

at all times hit hard and ask for no quarter, and it will stop in this Chamber and not go outside.

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

House adjourned at 9.23 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th July, 1912.

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

QUESTION—FRUIT INDUSTRY.

Mr. TURVEY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to provide open markets in the metropolitan area for coping with next season's fruit supply? 2, Will ample cold storage accommodation be provided in connection with the open markets? 3, What action, if any, does the Government intend to take to exercise a greater control over the export of fruit during next season? 4, In view of the Agent General's favourable report upon our local timber for fruit cases, will the Minister equip a small plant in connection with the State sawmill, for the manufacture of fruit cases locally?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1 and 2, The Government intends to establish markets, and in connection with these, refrigerating works will be erected to replace the present works

which are included in the railway resumption. 3, This matter is receiving consideration. 4, The Minister concerned will, no doubt, keep in view this outlet for the use of timber.

MOTION — FREMANTLE COUNCIL ACCOUNTS.

On motion by Mr. CARPENTER, ordered: "That all papers in connection with the recent special audit of the accounts of the Fremantle Municipal Council be laid upon the Table."

PAPERS—PETITION OF JOHN MAHER.

On motion by Mr. DWYER ordered: "That all papers in connection with the application and petition of John Maher, contractor, for compensation in reference to the erection by him of public buildings in Cathedral-avenue, be laid upon the Table."

QUESTION—FORMAL MOTIONS.

Mr. MONGER: If I am not trespassing, may I ask whether the motions, notices of which I have just given, will be treated by the Government as formal, and placed in such a position on the Notice Paper that they will be dealt with speedily?

Mr. SPEAKER: Has the hon. member obtained the consent of the Ministers concerned to that course?

Mr. MONGER: I submitted these motions the other afternoon in the form of questions and I was asked to present them in the shape of motions. I now desire to know whether they will be treated by the Government as formal.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may have them treated as formal if he obtains the consent of the Ministers concerned.

Mr. MONGER: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow a discussion on the matter at this stage: I have given the hon. member my ruling in respect to the matter and I hope he will be satisfied.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier : Special audit of the accounts of the Fremantle municipality (ordered on motion by Mr. Carpenter).

BILL: SUPPLY, £1,003,361.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

THE NO-CONFIDENCE DEBATE—
PROPOSED SECOND AMENDMENT ABANDONED.

* Hon. FRANK WILSON: Before the business is proceeded with I want to say that, in view of the answer which the Premier gave to my questions with reference to the Trades Hall in Beaufort-street, that the promises he made would be subject to legislation in this House, I do not propose to proceed with the second amendment to the Address-in-reply, notice of which I have given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You dealt with it last night.

THE MACE.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Another matter I would like to refer to is that I notice the Mace is not on the Table. It is a matter of some concern to hon. members, at any rate on this side of the House, as to what has become of it. Perhaps you, Mr. Speaker, will kindly explain.

Mr. SPEAKER: The mace is locked up securely in the safe.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: By whose order?

Mr. SPEAKER: By the order of the Speaker.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Is it not proposed to bring it out of the safe?

Mr. SPEAKER: Only on occasions when the Standing Orders and Rules of the House demand its presence here.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Third day—Amendment of No-Confidence.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the previous day on the motion for the adoption of the

Address-in-reply, and on the amendment of no-confidence by Hon. Frank Wilson, "That the following words be added to the Address:—'But this House desires to inform Your Excellency that it is not in accord with the action of the Government in committing the country to heavy expenditure in connection with new industrial State enterprises without first having obtained the consent of Parliament.'"

Point of order.

The Premier (Hon. J. Scaddan): Before the debate is proceeded with, in view of the wording of the first Order of the Day, I desire that you should submit a ruling as to whether I must confine my remarks to the subject-matter of the amendment, or whether I am to have the opportunity of replying to all the remarks of the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: In reply to the Premier's question, I rule that any remarks the Premier or any other hon. member may make on the amendment must be strictly confined to the subject-matter of the amendment.

The Attorney General (Hon. T. Walker): Perhaps I fail to understand you correctly, Sir, as to the exact import of your ruling, and I shall be glad if it can be made more explicit. For instance, I understand the situation now to be that we are dealing with the Address-in-reply which embraces the whole of the Speech delivered by his Excellency, and to that Address-in-reply to the Speech there has been proposed an addendum which in effect embraces the whole of the matter in the Address-in-reply, but adds a further clause, implying therefore that all that has gone before is in the possession of the House as part and parcel of the matters approved of even by the amendment. But something further being added makes the debate still wider. I ask more particularly whether the preceding portion of the Address-in-reply be not included in the amendment itself, because it would be manifestly unfair, and, I venture most respectfully the opinion, against all precedents on an occasion like this, to limit the reply of the Premier to the Speech made by the leader of the Opposition. The leader of the Opposition, as you are

aware, made an extremely long and, I may say, from his point of view, forcible speech in attack, and it would be manifestly unfair if, in speaking on that amendment, all the matters he referred to in that speech, cannot be replied to—if we are to be precluded from debating material points submitted by him in support of the amendment with which he concluded. I think we ought to be definite. And I want to make one other point which, I think, would vary the ordinary rules of procedure, for, whilst admitting that technically it is correct that an amendment having been moved the amendment becomes the question under discussion, yet that amendment being of the character of a motion of want of confidence in the Government and accepted as such, it is the usual procedure and the invariable custom for the Chair and the House to allow a greater degree of latitude in those circumstances than in any other. If this were an ordinary transaction of the House in pursuance of its ordinary business, it would then be technically correct to confine hon. members to the amendment which has been moved, until that amendment has been disposed of. But this is more than ordinary business; it is a no-confidence debate from the moment of the moving of that amendment, and it has been so accepted by the Premier and by the House itself, and an adjournment made to emphasise that fact. The authorities lay down as a rule for guidance that in matters of no-confidence when the Government are challenged, the strict limits of debate are not proceeded with, and all questions affecting the life of a Government, their policy, their deeds, and their proposals, are then the controversy of the House. I should be sorry if we made a departure at this present juncture which would limit debate in future on such important occasions. It would be manifestly a disappointment to the whole country if, on an important occasion like this, we were to restrict the leader of the Government to the mere verbiage of the form in which the hon. member concluded his speech—that is, the mere technical wording of the amendment. I do not think that the leader of the Opposition himself would be satis-

fied with such a restriction; at all events, it would be a surprise to the country and—more than a surprise—a disappointment. Certain charges have gone forth which we must all feel the necessity of answering. Those charges have been widely published, and if we were now to say that the Premier shall not answer them but shall be restricted by the technicalities of debate, and shall only direct his attention to the few points, which may or may not be major or minor points—I say it would be a disappointment throughout the length and breadth of the State if we were to so restrict the Premier on an occasion like this. I ask you, Sir, if in your ruling, which I scarcely think I understand, you have taken into consideration the fact that the leader of the Opposition made a long speech in attack, with the expectation that what he said would be replied to, or the absence of a reply be taken by himself and the country as evidence that the charges could not be met; if, furthermore, you have taken into consideration the fact that this was a no-confidence motion which by *May* and every authority qualified to speak on the subject is always considered one on which the usual restrictions and technicalities of debate are abrogated, and the whole sphere and scope of Government and Government officers and offices are open for discussion.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I have not the slightest doubt that you, Sir, are perfectly right in the ruling that you have given. The debate on an amendment, no matter what the amendment may be, must be confined within the four corners of that amendment, and the amendment having been disposed of the original motion has then to be dealt with. So that the Premier does not lose his right to reply to any strictures which I indulged in when addressing myself to the original motion yesterday afternoon.

The Attorney General: Yes, he does.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The Attorney General: He cannot speak twice in the same debate.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Premier can afterwards speak on the original motion.

The Attorney General: No, he cannot.

Hon. Frank Wilson: At any rate that is my understanding. My understanding is that I, personally, cannot speak on the original motion again, as I have already addressed myself to it, nor can I reply to any speech in regard to the amendment. I am done, so far as I personally am concerned, by the rules of the House, but the Premier, I understand, can speak on the amendment and, in common with other members of the House, can afterwards address himself to the original question.

Mr. Swan: Sweet innocence.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is the position so far as I understand it. I may be wrong. There is no intention on my part to restrict the Premier's reply. Personally I have not the slightest objection if the rules of the House will permit, to allowing a general discussion, but if the rules of the House will not permit of that and we cannot get over it in any other way—I do not know whether we have the power to suspend the Standing Orders in order to enable the Premier to indulge in a full reply.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): We can wipe out the amendment.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I have not the slightest doubt that hon. members can wipe out the amendment and will wipe it out. If Mr. Speaker can see any way by which we can grant permission to have this debate on the whole of the Address-in-reply, I shall be very pleased.

The Attorney General: I have never known it otherwise in any Parliament I have been in.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The hon. member may have a wider experience than I have had, but I believe that Mr. Speaker is right in the ruling he has given. At the same time, I want to assure the Attorney General that I have no desire to restrict the Premier in the slightest degree in his reply. If we can have a general debate on the whole question I personally, shall be pleased, and in such circumstances I shall have the right of reply before a vote is taken on the motion.

Mr. Taylor: I am indeed surprised at the ruling which you, Mr. Speaker, have just given, in view of it being a no-confidence motion that is under discussion. As has been pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, your ruling would apply to an ordinary motion, and an ordinary amendment upon that motion. A discussion on the amendment moved on an ordinary motion would be confined within the four corners of that amendment, but when an amendment to the Address-in-reply is accepted by the Government and by the House as a no-confidence motion, then the whole ramifications of Government from one end to the other, wherever they are administering any department in the State, are open for discussion in this Chamber. Whether our Standing Orders allow that to be done or not, it has been the custom in all Parliaments of the Commonwealth since we have had responsible Government in Australia. The practice is the same in the Commonwealth Parliament and it is supported by common sense. It is supported by all Parliaments that when a no-confidence debate is on, members are not restricted in any way. Why, no-confidence motions have been moved in Parliaments with no other object than to allow the Opposition members to deal trenchantly with the administration of the Government in power, and to focus the eyes of the people on the fact that they were not being governed as they should be governed. What did the leader of the Opposition do yesterday? Did he not attack every department which it was possible to attack while he was on his feet.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, not at all.

Mr. Taylor: The hon. member did more than that. He did more than any mover of a no-confidence motion has done since I have been in this Chamber, covering a period of eleven years. He attacked the honour and integrity of three Cabinet Ministers in using their power as Cabinet Ministers to further their own interests.

The Minister for Lands: Knowing at the same time it was untrue.

Mr. Taylor: And because those charges are not within the four corners of the amendment, are those hon. members to sit in silence and allow it to go broadcast through this country and the English-speaking world and not be allowed to resent it? I say the ruling, in my opinion, is absolutely without foundation, and without the support of common sense.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must withdraw and apologise to me also.

Mr. Taylor: I did not intend to reflect; I withdraw and apologise to the House.

Mr. Speaker: And to me also.

Mr. Taylor: I apologise, sir.

Mr. Speaker: To me?

Mr. Taylor: To you, and to the House.

Hon. Frank Wilson: For the reflection on the Speaker.

Mr. Taylor: I did not intend any reflection on the Speaker, and as soon as the Speaker took exception to what I said I told him so and apologised. The ruling has nothing to support it, and for the leader of the Opposition and every other member to suggest to you how to get out of it to me is appalling. There is one way to get out of it, and that is, if any member thinks there is a possible chance of the House not agreeing with the ruling, to move to disagree with it. That is the one way to allow freedom of debate, and if this side of the House desires freedom of speech, that is the course that is open to members. It is no use us being hypocrites to ourselves, and saying that we have no course open to us; that we are at the mercy of the Speaker. We are at the mercy of the House. There are fifty members in this House, and members can say whether the Premier should be heard in defence of the charges, or not. That is the position, and I again say that I am surprised Mr. Speaker has given a ruling of that character.

