from members of the Ministerial caucus is very different from that asked for by the Labour caucus: for on this side of the House we are only asked to vote on big and important questions, questions which are of vital importance as dealing with matters of principle which affect the State, the other States of the Commonwealth, and every civilised country in the world. That is the difference between our caucus and that of the other side, which latter on one particular question for instance, namely, that of the land tax, says, "Although you do not believe in the land tax and feel that it touches your pocket, still because we want it and it is necessary for us to have it, you must vote for it." This is all very well, but members on the other side of the House want agricultural railways, every possible convenience, freezing works at Geraldton, at Wyndham, and all over the country, and yet say that the agricultural industry is not to bear any proportion of the cost. We all know that had it not been for the population coming to this State owing to the discovery of gold on the Eastern Goldfields, there would be practically no agricultural industry here to-day. We know what the condition of the agricultural industry was before 1900. And therefore we contend that if the Government put on a proper land tax and a properly graduated income tax, they will receive all the revenue they require without the adoption of these petty methods of taxation. It does not seem that the Government are desirous of

doing anything of the kind, and therefore I think that we cannot be accused of being unjust when we criticise the Ministerial policy in that direction. We are justified in criticising it from every possible point of view; but I trust that when we do criticise the Government we shall do so by stating facts and arguing upon proper premises and not by imputing any personal motives. I can differ in opinion from any man and yet be honest in my conviction and at the same time give him credit for being equally honest in his opinion, and whenever I criticise any matter which is brought forward, I am merely expressing my opinion as to the best course I think should be pursued. It is a favourite thing to taunt the Labour Government as having had a "Mark-time" policy. This evening it is impossible for me to obtain figures in connection with that Government, but I do know they expended a large amount of money in public works during the time they were in office. I know also they never dipped into loan funds for administration.

*Mr. Gordon:* Not for the rabbit-proof fence?

*Mr. McDOWALL:* The rabbit-proof fence is not administration, and the fence, I think the hon. member will admit, is a necessary work, and a work which this Government is in favour of. So I scarcely understand the aptitude of the interjection.

*Mr. Bolton:* You do not understand the hon. member.

*Mr. Gordon:* He does not know what he is talking about.

*Mr. McDOWALL:* If the member for Canning understands what he is talking about when he gets up to speak as well as I do, then I will say he is a more fortunate member than his speeches in this House have led us to believe. The Labour Government have been called a "Mark-time" Government, and it is said they were in favour of borrowing. The Labour Government were in favour of borrowing for reproductive purposes, and for reproductive purposes only; and I venture to assert that even the member for Katanning, with his three millions of pounds that he considers it necessary to borrow, principally

for agricultural railways, would have no reason to complain of the Labour Government if we, on this side, changed places and went over to the other side of the House; he would have no reason to complain in the direction of want of progress, because we would be found as progressive as any Ministry could be, with the fundamental difference that we would raise our taxation on a scientific basis, and not by taxing the poor unfortunate land agents, £1,000 per annum, the billiard people, £800 per annum, the pawnbrokers, £130 per annum—I will agree to that though—tobaccoists, £3,750, and so on. Just imagine, we get from stamp duty £65,000, and we get from land taxation—what should be the most important tax of the State—only £42,000. Is that, I ask, scientific taxation in any sense of the word?

*Mr. Brown:* You cannot buy a revenue stamp outside the G.P.O.

*Mr. McDOWALL:* The G.P.O. is a Commonwealth department, and the revenue is a State matter. On top of all this the Government are going to charge stamp duty of one penny on every receipt over £1 and up to £2, and 2d. over that. Is that not a scandalous thing? Why, we might be able to cheat the Government by writing "duplicate," or something of the kind, across the receipt. It is scandalous, I say, that we should be worried by such things. This is the petty taxation that the Government are attempting to impose. What we maintain is indisputable, that taxation on land values and a graduated income tax should be the policy of the Government. I know perfectly well that we shall be told it is useless trying to alienate the land of the country if we are going to immediately put a tax on it, but all experience goes to prove that this kind of tax is the best that can be adopted. It prevents people keeping land in idleness, and it makes it productive in more senses than one. If we want to get rid of some land at the present time what have we to do? The Premier, this evening, introduced a Bill for the construction of a railway to go out into agricultural districts where there is practically no land near a railway line. In conclusion, allow me to state that these

are the reasons why I have criticised the administration and the taxation policy of the Government. I sincerely trust that before it leaves this House it will be considerably modified, and a more perfect land taxation introduced. I hope and trust that for the reputation of the State these pettifogging taxes, that are of no moment, will be relegated to the waste paper basket.

Progress reported.

#### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Permanent Reserves Rededication;  
2, York Reserve; received from the Legislative Council.

#### BILL—LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS.

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 27th November.