Mr. Speaker: I think the discussion had better cease. If exception is taken to my ruling there is a course open to hon. members. I want to say again, so far as my ruling is concerned, it is a ruling, if I want to follow the proper forms of the House, which must be adhered to. If I

were to allow full discussion, or any matter outside the amendment, then the discussion would not be in order, because the original motion would be under discussion, and not the amendment. The forms of the House demand that any discussion on an amendment must be strictly confined to that amendment.

Mr. George: May I ask you this question? Assuming your ruling is upheld, and it will be if you insist on it, and members address themselves absolutely to the amendment, and the amendment is disposed of, can members then speak to the Address-in-reply? I regret extremely that it is necessary for you to give the ruling you have done, because in the interests of fair discussion, from my point of view, the Premier should have an opportunity at once of replying to the speech of the leader of the Opposition. I do not care if it is exactly in form or not, but I think that will appeal to the instincts of all who desire to be fair.

The Attorney General: If the Premier is not allowed to traverse the arguments on the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, would he be in order on the Address-in-reply in traversing those arguments which were made relative to the amendment?

Mr. Speaker: The leader of the Opposition in moving the amendment traversed much ground that is not included in the amendment, and though he was permitted to do so, and was in order in so doing, the Premier, and no other member, will be in order in dealing with any matter outside the amendment whilst the amendment is under discussion.

The Attorney General: That is asking us to reply to charges in bondage. I object to it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: After the amendment is disposed of, either carried or rejected—rejected, I presume—by the members opposite—

The Premier: You are far seeing.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will the Premier have the right to address himself to the House on the original substantive motion?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, the Premier will.

The Premier: I want to make it clear to the leader of the Opposition, and to members generally, that I do not propose to address myself to the amendment of the leader of the Opposition, but when opportunity presents itself to reply to the charges of the hon. member, I shall address myself to the House, and not before then.

Members: Question.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You will not be able to speak about the amendment then.

Debate resumed.

Mr. MONGER (York): I certainly shall not agree to allow this matter to go by default. I have not got a note in front of me; I do not want one. I have certain charges to level against the Minister for Works embraced in yesterday afternoon's remarks of the leader of the Opposition, and I am going to deal with those now without any preparation, and knowing that the Minister is present to hear every word I have to say. I am sorry at the attitude adopted by the Premier in trying practically to gag the House this afternoon.

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

Mr. MONGER: Mr. Speaker, where is your mace? Do not talk to me about order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must resume his seat; if the hon. member pursues that line of conduct, I shall name him.

Mr. MONGER: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will resume his seat.

Mr. MITCHELL (Northam): I am anxious that we should discuss this question particularly in connection—

Mr. McDowall: I should like to know if the member for York cannot be heard. You have ordered the member for York to sit down, but may I suggest that if the hon. member apologises for the remark he has made, he should be allowed to continue his speech, if he keeps within the rules of the House. We do not wish to gag any member, but by allowing another member to speak we are gagging the hon. member for York.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Mitchell.

Mr. Monger: I ask on what grounds I am not allowed to continue.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will resume his seat. I want an apology from the hon. member first. The hon. member must resume his seat; I shall not allow him to discuss any matter before the House until he apologises.

Mr. Holman: I move—

That the member for York be heard.

Motion put and passed.

Mr. MONGER (York): If in my few remarks I did trespass upon the privileges that are accorded to your high and honourable position, I desire to tender a most humble apology, and I shall be the last to ever attempt to rise in my seat in the House and pay the slightest disrespect to the Chair. I may, in dealing with this question which has been thrust upon us at the eleventh hour, deal only with perhaps what may be termed by the Minister for Lands, and the Minister for Works, as a parochial question. I am going to deal, in the remarks I have to make this afternoon, with the question which I submitted yesterday to the Minister for Works, and ask him whether he is going to place on the walls of this Chamber—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order. He must confine himself to the amendment before the House.

Mr. MONGER: I shall, from this on, confine myself to the amendment. During the course of the remarks that fell from the leader of the Opposition, he certainly levelled grave and serious charges against the administration in regard to the proposed public works, and big propositions that the Government were submitting for the consideration of the country. In regard to these big public works—and no one has become better acquainted with them during the period he has been visiting those far known portions of the North than the Minister for Works, and when he tells us that he is going to revolutionise Western Australia, and that a plank of the policy of the Government, in order to reduce the cost of living and create a more happy feeling amongst the people, is to bring down measures like those that

have been recently foreshadowed by the Government, no self respecting individual in Western Australia has any regard for gentlemen who attempt to bring down those measures in the shape and manner and methods which the Government have recently adopted. The Premier has said this afternoon that he will not reply to any motion of censure or anything in that direction, but that he will wait to deal with the serious charges and allegations that were levelled against him by the leader of the Opposition. When those of us on this side of the House, a very small minority, listened to these charges, and when we heard prior to that the answers given to the various questions submitted, we could but come to the conclusion that there was something very much wanting in the replies that were given by the Ministers. There must have been some of those remarks that we heard hurled out in the past about secret papers missing from the sacred files of Cabinet.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. MONGER: I desire to show that the questions are the substantial matter on which this debate would be based. That information was refused by Ministers yesterday afternoon. I do not know how far I am trespassing upon ordinary grounds of prudence, but I think that on an occasion like this the questions submitted on the day after the opening of Parliament might have been reasonably and fairly replied to by Ministers of the Crown.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order.

Mr. MONGER: I have gained the object I desired in attempting to address the House by giving some other members on my side of the House an opportunity—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order. I shall ask the hon. member to resume his seat if he does not keep to the point.

Mr. MONGER: I told you, Mr. Speaker, that I did not desire to trespass; and having no desire, and not thinking that

the privilege would be given to me this afternoon of even going so far as you have permitted—

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order. He will resume his seat.

Mr. MITCHELL (Northam): There are some points in connection with the amendment that can be made quite clear to the public. I am bound to confess I am somewhat at a disadvantage, through the attitude of the Premier with regard to the questions put by the leader of the Opposition. It is unfortunate that the information has been denied to us. If the House is to do its duty as it should, the fullest information possible with regard to the acts of the Government should be given.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You used to do that!

Mr. Heitmann: What is lacking to make up the chain of evidence on the constitutional point?

Mr. Underwood: What is it you want to know?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MITCHELL: We should be given the information in order that the amendment may be discussed fully and with the knowledge we ought to have, knowledge the Government possess. If the House is to be denied what information the Government have upon a question that is here for our consideration it must be admitted members are at a disadvantage.

The Minister for Mines: You are not challenging the Government on the wisdom of their proposals, but on the constitutional aspect.

Mr. MITCHELL: The leader of the Opposition has said that the Government have flouted the Constitution with regard to the purchase of these steamers. It is perfectly true. The Treasurer has had at his command £250,000 of revenue, and we know that from this revenue he has been able to pay for these steamers; but this amount is placed under the control of the Treasurer in order that various works may be carried to completion, in order that the legitimate work of the Government may be carried on without interruption; it was not intended that it should be devoted to the speculative enter-

prises the Government have entered on, such as running steamers and sawmills. When we consider the financial strength of the country, those of us who have had any experience at all stand aghast at the proposals now before us. The country is not in a position to finance these undertakings. The country is calling out for works. The Minister for Works has just been North, and says that money is required there in order that jetties may be built—I presume for the very purpose of getting these cattle to the market. Quite apart from the motive actuating the Government in this matter, I am bound to confess that the question of finance is now the most important for our consideration. I have no intention of interfering in any way in any attempt the Government may make that will have a reasonable chance of success in the direction of reducing the price of foodstuffs, but this work can only be stigmatised as reckless expenditure of money. I am afraid our friends opposite do not count the cost. Loan moneys will be expended by the Government on the work of purchasing steamers and on State sawmills; and it astonishes me when I remember that I had before me at the last general election the Labour platform, which distinctly stated that loan moneys should not be used except for reproductive works; and the definition of “reproductive” was that a work must pay interest and sinking fund and return the principal invested during the life of the undertaking. Now, if the poor old “Darius” is to pay her way, and pay for herself during the rest of her life, she is a very much better boat than I thought. Seeing that she is 20 years old, there is small chance of her paying sinking fund and interest, let alone paying working costs. It is strange to find our friends opposite so ready to depart from the pledges they gave to the people. We were told in so many words that if the Government spent loan moneys they would be spent on permanent reproductive works. Can a boat 20 years old be called a permanent work?

Mr. Heitmann: There are boats in the inter-State trade that were working 20 years ago, and are still here.

Mr. MITCHELL: I propose to discuss this question a little later on. Just now I am questioning the wisdom of using loan moneys for this purpose. Apart from any charge that must be made against revenue, the Premier, and everyone on the opposite benches, knows that we must have millions of money in the very near future. The Trans-Australian Railway will take two millions, and we are pledged to build agricultural railways that should be built without a moment's delay, which will take another two millions. Then it is possible that our Savings Bank funds will have departed, and it is more than possible that for this purpose money will have to be borrowed. It is quite patent to anyone that our financial strength lies to a very great extent in our ability to borrow, particularly in this connection. If Mr. Fisher's State Bank does draw upon the four millions that the Treasurer has in the State Savings Bank, the State Treasurer will certainly have to go on the market to borrow the money to pay Mr. Fisher, because the four millions are largely invested in permanent works. Then the Agricultural Bank is sorely in need of money. The Minister for Lands knows full well that if the demands that have been made upon the bank are to be met for the next year or two it will take, not the £500,000 we are accustomed to give, but at least a million pounds. The trading ventures also will take up a lot of money. If we are to have satisfactory sawmills with satisfactory working capital, and if the boats are to be properly equipped, the capital needed for the purpose will certainly reach a big total. We have a grand total of eight million pounds of money that the Government will have to borrow in the very near future.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That is nothing. We will spend double that before we are finished.

Mr. MITCHELL: That is one good feature of the work of the present Government. They are quite willing to borrow money now they are in. They were not so willing to borrow money before they got in. The Premier said the other day he had borrowed and spent two

million pounds since this Government took office. I am afraid it has not been very wisely spent, because the people are very dissatisfied with the work done. However, the calls on the revenue to pay interest on this enormous sum will have to be met. Probably those in charge of the Treasury bench will tell us that this charge will be met by increased taxation. Certainly it will be needed in the case of the two million pounds to be spent on our section of the Trans-Australian Railway. I admit that this is a rough estimate.

The Minister for Mines: It is about a million and a half, I believe.

Mr. MITCHELL: A million and a half, plus rolling stock and equipment; it will be probably something like two million pounds; and as the railway will merely be laid down in substitution for the line now going to the goldfields, we cannot expect to increase the revenue very much. Of course there will be a slight increase, but it will be very slight indeed. During the past eleven months there has been an enormous expenditure of £3,647,000 with a revenue of £3,451,000 pounds, showing a deficit of £195,000 pounds. We would never have thought to undertake the works on the scale proposed by our friends sitting on the Ministerial bench with the revenue as it stood in our time. We were able to make our ledgers balance. When the present leader of the Opposition was Treasurer the revenue was £3,371,000, some £80,000 less than the present Treasurer got last year, and his expenditure was £3,316,000, showing a surplus for the year of £54,000. The worst feature shown by an examination of these figures is that the public have had to find all the money.

The Minister for Lands: Is the hon. member in order in his remarks? Are they germane to this debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is making his remarks for the purpose of comparisons. While he pursues that course he is in order.

Mr. MITCHELL: Although we were able to square the ledger we should never have ventured upon trading concerns of the magnitude proposed by the Premier, not, at least, without Parliamentary authority. I was saying that an examina-

tion of the figures points to the fact that whilst the expenditure has been enormous—some £330,000 more than last year—except that salaries have been increased, and rightly increased, to public servants, very little advantage has come to the State. In examining the figures we see that the amount is spread over the departments, and the expenditure has been more or less expenditure that might have been avoided. In times of financial stress greater economy might have been exercised, particularly in view of the fact that the Government have these enterprises, not merely in view, but under way and started. Can the Government expect the country to agree to additional taxation to meet the losses which they will have to face in connection with their proposals? I venture to say that we are already sufficiently taxed. It is quite true the Government have what they call a mandate from the people to remove exemptions, but if they do remove those exemptions, the amount they will collect thereby will be infinitesimal. Then, too, the Government should remember, and it is my duty to remind them of it, that the people already contribute to the Federal Treasury, the State Treasury and to the Municipal Treasury an enormous amount in taxation. The work of governing is, I admit, more than covered by the total collection of the Federal and State Treasuries, but this matter does not seem to concern the Government at all. Our burdens are fairly heavy now. Farmers are not quite so prosperous as they were, partly because the financial methods of the Government have to a very large extent interfered with private finances. If that were not so, if the country were as prosperous as we left it, then additional taxation might very readily be undertaken.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You know that any diminution of the prosperity is due to the bad season last year.

Mr. MITCHELL: I know that the bad season has somewhat interfered with the finances; still we find that railway revenue increased during the year, although this was partly due to the operations of new railways. But private finance has been interfered with by the work of the Federal

Government in connection with the note issue, and again by the proposal to establish factories. The Premier of Western Australia is not to blame for this, but he should keep in mind the fact that the limit to the people's ability to pay is now reached, and I doubt if they could undertake without considerable hardship the payment of further taxation. The Federal note issue took from our banks a great deal of money that was hitherto used for private enterprise. We know that already the threat of Mr. Fisher to open a Federal bank has also caused the private institutions to withdraw their support from the public. We know, too, that the regulation put forward by the Minister for Lands has had a disastrous effect upon the borrowing powers of farmers.

The Minister for Lands: Is the hon. member in order in dealing with these points on a debate of this character?

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will more strictly confine himself to the amendment. I know that on occasions, for the purpose of allowing comparisons to be made, certain latitude is necessary, but it is not necessary to traverse the whole ground of public policy.

Mr. MITCHELL: I merely wish to impress on Ministers the fact that someone will have to pay, and to make the point that the people are not so well able to pay as they were before, because of the actions of the Government. For instance, if the Federal Treasurer takes our Savings Bank, Ministers will find it difficult to raise the money to take up the loans they have made. I have no wish to discuss the regulation framed by the Minister for Lands; that is not my intention. I was wishing merely to point out that, one way or another, farmers have had to face difficulties because of this regulation, and because money is less easily obtainable than it was previously. It ought to be remembered by the Government that a producing country is always borrowing money; a producing country such as we have demands the most sympathetic attention possible at the hands of the Government.

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

Mr. MITCHELL: I was merely wishing to point out that to the extent of £30,000 or £40,000 the Government have assisted to put in the crop now growing.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with the amendment.

The Minister for Mines: Surely the trading concerns are in themselves serious enough, without talking about the land.

Mr. MITCHELL: I should be sorry if anything were allowed to come in the way of rendering the assistance so much needed by our people. The great point it is necessary for me to make if I am to deal intelligently with this proposal is that it is all a question of ways and means. If the Government had a flowing Treasury and a people able and willing to further contribute, it would be quite another matter; but the taxpayers have been called upon to provide a million of money for the purpose of cropping the land. In discussing the steamers it has to be remembered that the weekly requirements of this place total about 900 cattle and 6,000 sheep, while the boats now running carry over 900 cattle and 3,000 sheep, leaving the balance of sheep to be provided by our agricultural districts, which can be easily done. I want it to be remembered, too, that the system of sale at Fremantle is quite satisfactory. Stock shipped down to the port are now all auctioned. It has to be remembered, also, that all the stock required are now brought down. This will be made clear to hon. members when I tell them that the wholesale price of meat in Perth to-day is 3½d. per pound. I am quite ready to admit that in a small country rings are possible; I am willing to confess that I never had the slightest objection to taking a hand when I thought people were being made to pay an undue price for their commodities. If there is any suspicion whatever of a ring, the Government have a clear duty to perform by the people, namely, to see that the people get their goods at a fair price. But there are two ways in which this might be done. They might enter upon trading ventures or, alternatively, they might encourage competition. In a country where practically the whole trade is done by private enterprise the encourage-

ment of competition would assuredly be the more satisfactory way.

Mr. Green: How could they secure competition against trusts?

Mr. MITCHELL: To any but the hon. member it would not be a very serious problem. However, the Government have determined upon the course of trading enterprises. It is quite true the meat is dear to the consumer, but it is my duty as a member of the House to supply the House with some information I have in regard to this matter, in order that members of both sides may judge whether this venture should or should not be persisted in. If we ask ourselves where the trouble is, whether it is with the grower of the cattle, with the shipper or with the retail butcher, it is not very difficult to find the culprit. Beef is sold in Kimberley at $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound. No one, certainly not the present Government, wishes to see the price lower than that. If the beef is only worth $1\frac{1}{2}$ per pound at Derby the grower is getting little enough. Freight is 1d. per pound, and the charges $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound; so, altogether, when it reaches Fremantle the meat has cost the shipper 3d., of which the grower has taken $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. Losses have to be provided against and, of course, the wholesale butcher makes a profit on the killing of something like 20s. It is obvious to everyone that prices in the shop cannot be reduced very much if the butcher can hang first-class beef in his shop at $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound, and if the people in the South-Western part of the State have to compete with a lower price they will find it necessary to give up growing cattle altogether, because there are commissions, railway freights, and other deductions to come out of this $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. I am quite sure the members on the Treasury benches have no wish to reduce the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound at Wyndham. It will be seen from the figures I have quoted that my friends have just the 1d. per pound freight to work upon. If the cattle were carried free there would not be much to come off the price of meat.

Mr. Gardiner: The boats will serve the North-West coast trade.

Mr. MITCHELL: I believe the shipping is unsatisfactory to the people there,

but the member for Roebourne is capable of putting that before the House. I am referring to the avowed intention of the Government to cheapen the price of meat. It may be news to members opposite, but it is a fact, that all the cattle which could be sold have been brought to Kimberley. If there was a ring, they would have had a short supply from time to time, but there has been no ring. In 1910, 18,000 cattle were landed, in 1911, 26,000, the drought in the Gascoyne and Murchison districts having been responsible for the increase. Previous to 1910 we drew the difference between the 18,000 and the 26,000 from those districts, but, notwithstanding the shortage, the pastoralists of Kimberley were very glad indeed to send their cattle to Fremantle and get $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb. for them. I do not want to labour this question, but I want hon. members to see that when the Government talk of cheapening meat by the aid of steamers they are proposing something utterly impossible. Can the Government carry beef at less than 1d. per lb.? Will they tell us how, out of this 1d. a lb. they are going to do anything for the consumer with these ships? Why not look the position in the face? Why put the country to this enormous expense of buying steamers for this avowed purpose of cheapening meat? I hope the public will remember the figures I have quoted, because there is an impression abroad that meat is dear because there is a shipping ring.

Mr. Lander: It is quite true, too. I have been to Wyndham, and Derby also.

Mr. MITCHELL: Freight is about 1d. a lb., and beef is selling at $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb.

Mr. Gardiner: A man at Roebourne cannot ship at all.

Mr. MITCHELL: I am talking about the reasons for purchasing these steamers. If it is the desire of the Government to cheapen meat, they must look to the distribution of it; the difference between the price paid by the housewife and $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. would be the amount they could work on. They may be able to do something in this direction. I do not know what they can do, but, since their energies are centred on the question of

a cheap meat supply, they might at least make an attempt to give the country some information; but it is futile to start with steamers, because that would be starting at the wrong end. I want to be understood, that anything I can do to cheapen the food supplies for the people shall be done. I advocate in this House abattoirs and freezing works at Wyndham, Fremantle and Northam.

Mr. HEITMANN: Why did you not build them at Wyndham?

Mr. MITCHELL: Because I met with strong opposition, and it was only just before I left office that I got a vote through. There is no reason why that should not be proceeded with.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was in the 1903 election that you were advocating that.

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes. I had to advocate it long before I could convince members.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You had the vote for three years.

Mr. HEITMANN: Was not the money authorised for this?

Mr. MITCHELL: For the Fremantle abattoirs it was. It was necessary to work hard to get sufficient members to agree to the vote. Delays, however, were occasioned by members protesting, and opponents were led by the present Minister for Works. I advise the Government to put up freezing works and abattoirs at Fremantle at once. If the scheme is to provide for distribution they must have their abattoirs, and have them at once.

Mr. Swan: They must have their stock.

Mr. MITCHELL: The stock is here, and the boats are on the coast carrying the stock down. One cause of the increase in the cost of living is the high rate of wages. It is impossible to have high wages and cheap food. During the last year, wages have gone up, and consumers have had to bear the additional burden. Now I understand that three boats have been purchased. I know little about the "Mongolia." All of us know the "Una," and there is no need to say anything about her. We also know something about the "Darius." We are told the Government paid £17,000 for her. She was

under offer two years ago at £15,000, but I suppose when they heard that the Government wanted her they put up the price £2,000. The purchase of this boat is said to be a standing joke in Melbourne—and no wonder. She is an old-fashioned boat, more than twenty years old, and a great coal-eater, to compete with up-to-date fast boats. We have not been told anything about these boats; we do not know on whose advice they were purchased, whether they were surveyed, or whether they are sound; all we know is the "Darius" is an old boat, which steams slowly, and is not likely to be made profitable. It will be reasonable to allow a depreciation of 10 per cent. on this steamer. The Minister for Lands may smile; it may not seem serious to him, but it is to the people who have to find the money. In ten years the cost of this boat ought to be covered. Insurance will be a heavy item, and the working expenses will be enormous. I am told that it will cost £2,500 a month, or £30,000 a year to keep this boat in commission.

Mr. Gill: Have you seen Moxon?

Mr. MITCHELL: No, I have not. This information should have been supplied to us by the Government.

Mr. HEITMANN: Speak to the amendment; this has nothing to do with the question.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is material. If this boat does carry 600 cattle a month, she could earn only £1,500, so that there must be a loss in that connection.

Mr. Gardiner: What about general cargo?

Mr. MITCHELL: She may get some, but there is not much hope of the Government getting it, unless they carry it at a very low rate. I have pointed out the position in regard to the meat supply, and that the Government have no right to enter on this or any other enterprise, without the authority of this House.

The Minister for Lands: Now you are coming to the point.

Mr. Underwood: Mr. Speaker, do not the Standing Orders provide that members are not to carry on conversation while a member is speaking? There is conversation going on.

Mr. MITCHELL: These boats have been purchased to be used, and the only thing left to be discussed, apart from the constitutional aspect, is that of running the boats. It is true the Government may use them for other purposes than the cattle trade, but why do they not tell us?

Mr. Underwood: What do you want to know?

Mr. MITCHELL: All that the hon. member for Pilbara knows. We have been told that these boats have been bought to cheapen meat. I do not believe it for one moment; I believe they have been bought to carry out the socialistic programme of the Government. At any rate, some of the supporters of the Government indicate that that is the case.

The Minister for Mines: Cheap food and socialism are synonymous terms.

Mr. Underwood: Would you be satisfied if this was a new steamer?