Mr. DRAPER (West Perth): The Attorney General in moving the second reading of this Bill informed the House that its object was to enable people in a small way of business to obtain financial assistance which under the present Act they had difficulty in doing. I venture to think that the object of this Bill is worthy of the support of every member of this House if only it would carry out what the Attorney General seems to think it would. But if one compares the present law of partnerships with the provision in this Bill: and if one regards the effect of similar Bills in another State I think we can only come to one conclusion, and that is that the Bill as it stands will not attain this object. The principal objection to this Bill is the fact that the partner with limited liability is unable in any way to interfere with the management of the concern into which he has put his money. For years partnership Acts have been in force in England and also in this State, by which practically the same object would apparently be achieved. And yet it has been found to have no effect whatever. Under the present partnership law in this State, any man can lend money to a partnership and receive as consideration for

his loan a share in the profits. That does not necessarily constitute him a partner. In addition to that he can also obtain security from the firm to whom he lends the money. In practice however it has been found that transactions of that kind are very few. Because whenever the firm gets into difficulties disappointed creditors have a tendency to come down on the gentleman who has advanced the money and to say that he is a partner. It is then always a question for a jury to say whether or not he is a partner; and some gentlemen think it much better and safer not to lend the money at all, than to be held to be a full partner. But the principle of this present Bill really does not take it much further than that; because it still will remain a question of fact for the jury as to whether a partner of limited liability has interfered with the management. And I venture to think that as a partner under this Bill can obtain no security, he will be in a more disadvantageous position than under the old law. It is true he has the right to inspect the books of the firm. Now in ordinary circumstances he will not want to inspect those books unless he is dissatisfied with the management of his partners. And if he be dissatisfied with the management of his partners it is quite probable that there will be a dispute between them, and they will not be very friendly disposed towards him. And if the firm gets into difficulties and the creditors press him it will be a question of fact as to whether he has interfered with the management and in all probability he will have his partners against him. If not probable, at least it is possible. I submit that in order to attain the object of the Bill the Attorney General brought forward, and which is worthy of our support, it will be necessary to amend the Bill in a manner which, possibly, the Attorney General will consider somewhat revolutionary. In furtherance of that object I frankly say that I will support an amendment to strike out of this Bill the clause which makes a limited partner liable as a partner if he interferes with the management. If you come to con-

sider the fight which took place in the old country when limited liability companies first came into force it will be seen that there is very little difference in principle under which a limited liability company was first authorised by law, and the principle which I submit should be adopted on the present occasion. Up to 1862 in England there was no such thing as a limited liability company. These companies were originated in order to obtain capital to a large amount from numerous people, too numerous to render a partnership manageable; and by means of that capital to carry out a larger undertaking than a single individual could carry out. That was the original reason for the formation of companies. But it very soon was found that this was inconvenient; because up till 1862 in a company formed under the ordinary Acts the shareholder's liability was unlimited, and up to that time it was urged that to allow a shareholder to have a limited liability was to infringe upon the general principle of trade—that if a man was to obtain profit out of a transaction it was fair and reasonable that he should run the risk of all loss. However, the Act was ultimately passed and I venture to think that by the passing of that Act trade in the old country was increased to a very large extent and people were encouraged to put capital into undertakings which otherwise they would have kept in their own pockets. And it is to prevent anything happening to this Bill which may render it a dead letter that I would urge that the clause making a limited partner liable if he interferes with the management should be struck out from the Bill. That principle should be deleted from it. I would point out that the general public would run no more risk in this case than it did in a company with a limited liability; because under the Companies Act they have to file with the Registrar of Companies, as they have to do here, a list of shareholders, and they have to show the amount of capital they are contributing, and in addition they have to show to the general public if a search be made the amount of calls to

which the shareholders are liable. That is a general indication to the public, and by searching in the records, if they are properly kept, the public can get sufficiently correct information as to the financial stability of the company. Apply that principle to the limited partnerships, and insist that after the name of any firm some words should be inserted which will show that the firm is under the Act; and go further and insist that the return required under the Act should not only show the amount the limited partner has contributed to the firm, but also the amount he is still liable to contribute under the articles of partnership. If that is done, anybody trading with the firm will at once know the liability is limited, and the public will not suffer, and I venture to think that the public, by reason of the increased trade, and by reason of the increased facilities for the employment of capital, will ultimately benefit. I shall support the second reading, and shall certainly endeavour in the Committee stage to insert the amendment I have indicated.

On motion by *Mr. Walker*, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Friday, 4th December, 1908.*

	PAGE
Questions: Metropolitan Waterworks Employees' Holiday ...	650
Arbitration Award, tailoring trade ...	650
Immigrants' Free Passes ...	650
State Battery, Lennonville ...	650
Bail Money estreated ...	650
Liquor Law, Sunday trading ...	650
Privilege: Papers not complete ...	651
Papers presented ...	651
Bills: Revenue Licences, 1a. ...	651
Public Entertainments Tax, 1a. ...	651
Bunbury Harbour Board, 3a. ...	652
Vermis Boards, report ...	652
Bridgetown-Willemarup Railway, 2a., Cont. ...	652
Appropriation Messages ...	651

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