Mr. MITCHELL: No. Before I left office, the Honorary Minister knows, I wrote on this question to the Under Secretary—

Please take steps first to secure one of the several abattoirs now existing at Fremantle as a public slaughtering place until our North Fremantle Works are erected. Please ascertain if a steamer can be secured to run for the next twelve months between Wyndham and Fremantle, to carry only cattle approved by the Department, so as to secure to the small men an opportunity, and at what subsidy for the twelve months' run. The boat might carry all Government material, and a great deal of work will be done in the North during the present year in connection with jetties, etc. However, if the abattoirs can be secured at once, the public sale yards, which are now used almost exclusively, will provide probably an opportunity for a reduction in the price of meat by setting up a number of abattoirs in the slaughtering trade.

Mr. Underwood: You were in accord with it then; why do you object to it now?

Mr. MITCHELL: This is a very different matter.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: What was the date of that minute?

Mr. MITCHELL: September of last year. This matter had received my attention for a great number of months. Hon. members know this question was mentioned in the House time after time.

Mr. Underwood: It was your expiring effort; that was because the election was coming on.

Mr. MITCHELL: No, it was not written because of that. The Government ought rather to have a hired steamer and made experiments with a hired boat, as they could have got it for less than the cost of running the "Darius." As it is they are saddled with these old boats, and with continuous expenditure to keep them running. I repeat that I am afraid the socialistic tendencies of the Government—

The Minister for Mines: Are you opposed to socialistic railways?

Mr. Thomas: Explain what socialistic means.

Mr. MITCHELL: I will leave that to the hon. member. We have heard of public meetings having been held to approve of the purchase of these steamers, and for the purpose of cheapening the price of meat. It is perfectly true that a number of unions have very warmly approved of this action of the Government, and if it has the desired effect, we shall all be found approving of it. I find on enquiry, however, that no cheapening of the meat can be expected.

Mr. Swan: Where did you enquire?

Mr. MITCHELL: Not only have the Government committed the country to enormous expenditure in connection with these old steamers, which have been bought by a Government that calls itself wise, but the country has been committed to an enormous expenditure in connection with State sawmills. We hear that the powellising process has been secured by the Government, and if karri can be marketed as anticipated, then a great work will have been accomplished. With regard to the action of the late Government in erecting sawmills, these were provided to supply its own requirements, but it is quite another thing for the Gov-

ernment to enter upon the business of exporting timber.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What would you have done with the surplus from the mills?

Mr. MITCHELL: We should have sold it of course.

Mr. O'Loughlen: To the public?

Mr. MITCHELL: Certainly. It is quite another matter to put up a lot of mills that are not intended to supply the State with the timber it requires, but merely for the ordinary purposes of trade. I warn my friend, the member for Bunbury, that the men can only be paid for what they earn.

Mr. Holman: It is a pity the other employers do not pay the men what they earn.

Mr. MITCHELL: I venture to say the earnings of those employed by the Government will be less.

Mr. Holman: The private employers do not pay their men what they earn, and that is why the companies show such big profits at the present time.

Mr. MITCHELL: The men will be paid by the Government just what they earn, and the Government will stop its trading if that trading shows a loss. You cannot go on with the work of timber cutting unless you market it, and unless you can do that you will have to face a big weekly cheque. The revenue of the State will not stand that. I admit that for a time the men on the Government mills will receive a little better pay than those who are working elsewhere, but it will only be for a short time.

Mr. Holman: We will make the others pay up as well.

Mr. MITCHELL: If that is the intention of the Government we should be told so. Is it the intention of the Government to squeeze something out of the other mills? If it is, the Government should say so. At any rate, I warn workers on the State enterprise that they will be paid only for what they earn and no more. We have heard that the Government have entered into a guarantee to supply the Federal authorities, but it is perfectly plain that the Federal Government have not undertaken to purchase powellised karri sleepers. I hope the

Federal Government will do so, but so far the State Government have not got a contract and therefore they are not justified in embarking on these schemes. Have they considered what amount of money will be necessary to keep these mills going and to establish agencies? The hon. member who represents these workers so ably will possibly be able to give us some information on this point. I do not profess to know much about the timber business, but I know that you can soon lose a great deal of money over it. Then there is the project to manufacture machinery here. There is some chance of succeeding in that.

Mr. Thomas: You think we will succeed in that do you?

Mr. MITCHELL: I think hon. members opposite will fail in everything, but I think they may succeed in regard to agricultural machinery, because at the present time it is subject to a high protective tariff. I have protested often against the duty of £12 10s. on harvesters, and if that were removed, these implements would be very much cheaper to the purchasers. I would have no objection if this money which was paid on harvesters went into the State Treasury, but it does not go there.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in discussing harvesters and high protection.

Mr. MITCHELL: Is this not one of the matters on which the Government propose to expend money without the consent of Parliament?

Mr. George: At the present time we do not know what they have expended because they will not tell us.

Mr. MITCHELL: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but I think this enterprise was one of those referred to in the amendment. At any rate, I do not wish to be misunderstood. I think that if any of these enterprises will succeed it will be this particular one of the manufacture of agricultural machinery, but I very much doubt if even that will have any chance. State brick works have been mentioned, and the Government have expended money in that direction. I believe that the State brick works of New South Wales have not been a success. I have

not the figures before me, but with our falling revenue and our depleted treasury this will be a particularly venturesome industry for the Government to undertake. We have been told also that the people will have cheap fish. A trawler was engaged testing our waters and all it did was to get some 1,100 stingray, and a few other fish. I do not know what the Minister did with the haul. No doubt he will tell the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I did not get any.

Mr. MITCHELL: At any rate the people in the metropolitan area are still waiting for cheap fish. Then, too, there is the question of the State milk supply, and by the way, I think I saw the Minister's milk cart running around Perth to-day. I remember, and the country remembers too, the discussion which hinged around the importation of a number of cows by the previous Government.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They cost the country a lot of money.

Mr. MITCHELL: They did not. I do not think they cost the country anything at all. In the direction of supplying milk in the metropolis, a very small start has been made. A few cows have been brought up from Brunswick and they came up under the Government stroke. They were not milked when they should have been, and the result was that when the milk was disposed of it made the people ill.

Mr. Swan: They were the cows you bought.

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes, but I did not milk them. It is mismanagement that has resulted in these cows being practically ruined. The Premier went to Armadale and stated that the Government had saved the lives of thousands of people by establishing this milk supply, and the Attorney General went to Norseman and told the people there about the milk supply for Perth. I believe, however, that the people at Norseman were not much interested, because Norseman is so far away from the city.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They are very good cows.

Mr. MITCHELL: They may be good, but the Government are interfering with the supply by private people, and they are not increasing the supply of milk in the metropolitan area. What they have done is to simply transfer the cows from Brunswick to Perth. It is ridiculous to say that the number of cows that the Government can keep at Crawley or anywhere else in the metropolitan area, will make any difference to the supply in the metropolitan area. The cows might well have been left at Brunswick and the milk brought to Perth by means of an improved train service. I believe there is room for improvement in the milk supply of Perth, and I think the milk should be pasteurised. There should be a receiving station in Perth, and the milk should be distributed from that station at a temperature reduced to say 40 degrees. If this were done it would have the effect of providing Perth with a pure milk supply. At any rate, more should be done in that way than is being attempted by the Government at the present time. The Government have the opportunity of assisting the dairying industry in the outer districts. Milk was never dearer than it is at the present time, and this is because of the Government's method of interference. Everyone knows that the dairymen must keep their herds up, and they are not likely to buy cows, because the Government are going to interfere with the industry. We are entitled to have full information on this subject. I plead guilty to the charge of having bought a large number of cows.

Mr. Lander: Diseased ones.

Mr. MITCHELL: They were just as healthy as the hon. member is, and they were the best cows ever brought into this State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MITCHELL: Before tea I was dealing with the proposal of the Government to supply milk to the people of Perth, and I want to urge upon the Minister in charge of this work that he should undertake the work of encouraging milk production through-

out the settled districts by the establishment of a central milk depot in order that pure milk may be obtained. I am certain I am right when I say that a pure supply will never be obtained from the cows milked in the metropolitan area except at great cost, because the whole of the feed has to be purchased. The Minister for Lands has in view irrigation schemes in the South-West, and I expect that when he gets them going milk will be brought to the metropolitan area in large quantities, perhaps giving Perth a cheaper supply than it has ever enjoyed. It is strange that this question of the milk supply should have engaged the attention of the Premier so soon after his assumption of office. It is a very necessary thing and we have no quarrel with him in his endeavour to obtain for the people a pure and cheap milk supply. We only desire to warn him that there is danger in tinkering with the question.

The Premier : Do not worry, we are going right on with it.

Mr. MITCHELL : Whenever the Premier has referred to the question he has referred to it as being something done and not something to do. In all these matters we desire that the right thing shall be done. We are anxious to cheapen the food of the people, but we want it done on sound and proper lines.

The Premier : The amendment to the Address-in-reply is not a move in that direction.

Mr. MITCHELL : Absolutely. It is true that we object to the flouting of the Constitution.

The Premier : That is absolutely wrong.

Mr. MITCHELL : It is perfectly true. But all the same, we desire information and we desire to be helpful to the Premier. We do certainly object to money being used without Parliament having been consulted, and we object to measures of this nature being taken without Parliamentary approval and without advice which hon. members may be able to give the Government in order to do the best for the people.

The Premier : Not a penny has been expended by this Government without Parliamentary authorisation.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Why the Premier declared the other night that he had spent money, good British gold.

Mr. MITCHELL : That is some information gained at any rate. I have heard the Premier say that he had paid good British sovereigns. At any rate, it is for the Premier to show that we are wrong in our contention that the Constitution has been ignored and it is for us to protest against this flouting of the Constitution. The Premier when sitting in opposition protested time and again against the flouting of the Constitution.

Mr. Heitmann : You do the same thing. Give us something about the Constitution.

Mr. MITCHELL : I urge the Government even at this eleventh hour to reconsider their determination and to end these efforts in the direction of cheapening meat by the purchase of these steamers. I have pointed out that the wholesale price of beef in the metropolitan area is reasonable. I have quoted the prices, and I have pointed out that the best he can do if he carries stock free is to reduce the price of beef by 1d. per pound. He must look further than the purchase of this poor old "Darius."

Mr. Heitmann : Do you deny the existence of a meat ring and a shipping combine?

Mr. MITCHELL : I do not know about the shipping ring, and if the Government know, it is their duty to tell us. We have been denied information. Take, for instance, the answers to questions.

The Minister for Lands : You should have asked in the proper way.

Mr. MITCHELL : We are entitled to know the prices the Government have paid for these boats.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member is out of order. -

Mr. Munsie : Did not your officers tell you—

Mr. SPEAKER : Order! I gave a ruling on the amendment, and whilst I desire to allow a member to make every comparison and to bring for-

ward any matter which has a bearing on the amendment, I find that the debate is getting beyond the bounds of the amendment. Now the amendment states that the House "is not in accord with the action of the Government in committing the country to heavy expenditure in connection with new industrial State enterprises without first having obtained the consent of Parliament." The amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition is for the purpose of protesting against the action of the Government because that action has been taken without first having obtained the consent of Parliament. Now, I hope members will confine themselves to the amendment.

Mr. MITCHELL: I thought I was in order in asking what amount of money had been paid for these ships.

Mr. SPEAKER: The objection is that the Government have done certain things without first having obtained the consent of Parliament.

Mr. Taylor: What are the things?

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have bought a timber mill.

Mr. SPEAKER: The debate must be confined to the justification of the opposition to the Government's action or to a condemnation of the Government's action by showing that the Government have acted wrongly.

Mr. MITCHELL: Well, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Opposition has shown that the Government have acted wrongly from a constitutional aspect, and I have endeavoured to show that they have acted unwisely, that they have not got value for their money, and that we object to the State embarking on these vast enterprises which not only commit the country to a big outlay, but involve a considerable annual expenditure.

The Minister for Works: That applies to the milk supply.

Mr. MITCHELL: Yes.

The Minister for Works: Then you are opposed to the milk supply?

Mr. MITCHELL: No; I am opposed to tinkering with the subject.

The Minister for Works: You are opposed to supplying pure milk to the hospitals.

Mr. MITCHELL: Not at all, but no good can come of the enterprise which has been entered upon by the Government.

The Minister for Works: We have saved some lives, that is all.

Mr. MITCHELL: No. More deaths have occurred since the Government scheme has been in operation. I have entered my protest and I am sorry that the Premier has not seen fit to give us the information we are entitled to. We are at a disadvantage in discussing this question by reason of the fact that the information we should have is not before us.

The Premier: Surely you had some information before you submitted an amendment to the Address-in-Reply.

Mr. MITCHELL: We had all the information necessary for that step, but we cannot get the information from the Premier. Before sitting down I urge the Premier to at once supply the information which we sought to obtain.

The Premier: I will judge the time when I should give it.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is certainly wrong to have undertaken these enterprises without the consent of the people's representatives. It is quite true that members of the Opposition sit here in small numbers; nevertheless we have a duty to perform, the duty of keeping the public fully acquainted with all that has happened.

The Premier: It will affect you a little.

Mr. MITCHELL: That is all right.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Keep on threatening; who cares for your threats?

Mr. MITCHELL: Before I sit down I wish to again protest against the action of the Premier; it is unconstitutional and it will be proved to be unwise and a great expense to the State.

The Premier: Absolutely incorrect.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I regret very much that through the ruling which has been given this afternoon, to which, of course, we all bow, the Premier has not thought fit to rise in his place and deal with the amendment as he should have done. Of course, he is quite within his right.

The Premier: I am the best judge of that.

Mr. GEORGE: And he is the best judge of his own actions, but like anybody else placed on a pedestal he must be prepared to have the fierce light of criticism thrown on him both here and in another place. Of course, in dealing with this matter it is not a question of discussing the details of the enterprises so far as the Government have gone. The time for discussing these in detail will be later on, when we have information upon which we can form judgment. If that information should be such as will enable us to endorse or in some measure approve of the action which the Government have taken, it will be manifestly our duty to carry out that course, but for the present time the duty of the Opposition must be to express their views of the action of the Government in anticipating Parliamentary sanction of the expenditure of public money. It in no way adds strength to the arguments that may be put forward by the Premier or the attitude taken up by his party to say that illegal actions have been taken by previous Governments and perhaps have been condoned by Parliament; but at the present time the action of the Government has been such as to make an absolutely new departure in connection with State affairs. It matters not whether it is a question of a pure milk supply or the purchase of steamers with the object of bringing down the price of meat. So far as the milk supply is concerned, who on the Government side of the House or in the country would accuse members on this side of being desirous of preventing anything which would conduce to the health of the people of this State?

The Premier: Your boss did, anyhow.

Mr. GEORGE: Nothing of the kind.

The Premier: Sir John Forrest did.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member has taken the absolutely wrong view. I dare say he is perfectly sincere in it, but from our point of view he is wrong. No one on either side of the House would desire to interfere with measures which would tend to benefit the health and welfare of the people of the State; but we, as an Opposition, would be failing in our duty, as members opposite

would be failing in their duty if they were occupying this side of the House—as they will be shortly—

Mr. Holman: No fear.

Mr. GEORGE: Some of the present Ministerial supporters will soon be relegated to the positions they adorned a little time ago. But from a Liberal, or Labour, point of view any Opposition would be entirely failing in their duty if, when there was a departure from the constitutional methods which have brought this country to its present state, they did not call to it the attention not only of members of the House but also of the great public who are our masters. We contend the Government have never had a blank cheque given to them by the people of the State. Whatever the mandate may be the hon. member and his supporters claim they have, the public have never given the Government, nor would they give any Government, a blank cheque on which to draw just as they pleased. The dissent embodied in the amendment is that the Government are going beyond the general province of a Government, that of administering the affairs of the State, carrying on the public duties which appertain to a Government in regard to the finances and in seeing that the laws are properly carried out; they are going beyond these and are now endeavouring to establish a new departure by entering into a complex trading proposition. It is true that railways and water services are trading concerns, but they are trading concerns that have been established after they have been laid before Parliament and after Parliament has been asked to sanction them and after that sanction has been obtained.

Mr. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What do you call a cattle station?

The Premier: What do you call a butcher's shop and a grocer's shop.

Mr. GEORGE: I know nothing of a butcher's shop or a grocer's shop. I am trying to get above that, and I ask the Premier to contain himself until I have finished, and to treat this debate as of more importance than to be dealt with by a gibe or sneer. The Premier's

position is one of high dignity that he should fully appreciate; and while as a leader of the Opposition or as a private member we can take from him irresponsible utterances at their value, every utterance he makes in his chair as Premier of the State is a question of the dignity of the people of the State. What is wanted by the Opposition and, I believe, by the people of the State, is a thorough knowledge of where the policy of the Government is going to lead. We want to know absolutely plainly, with the importance given to utterances in this Chamber, a declaration of the goal to which the Government are moving, and of the means by which they propose to attain it. It is all very well to try to make out that pre-election speeches do this, and that the return of the hon. member with a big majority was a mandate from the people, but we know the value of utterances in the country. We want the Premier's utterances registered in *Hansard* and recorded in the daily Press, to let the people know exactly what they are to expect and what they are to deal with. What has the Premier got to fear? He has the courage of his opinions. No one would dare think for a single moment that he is afraid to give utterance to them. What has he to fear? He has 34 members behind him. He has courage with regard to personal affairs. He has a backing for his measures. He has the backing of the mightier party outside, and that of the uncrowned king and premier. In addition he has all the power and force that can be given by the display of brass bands and flags on the Sunday on the Esplanade. He has simply the fear that he has entered on a path—I do not dispute his good intentions—and he cannot see exactly where he is going. He is just beginning to discover that in connection with his big trading concerns something more is wanted in initiating them and in carrying them out than merely carrying out what he considers to be the mandate of the people. He has to learn that, in order to establish these concerns, something more is needed than discussions with others in this

Chamber. I wish the hon. member to give this information. I suppose it may be called tactics to refuse it. If we failed to ask him for it we would be failing in our duty.

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

Mr. GEORGE: It is admitted that they have entered into the steamship industry, the brickworks industry and the timber industry, and that they have spent money in connection with these.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Your party entered into it; we only enlarged it.

Mr. GEORGE: Our party got timber for the railways.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): We are merely doing the same thing.

Mr. GEORGE: The Attorney General knows what the constitutional points are, and if I could manage to get him on his legs when I finish, even though he makes fun of me, I would not care, so long as we could know where we are. We have the right to demand that a clear utterance in regard to the matters dealt with in the amendment should be made by those who are responsible for the actions we are criticising. They should at any rate have the courage of their opinions and the courage to stand up for what they have done. I presume I shall be quite in order in speaking in regard to the timber mills. The Government are evidently entering into this trading concern to supply powellised karri timber for the construction of the Trans-Australian railway.

The Premier: For public railways, publicly-owned railways.

Mr. GEORGE: If that is the only means by which the timber industry of Western Australia can be continued and exploited—exploited I mean for the general good of the people—there is some reason for Government action; but why did they take action before Parliament met? Why was not action taken after the meeting of Parliament when we could have had full information before us, and had the case put forward by hon. gentlemen so that we might have seen whether it was such as commended

itself to our judgment and to the judgment of those who may claim some little experience in connection with the matter? Surely the endorsement of the whole House, which would be easy to get, would be better than taking the *ipse dixit* of someone as to the interpretation of a popular cry? The Government timber mills are to deal with karri. For its own particular purpose karri has an established value; but for some purposes its value is nothing whatever. It has been proved beyond doubt that so far as karri is concerned for sleepers in connection with our railways it is not worth the trouble of putting in.

The Premier: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. GEORGE: Not only does the hon. member forget his courtesy, but he does not know what he is talking about. What about the sleepers put into the Great Southern Railway which had to be dug out with a shovel?

The Premier: They were not powellised.

Mr. GEORGE: Exactly. If the hon. member would wait and try to have a little patience, I would show him all about powellising. Has the Premier any data to put before the House in regard to powellising?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the question. The issue is that the Government have expended certain moneys without obtaining the authority of Parliament.

Mr. GEORGE: These gentlemen have acknowledged spending money in connection with it. I hope it is not out of order to discuss it and warn the Government as to what experience has shown.

Mr. SPEAKER: The objection is taken by the amendment that the Government have spent certain moneys. The objection is not taken as to how they have spent it. The objection is taken because they have spent certain moneys without first obtaining the consent of Parliament.

Mr. GEORGE: They have committed the country to a huge expenditure. Cannot I discuss that huge expenditure?

Mr. SPEAKER: No. The amendment says, "without first obtaining the

consent of Parliament." There is no objection to expenditure in that.

Hon. Frank Wilson (on a point of order): The amendment says that the House "is not in accord with the action of the Government in committing the country to heavy expenditure in connection with new industrial State enterprises." I maintain the hon. member can refer to the new industrial State enterprises to which the Premier attempts to commit the country.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have no objection to any hon. member referring to any enterprise taken objection to, but I have taken objection to any member discussing in detail any matters in connection with these enterprises. The amendment is very clear. Objection is taken to expenditure without first obtaining the consent of Parliament. The objection is that the Government did not obtain the consent of Parliament.

Mr. GEORGE: It is impossible to base an argument without giving reasons. I am referring to the powellising question which is an entirely new matter. I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, whatever it may be; but pardon me if I suggest that possibly a little latitude may be allowed in that respect.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall allow any member to refer to the enterprises to the greatest possible extent, but I cannot allow any hon. member, if I enforce my ruling, which I gave this afternoon with respect to the amendment, to depart from the question at issue; that is, that objection has been taken that the country has been committed to expenditure without the Government having first obtained the consent of Parliament.

Mr. GEORGE: When the Address-in-reply debate is resumed, will it be competent for a member to deal with these matters?

Mr. SPEAKER: Undoubtedly.

Mr. GEORGE: My remarks have become somewhat reduced.

The Premier: It gives an idea of the narrow issue the leader of the Opposition tried to get me into.

Mr. GEORGE : This is a serious assembly. It is not a pot-house debating society.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must withdraw that.

Mr. GEORGE : Certainly I withdraw it.

Mr. MacDowall : (on a point of order) ! The member for Murray-Wellington should withdraw that remark in a respectful manner. "Oh certainly," with a nod of the head, is not respectful.

Mr. SPEAKER : I am sure the hon. member will.

Mr. GEORGE : To please the member for Coolgardie, I wish respectfully to withdraw the expression that this is not a pot-house debating society. I apologise for having made use of that expression which came unthinkingly. The Government have entered upon a career of business trading, and the Opposition desire to know from them how far their programme is intended to go, what businesses they intend to deal with and what is going to be the end of the affair. If the Government are going into direct socialism, we shall know what we have to expect, but we have a right to raise a protest against the departure from the constitutional procedure of the State as represented in the embarking on a new method of State administration without the sanction of Parliament. If the Attorney General were sitting on this side of the House, he would be able to supply arguments to sustain the attitude I am taking. As I stated a little time ago, the pre-election speeches of the Premier and his colleagues cannot be taken to over-ride the rules laid down for the Government of this State from the earliest time. So long as the Premier is within the Constitution he takes his responsibility ; but when he steps beyond that, how is he going to deal with the Auditor General ? Again, how is the Auditor General going to deal with him ? If the Auditor General does his duty firmly there may be a retirement of the Auditor General in favour of a new one. I am giving the Premier something to think over against his reply. If the Attorney General were

delivering a speech on this question in opposition to the Government, he would trace out of that wonderful store of knowledge of his all the rights the Commons of England had in past ages, and upon the traditions of which the Colonial Parliaments have been based. Until the Constitution thus devised has been altered—not at the bidding of a convention called by caucus, but by the whole people—the Government have no right to enter into enterprises of this sort, dealing with the money of the people, without first asking the sanction of the people's elected.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore) : The amendment before the House distinctly censures the Government for having committed the country to heavy expenditure in connection with the new industrial enterprises without having first obtained the consent of Parliament. I think all members will admit that it is the intention of our Constitution that the money of the people shall not be expended without the consent of this House. At the same time I will admit that there are occasions of very great urgency when it is necessary for the Government to expend money on behalf of the people in, perhaps, preventing some great catastrophe, or in advancing the interests of the country when they may be at stake. But here we have the Government entering upon what is distinctly stated in the amendment to be new industrial State enterprises, without having first obtained the consent of Parliament. What I think hon. members on this side of the House object to—and I am afraid there is a large number of people in the country who object to it also—is not that the Government have spent money without the consent of Parliament, but that they have entered upon new State enterprises concerning which they have not taken the country into their confidence, and we do not know to what extent the Government intend to go with them. That, I think, is the question which exercises the minds of hon. members on this side of the House, and I am quite sure it exercises the minds of a large number of people throughout the country. The Government have

entered upon a new State enterprise, that is to say, the carrying of stock from the North-West. That is distinctly a State enterprise, and what we want to know is, how far the Government intend to go in this direction. It is not one enterprise alone which they propose to take up, for they propose to enter into several enterprises. They propose to engage in the timber industry, and also in the brick-making industry, while they have already taken up dairying. I do not know whether the party supporting the Government are all with them in regard to these enterprises, but we all know that behind a great many questions which are now included in this amendment are further questions which may affect the whole social and economic fabric of the country. Is it the intention of the Government to go in for State socialism? If so, I think they should first come before the House, and inform us of what they intend to do, and how far they intend to go. A Government with the majority the present Government have behind them are in a position to carry any measures which they think fit to bring before the House; but at the same time the country has a right to know what the Government intend to do, and how far they intend to go. We know perfectly well what the trend of thought is in many quarters at the present day. We hear of State socialism and of syndicalism. Here we have two almost diametrically opposed associations. It might almost be said that two robbers are both going to rob the same place, and each try to get away with the swag. A number of people have invested capital in this country, and through their industry, their thrift, their energy and determination have acquired property. These people want to know what is the intention of the Government, and whether they intend to go further with these State enterprises than they have already done—whether, in fact, it is their intention to seek control over all production and distribution. Do the Government intend to take control over all production? Because the people of the country are not going to permit the Government

to secure this control. I hope it is not the intention of the Government to attempt anything of the sort in a new country such as this, where we require to encourage individual energy as far as we possibly can, where we require to encourage the introduction of capital to develop our industries, and where we require to encourage the individual himself to go on the land and open up the country. I say that in such a country as this it is only right that we should know how far the Government intend to go in this movement, and what is the goal they have in front of them. The country fear the Government may go too far, and may enter upon enterprises which, as I say, may upset the whole social fabric of the country, and shake its economic system to the very base.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot anticipate any proposals of the Government.

HON. H. B. LEFROY: I say that where the Government propose to enter into any new industrial State enterprise they should first come before the House, and let the country know of their intentions. There are many people who have embarked their capital in enterprises in this State, and I trust the hon. gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury benches have no intention of attempting to cripple these people in any way.

The Premier: We are going to prevent them crippling other people.

HON. H. B. LEFROY: We know there are those who endeavour to sweep away all individual action, energy and enterprise, and to form a sort of collective community where there shall be no wages, and where all shall share and share alike. It does not appear to me that a Government should enter upon new industrial State enterprises, such as these, without having obtained the consent of the country, and I think it would be well for the Government to inform the country what their intentions are, and let the people know distinctly how far they intend to go, and what the goal is. Then the country will be able to give them their answer. But we have this trading between here and

the North-West for the purpose of bringing down stock. There are many of us who are at a loss to understand how this trading concern is going to pay, and how, in the name of fortune, it is going to decrease the price of meat.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: It is very difficult, Mr. Speaker, in these days to keep to a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will help the hon. member.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Thank you. I shall be very much obliged for your assistance and I shall endeavour to conform to your wishes. Would any individual members of the Government be prepared for one moment to enter into enterprises such as these? I take it they would not. I think they would soon find they would be on the wrong side of the ledger, but if the Government are going to bring down cattle and sheep from the North-West to Fremantle, unless they intend to open butchers' shops themselves—and if they do, all I can say is God help them—the profit derived will go, not into the pockets of the people but to those who have grown the stock. We object to these industrial enterprises having been entered into by the Government, and we object because the enterprises in themselves are small. They are not enterprises of great moment or urgency, and we object to the Government having entered upon them and having spent public money without having obtained the consent of Parliament. I am not going so far as to object to the Government in a case of urgency going beyond their appropriation. I think they would be quite right to do so. The Government have a great responsibility and have to take certain responsibilities; if the Government cannot do that they are unfit to be in power.

The Premier: We have not done so.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: These enterprises are almost *infra dig* for a Government to enter into.

The Premier: It may be from your side of the House; pass on.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I am sure a large section of the people of this

country are not in accord with the action of the Government in having entered into these enterprises without having obtained the consent of Parliament, and we desire from this side of the House to lay before the country our disapproval of the action of the Government in this matter.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	28

Majority against .. 20

AYES.

Mr. George	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Allen
Mr. Monger	(Teller).
Mr. Meore	

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Swan
Mr. Green	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Holman	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. A. Willson
Mr. Lander	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lewis	(Teller).
Mr. McDonald	

Amendment thus negatived.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): May I take the opportunity of explaining to hon. members and to the country as well, in order that there may be no misunderstanding, why I declined to address myself to the amendment, and also to draw the attention of hon. members and the country to the tactics of our friends now in Opposition. I received a letter from the leader of the Opposition dated June 28th, which reads as follows:—

Dear Mr. Scaddan—I wish to intimate to you that we have decided to move amendments to the Address in reply as per copy enclosed herewith. The first amendment will be moved by me at the conclusion of my speech on Tuesday afternoon next; when disposed of, it will be followed by the

second to be moved by Mr. Nanson. I have taken this course in order that the debate may be confined as nearly as possible to the subject matter of the amendments, which I think will meet with the convenience of yourself and the other members of the House.

Now the hon. member protested early in the evening that he had no intention when submitting that amendment to baulk discussion, but if he had no such intention, why did he find it necessary to convey to me that he proposed to move that amendment, and in the same letter to practically inform me that he was going to confine my remarks, and the remarks of every member who chose to speak upon it to the subject matter of that amendment. Now I ask the House is it fair tactics to launch a no-confidence motion against the Government and to cover in a speech when that motion is submitted, the whole ground dealing with legislation and the Administrative acts of the Government and also personal attacks, principally piffle gathered at the street corners, and then to turn round and immediately prevent the other side from replying by moving an amendment in the manner he has done.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You are replying now.

The PREMIER : Yes, but the hon. gentlemen desired my reply to be split into two. He wanted me to speak to the country on the subject matter of the amendment and that only, and allow the Press of this country to say that they had reported my reply to the attack of the Opposition and allow the balance to go unanswered.

Hon. Frank Wilson : That is your imagination.

The PREMIER : It is conveyed in that letter, and while I occupy this position I will not allow the hon. gentleman, or anyone else to instruct me how to convey the truth to the public.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I will tell you.

The PREMIER : The hon. member will try, but will fail as miserably as on this occasion. That by way of introduction.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I have not failed at all.

The PREMIER : I remember not very long ago, when occupying exactly the same position that my friend occupies, in launching a no-confidence motion against him and his Government, he opened his remarks by saying that he did not want hon. members to go into the streets and listen to complaints of dissappointed men, whether those men were new arrivals or old identities, but that the least the hon. member could have done was to bring facts before the Chamber instead of basing his charges upon tittle tattle gained in the streets. Now I want to say that I never, in my capacity as leader of the Opposition, based charges on what I got from the man in the street, as my friend opposite has done. He has admitted that he had no solid facts, and that he had to base his remarks on what he heard from the man in the street, and from those who went to him to give him information because they said they had been badly treated.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I have it in black and white.

The PREMIER : Why does not the hon. member practice what he preaches ?

Hon. Frank Wilson : I have not listened to anyone in the street.

The PREMIER : Yet, throughout his speech, the hon. member rambled from A to Z, and back to A, because he stated we were not prepared to give him the information he sought. Was it reasonable to ask the Government to reply to a question dealing with the subject matter of the amendment which the hon. member intended to move, when that in itself was evidence that he must have had the information, otherwise it would not have been wise to proceed with that amendment. If he came to the conclusion that we had been guilty of unconstitutional action, he must have had some information ; if he had none, he was moving without first of all obtaining his facts. The hon. member was careful as well to point out that he did not promise to dwell on some of the clauses of the Governor's speech, and he also pointed out that the whole of the Speech was of an ambiguous nature, very lengthy, and with nothing

in it. Let me say that I have heard gentlemen who have read and listened to Governor's speeches before, and gentlemen who are not of the same political faith as myself, declare that no Governor's Speech has ever been presented to a Parliament of Western Australia, which, to use their own words, contained so much meat.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have been talking to the man on the street corner.

The PREMIER: One can appreciate the position of the Opposition when they discover that after only eight months the present Administration placed in the hands of the Governor a record of work which has never been equalled in Western Australia in a period of twelve months, let alone eight months. The reason why those sitting in Opposition at the present time are so anxious to prevent the business of the country being carried on is because they know we have accomplished done so much in eight months, and the people will find the necessity for retaining us here for many years.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No fear.

The PREMIER: The Opposition is are not nervous or anxious about the fact that we are supposed to have done something that was not constitutional but they are anxious to nip our efforts in the bud, because once they have been put into operation they will remain there for all time. Just exactly as they, and those before them—the same conservative and tory elements—opposed State ownership of the railway system, their desire is to try and prevent all those things being put into operation, because once in operation they know that the public will recognise their value, and say that they shall remain there. The Opposition are taking the earliest opportunity of trying to accomplish that, but just how much they will succeed has been shown by the division list. I was surprised, not altogether at the remarks of the hon. member when moving his amendment, but at the information he desired by way of questions, or, more particularly, the way in which he submitted those questions, and the subjects they dealt with. I think the hon. gentleman might

well look over the past history of this State, and of his own Liberal Governments, and see whether it is wise to meet Parliament on the first day with questions dealing with personalities. If some of the actions of the previous Governments were to have the light of day thrown on them, they would not be reflected creditably. I am going to deal with some of them. The leader of the Opposition asked why the Government plunged the country into expense for motor cars. The replies that I have given are sufficient evidence that the Government have not done this to the same extent as its predecessors, and, moreover, when cars were bought, the Government had good reasons for buying them. I am going to give the reasons now. We have a Tourist Department in this State. For a number of years a certain gentleman in Busselton by the name of Bignell, and mayor of the town, I believe—

Hon. Frank Wilson: What have you against him?

The PREMIER: I have nothing against him.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why mention his name?

The PREMIER: I am going to give reasons why the Government purchased certain motor cars. Is the hon. member not prepared to listen? At any rate, I am going to give this information to the House.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Sneer at Bignell.

The PREMIER: We have secured since October last three motor cars, for the purpose of the traffic from Busselton to the caves and the Margaret River, and the reason for doing so I am going to state. Mr. Bignell is the mayor of Busselton and is a good supporter of the leader of the Opposition. He had the contract for carrying passengers from Busselton to the Caves, and was paid for it £540 per annum.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Did he not earn it?

The PREMIER: I am not questioning whether he earned it or not. The conditions were somewhat as follows; it

was under the old Caves Board contract and it provided :—

that Bignell would convey all Couponists upon presentation of the coupons. He was not paid any lump sum, but his remuneration consisted of the fares paid (in the coupon charged) to the Caves Board who credited Mr. Bignell accordingly. It was simply a "no work, no pay" arrangement. Schedule of fares is on the attached agreement (which simply contained the rate as operating formerly). After a period of 8 weeks at a special rate of £20 per week—as mentioned in the foregoing—the Department arranged—prior to my advent—a contract with Mr. Bignell to continue conveyance of couponists on the same time table as formerly for a straight out remuneration (payable by the department) of £45 per month equal to £540 per annum. In addition Mr. Bignell had the right of conveying any other passengers he could secure, at the rates shown in the attached agreement, payment being made by such passengers to him direct, *i.e.*, extra profit to Bignell. This agreement operated from 13th December, 1910, to 12th February, 1911. Bignell did not tender for the service advertised by the department to operate from 13th December, 1911, but submitted an amended tender for different cars for the sum of £1,200 per annum alternatively to continue the service on the old lines with certain modifications to suit himself. This was not accepted and it was decided by the Hon. Colonial Secretary to conduct the service departmentally and three motor cars were purchased, two "Itala" cars at £495 each and one "Standard" at £725. The departmental service commenced on 13th December, 1911.

Mr. Bignell wrote as follows :—

I will provide three cars, one 8-seater exclusive of driver, two 4-seaters exclusive of drivers, and will maintain a daily service between Busselton and Yallingup as required throughout the year. Tri-weekly service from November 1st to April 30th.

Bi-weekly service from May 1st to October 30th between Yallingup and Margaret River as required. For this service I will require a guarantee of £1,200 per annum, and owing to the heavy outlay will expect a three years' contract, in case of the extension of the railway from Busselton to Margaret River *via* Yallingup, cancellation of this contract may take place, providing there is provision made in the agreement for compensation to the satisfaction of both parties. Failing this meeting with your approval, I am prepared to renew the present contract for one to three years with one 8-seater car and horses on the same terms, £540 per annum, but with certain minor points, on which we at present differ, cleared up. As this arrangement is for a fixed sum and I have the right to private traffic, the local agency of your department would have to be closed as it is at present as far as the sale of coupons is concerned.

On receipt of that the Colonial Secretary went into the question and determined, and rightly too, to secure the necessary cars to enable the Department to attend to the traffic and the Department are doing it now, and saving the country a considerable amount of money. That is the reason why those cars were purchased. There were not ten or twelve cars, but only half a dozen. I would like to leave the subject of the cars now because after all they are not of much moment on an occasion such as this, but I wanted to make a statement to show the hon. member that it would be better for him to first find out the facts from Ministers or the departments before trying to hold the Government up to ridicule, and in the hope of leading the public to believe that we purchased these cars to permit the Ministers to trip around the country. Now the public will know that the purchases were made in order to relieve the Government of a huge expenditure. The hon. member was good enough in his remarks to point out that the leader writer of the *West Australian*, when he attempted to damage me as Treasurer for not having made

an announcement with regard to the finances of the State at the close of the year, was hardly correct. That newspaper might easily have discovered, if it had only cared to ask the question, that this matter is regulated by law, which provides that the year shall not close until ten days have elapsed after the 30th June, the object being to permit the payment of accounts properly chargeable to the year when closing and the collection of all the revenue that should be brought to account. In following that course, I have complied with the law, and I have only followed the practice adopted by my predecessors. Therefore, a statement with regard to the finances cannot be made until the 11th July. The assertion was made by the leader of the Opposition that he had always held the doctrine that we should cut our garment according to the cloth, that is, if we provide a certain amount of expenditure, we should not exceed it, and that if we found the revenue was not what we expected, we should cut our expenditure down. It would be interesting to the House and to the country, to know how it happened that almost every year, when that gentleman was in charge of the Treasury, there was a deficit mounting up. If his doctrine is to cut the garment according to the cloth, how did he arrive at a deficit at the close of each year?

Mr. Gill: The scissors slipped.

The PREMIER: Apparently the hon. gentleman forgot that he was once Treasurer. I want to say that it is not part of the doctrine of the Government of which I am head to cut the garment according to the cloth when we are faced, as we were during the past year, with conditions that had not existed during any time when the present leader of the Opposition was Treasurer of the State. We could easily have done as he suggested. We could have decided that we could not give any consideration to the agriculturists who had been pushed out, in the eagerness of the then Minister for Lands to show a big record of land settlement, into districts in which the rainfall was not assured, and to which railway facilities had not been

even promised, let alone authorised by Parliament. We could, by refusing to go to their assistance, when they were in dire need of it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How did you go to their assistance?

The PREMIER: We went to their assistance in a way which the farmers themselves can tell the hon. member if he will go amongst them; or the member for Wagin, and the member for Toodyay, both Opposition members, can tell the hon. member what the Government have done to assist the farmers in their electorates, and if the member for Wagin will repeat what he said on a public platform when I was present, he will tell the House that the present Government did more for the agriculturists during the past year than had been done by any Government during the previous history of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What have you done that you have charged to revenue?

The PREMIER: I will come to that directly. I want to explain first of all that we have controlled the finances only for eight months of the year, and we did not even control them for that period, because when we took charge in October there was a considerable deficit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How much?

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman knows how much. And there were also commitments on hand which prevented the Government from doing anything other than anticipating a deficit at the close of the last financial year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: Let me explain that our friends opposite boasted during the last general election that they had been successful in squaring the finances and bringing forward a surplus. We discovered that they did bring forward a surplus, and we have been endeavouring to square the ledger ever since. In almost every department in which an excess has taken place the reason given is that there was a carry-over from the last year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What do you mean by that?

The PREMIER: Expenditure that should properly have been charged to 1910-11 was carried forward to the following year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is not so.

The PREMIER: I tell the hon. gentleman that it is so and the Auditor General's report shows it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Every penny expended was authorised.

The PREMIER: Then the Auditor General is making a mis-statement in his annual report.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are making a mis-statement.

The PREMIER: I am making a statement which the Auditor General has made in his last report. The hon. member is absolutely wrong and it shows that, although he was Treasurer, he did not know how the finances were controlled. Apparently there was no control of the finances at all under his regime.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is none now.

The PREMIER: There was a great deal of boasting by our friends opposite that there was proper control of the finances, but I have looked through a number of matters that required the control of a Colonial Treasurer, and apparently the hon. member gave no attention to them. He was too busy flitting about the world, to Japan, in the one instance, and to England in another, to attend to the condition of the finances. Let me tell the hon. member that when the financial year closed, in accordance with the Audit Act, every department was asked to inform the Auditor General of the amount of revenue and expenditure outstanding. They did so, and we find that the departments informed the Auditor General that the amount of expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund outstanding and not brought to account totalled in all departments, £25,140. The Auditor General kept a check during the first three months of the year up to September 21 to see how near the departments approached to being correct in their statements, and he found by the vouchers that there was no less a sum than £53,569 carried for-

ward to this year. Where now is the much vaunted surplus of £13,000?

Hon. Frank Wilson: That expenditure had not been incurred.

The PREMIER: It had been incurred. The Auditor General is most explicit on that point.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No; you had better read him again, and see your heads of departments.

The PREMIER: The Auditor General has been careful to point out each year that these returns are supplied by departments, but he doubted whether they included all accounts which might have been paid, and he says in his last report—

“(a.) All vouchers charged to contingency votes checked by the Audit Office between the 1st July, 1911, and 21st September, 1911, representing payments during 1911-12 on account of 1910-11, were listed. (b.) Salary vouchers checked which represented payments during 1911-12 on account of 1910-11 were also noted, except a few items in connection with the Public Works Department chargeable to Loan. (c.) Inquiries were made at the Public Works Department in regard to vouchers paid or ready for payment between 21st September, 1911, and 15th November, 1911;”

with the result that whilst the departments stated that the amount due was only £25,140, there was really a liability of £53,569, which the Auditor General says should have been charged to the year 1910-11. So much for the desire of the hon. member for sound financial control.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Does the Premier maintain that that was done by instructions from the then Premier?

The PREMIER: I have seen a minute by the Colonial Treasurer that “the daily card is not promising.”

Hon. Frank Wilson: By myself?

The PREMIER: Yes, it is signed “F.W.,” and it read somewhat as follows:—

I want you to ask all departments to bring all revenue possible to account during the present month and to keep down expenditure as much as possible.

I will read the statement.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Does the Premier maintain that I issued instructions that expenditure which had been incurred was not to be charged ?

The Minister for Lands : That was the interpretation they placed on it.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Nonsense.

The PREMIER : Well, irrespective of what the late Premier may have intended, the departments certainly accepted that as being his intention.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Nothing of the sort : you ask the Under Treasurer.

The PREMIER : I have had minutes and explanations as to why there were excesses on the votes.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Well, produce them.

The PREMIER : I am telling the hon. gentleman what is correct. The reason given by all departments for excess was that certain expenditure had been held over from the previous year, and one department went so far as to tell me that it would not have been necessary to have an excess vote this year if it had not been for the circular sent out by me saying that all expenditure for the financial year must be brought to account and charged to that year.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I deny absolutely that any instructions of mine have been given to departments to carry over any expenditure which had been incurred during the financial year ; on the contrary, I have always insisted that every penny expended during the financial year should be included in the bill. The hon. member knows that I was not in the State at that time.

The Minister for Lands : They were thought readers.

Hon. Frank Wilson : The Minister knows that he is making an incorrect statement.

The PREMIER : At any rate, a circular went out to the departments in the terms of that minute which the hon. gentleman opposite signed, instructing them to keep down all expenditure and bring all revenue to account. What would the departments imply from a circular of that nature ? As loyal officers of the State and of the Ministry of the day, they would imply that the hon.

gentleman was desirous of squaring the finances and showing a surplus. They considered themselves instructed not to charge expenditure and to get in all revenue, and they did it by carrying forward an amount of £53,569, which should have been charged to the previous year.

Hon. Frank Wilson : Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER : But the Auditor General said so, and I have just read the remarks in his report. I desired to put a stop to that sort of thing, and this is the statement which I sent out in April of this year—

With reference to the attached file, which has now been returned to me after passing through Executive Council, in accordance with my instructions, I wish to point out that, although I have approved of the excess in this instance, I have to complain on the same score as previously, namely, that my approval has been anticipated.

It had been the practice in the departments to anticipate the approval of the Colonial Treasurer and to incur expenditure before he had seen the file and given consideration to it. And that was the sound finance of the hon. gentleman opposite when he was Colonial Treasurer.

Hon. Frank Wilson : I objected to it on many occasions.

The PREMIER : But it was done, and I have had a tough row to hoe in trying to put a stop to that practice, but I have done it with the assistance of my colleagues. Now this is the statement I have issued—

I am not satisfied that my instructions (which, I think, were quite explicit) have been complied with. Please again ask the various under secretaries to make it clear to all responsible that I will not approve of any excess if I find that the money has been expended before application to incur such expenditure has first been submitted to me. Failing this being done, the vouchers must be held up.

Now, why should it be necessary for me in February of this year to send out such a minute to all departments if I had

not found that it had been the practice to anticipate the Treasurer's approval before making out the statement of excess? The leader of the Opposition knows that it was done regularly.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I know full well that I put a stop to it.

The PREMIER: Now I find that subsequent to that minute, namely, on the 12th March, a certain under secretary, whose name I do not wish to mention here, requested his Minister to anticipate my approval, and I wrote to the Under Treasurer in the statement already referred to—

I would like it to be distinctly understood that the terms of my minute are to be strictly observed, otherwise my approval is only a mere matter of form. I want departments to understand that the finances are to be controlled through the Treasury, and in future, as before stated, I shall expect departments to approach somewhat nearer to their requirements for the year when submitting their estimates for consideration and subsequent endorsement of Parliament. On another file I was surprised to see that a sub-department, when making application for an excess, stated that they had explained to the under secretary that the vote provided on the draft Estimates would be insufficient, and apparently the reply made to this was—"It does not matter" (or words to that effect), "you can get an excess."

And that is sound finance. I was also told by another officer of the same department that he was instructed to keep his vote down and excess it when necessary, in order, apparently, to mislead Parliament. That is what he had been told.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who told him?

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman knows who told him. I continued—

This method of doing things has only encouraged the various departments to make Parliament believe that they propose to make economies, or keep down expenses and then eventually, under the old system—which has now been vetoed—to make ends meet by transferring balances of other items, with the result

that little or no interest has really been taken in the expenditure of the funds provided.

Let me explain to hon. members what that means. In the Estimates we provide a lump sum for a department, but that lump sum may be divided into several items; it is the practice, in the event of one item being exceeded, to transfer an amount from some other item, the vote for which may not have been expended. This was being done in all departments, the items were being all lumped together and so the Treasurer had no means of knowing how the money was being expended.

Mr. George: What was the Auditor General doing?

The PREMIER: The Auditor General could do nothing, but I, as Treasurer, want to know what becomes of the money voted and the extent of the expenditure under the different headings. I refused to allow a number of transfers that had come in during the year prior to my advent. There had been three or four transfers before we assumed office and these have been cancelled. This will have its effect on the Excess Bill when we bring it down to Parliament, but it will be a straightforward statement of what has happened, and any financial statements brought down by the present Administration in future will, at any rate, be correct records of the transactions. This will also cause the departments, when once they have submitted to Parliament a request for funds, to keep within the amounts voted, or Parliament will have the opportunity of asking why it was necessary to exceed it. It has been a difficult matter to bring about this reform, but it has now been accomplished and I hope the day will never occur when it will be repeated. Then I went on to say in my statement—

The state of the finances compels me to write a minute of this nature and I must insist that departments shall study economy wherever possible. In no less than two cases I find that a request has been made to anticipate my approval, the department having over-run the constant before making application to incur the expenditure. I note that in

each instance the reason given on the attached files when putting forward the requisition for excess is that the positions which were provided on the Estimates as permanent have been filled by temporary officers. I would like to have more details. If these positions are to be permanent some effort must be made to fill them with permanent officers, if it is going to cost more to carry out the work with temporary officers. We cannot continue on these lines indefinitely. Kindly bring this file, together with C.S.O. 1149/12 under the notice of the Public Service Commissioner.

I then added the following footnote:—

I think your memorandum of 15th January, on pages 10 and 11 of Treasury file 6134/11 tied up therewith, might well be sent round again to all departments.

Since that date I have issued another circular to departments which, unfortunately, I left on my table prior to coming to the House, but I can get it if it is required. This asked the Under Treasurer to inform the departments that I wanted all expenditure properly charged up to the 30th June brought to account irrespective of the effect on our deficit, and also all revenue accounted for. The result was that I have had a number of excesses coming forward with the statement when the particulars have been provided that they could have been carried over as previously had not the circular come forward. Those are one or two reforms in the control of our finances and in the direction of sound finance that the leader of the Opposition did not adopt when he was in the Treasury.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If you ask the Under Treasurer you will find that I issued the same instructions.

The PREMIER: That is the difference between the hon. member and myself. He issued instructions and did not care if they were obeyed. I issue instructions and insist on it that they are obeyed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We shall see if they are.

The PREMIER: But I am not prepared to accept the hon. member's statement that he issued these instructions, because

I am assured by the Under Treasurer that he has been urging it year after year, and he said he hoped I would be able to introduce the system as it would have a great effect on the control of expenditure by the various departments. I am now considering whether it would not be desirable to bring the departmental accountants under the Treasury, so that we will have complete control over the finances, which we do not have now. I have tried to get control. I have done my level best, and I believe I have approached it nearer than past Treasurers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have a big deficit.

The PREMIER: While it is big, I am not ashamed of it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am. I am of the hon. member.

The PREMIER: Let me ask my friend what he would advise me to do in the circumstances—to refuse the system of deferred payments of rents to settlers who suffered by the bad season?

Hon. Frank Wilson: How much did that amount to?

The PREMIER: Would he ask me to refuse that in order to boast of the condition of our finances? Would he ask me to refuse to carry water to the settlers over the railways, or to refuse the system of deferred payments for water rather than to have a deficit? Would he refuse to assist the settlers with boring plants as we have done? It is all very well for the hon. member to speak of the condition of the finances. It would be better for him to say in what direction we could have acted to better them. Could we have refused to do what we did for the assistance of the people toiling on the land? I am not ashamed of the deficit; and when we get complete control of the finances, allowed to drift by my friend opposite, we shall very soon square the ledger and yet be able to say we have not interfered with the progress of the industries of the State. During the past year the Railway Department found it necessary to run 295,000 extra train miles. This is accounted for almost wholly by the haulage of water. The additional revenue derived was £34,000, but this amount could

have been earned by 95,000 additional miles, taking the previous year's figures as a basis. The balance of 200,000 miles can only be accounted for by the haulage of water, representing £50,000 that the railways have given away by the haulage of water. I could have saved that £50,000 had I chosen to adopt the hon. member's doctrine and cut my garment according to the cloth. The farmers would be well pleased to hear that he would have done that and would have refused to go to their assistance.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I issued instructions that the water was to be carried.

The PREMIER: It is sufficient for me to say that yesterday it was the hon. member's doctrine to cut his garment according to his cloth. It is interesting to the farmers to know that the hon. member would have done it by refusing to go to their assistance when assistance was so much needed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Premier is wilfully making another mis-statement. I issued instructions that the water had to be carried over the railways before the hon. member took charge of the Treasury.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not rising to a point of order.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Surely I am entitled to explain.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes; I will give you that courtesy.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am entitled to explain when the hon. member wilfully makes a mis-statement.

The Minister for Lands: The hon. member is entitled to do it at the end of his speech, but not otherwise. Is that not the Standing Order?

Mr. SPEAKER: Standing Order 136 says—

No member shall interrupt another member while speaking, unless (1) to request that his words be taken down; (2) to call attention to a point of order; or (3) to call attention to the want of a quorum.

There are occasions when courtesy may be extended to the leaders of the House, but it should not occur too often.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It has always been the custom of the House, and *May* has it

also, that a member can, with the indulgence of the House and of the member speaking, make an explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Our Standing Orders obtain. I have given the Standing Order, being requested to do so.

The PREMIER: Now let me proceed. I admit at once it is unpleasant to my friend.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, not unpleasant, but I want to save you making mis-statements, or stating things that are only half true.

The PREMIER: I am making no mis-statement. On many of our trains one-third of the load has been made up of water for the engines in districts where previously we did not haul water. This took place on some of the railways that had only recently been opened for traffic in districts where it was expected they would pay handsomely, even from the commencement; but unfortunately, we were not called upon to carry the produce of the district over the railway; on the other hand, we had to go to the expense of taking trains over them with one-third of the load water for the engines, the balance of the load being water for settlers, to be paid for on the deferred payment system. That is one of the reasons why we have built up a deficit this year, and I think I am justified in asking my friends opposite, together with some of the critics in our papers, how they would have adjusted the finances. Would they have refused to do what we have done? If they had not refused to do it they must have had a similar deficit.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Tell us what the cost is. We have had to haul water before in larger quantities in worse times than those.

The PREMIER: I desire to be perfectly candid with the hon. member and to the country. Part of the deficit is due to the increase given to public servants by the present Government.

Mr. George: They are not satisfied even now.

The PREMIER: I think they are more satisfied than ever previously in the history of the State. The increases we have given to railway men will amount

for last year to something like £72,000. I want to be fair to my friend opposite and say that he, first of all, set the example by giving, just prior to the general election, increases to one branch of the railway service—the highest paid branch—while refusing them to the balance. We, on the other hand, in accordance with the policy of the party since its inception, a policy which will remain, to give the first consideration to the man who is below a living wage, notwithstanding the effect it had on the finances faced the position and gave these men what was reasonable and fair and just. I could also point out that we have kept faith with the promise given by our friends opposite, also given just prior to the general election, that any increases that might be provided by the reclassification of the civil service would be made retrospective to the 1st July, 1911. We have kept faith with that promise, and it has cost us something like £13,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You knew that when you brought your Estimates down.

The PREMIER: I am fully aware of that, but the hon. gentleman knows that if I carried out the doctrine that he preached last night I could say that I could refuse to keep faith with his promises.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: Then I ask how could we square the ledger; how carry out his doctrine? The hon. member knows full well that the doctrine he preached last night was intended for those sitting on the Treasury benches at the moment. He did not follow it himself, and we propose to do what we have done this year—where it is in the interests of the whole State to come to the assistance of any section of it, we are going to do it wherever justifiable. I may also explain that the deficit is due as well to the fact that we have declined to sell any further town lots. That has had its effect upon our revenue—and we knew it at the time—but it will have this effect, that eventually posterity will reap an advantage which they would otherwise have lost.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How does that affect your Estimates?

The PREMIER: We did not sell town lots.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You knew that when you were making up your Estimates?

The PREMIER: And we did not make any Bullfinch-boom speeches in the Palace hotel before we put town lots up for sale—as the hon. member did, with the result that the Government have been called upon to defer the second instalments because the people now say that, through the boom speeches made by the late Premier and others, they were urged to pay a higher price than the true value of the land. We have not done anything of that kind for the purpose of showing our finances to be in an excellent condition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You knew you were not going to sell town lots when you made up your Estimates, and yet you are accounting for the deficit by it.

The PREMIER: I predicted a shortage of £104,000, and the other things we were called upon to do, which we could not anticipate at the time, account for the balance. We had to enter into a fresh agreement with the railway service and with the men in the loco. shops, and in each case it meant an increase. We could not perceive what that increase would be. The same thing applies to the deferred payments of rents and the payment for water supplies and the haulage of water over the railways that I have mentioned. That would more than account for the balance. My hon. friend opposite was talking about sound finance, and on the Notice Paper that very day was a list of questions, one of which reads as follows: "Is it proposed to keep the accounts on strict business lines, or under the system now in use in the Government departments?"

Hon. Frank Wilson: You did not answer that question.

The PREMIER: I am going to answer it now. I will tell my friend that it is our intention to keep these accounts on strict business lines, and that if the accounts in the various departments are

not kept on strict business lines we will take early opportunity of amending them. However they may be, they are as we found them. An admission that the accounts of this State have not been kept on business lines hardly comes well from the hon. member.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No country's finances are carried on along strict business lines.

The PREMIER: That is a reflection on those controlling the Treasury, and is not warranted. So long as we are in control of the trading concerns we will present a true balance sheet to the House and the country; in fact we have already prepared a draft for a trading Bill in order that these accounts may be properly kept, and so be maintained in a form easily understood by all people. Again, our friend said that under the administration of my colleague, the present Minister for Lands, there is stagnation; in fact he said that throughout the Lands Department stagnation stares them in the face. I went through the department recently and although I did not see many mirrors there I was struck with the idea that perhaps our friend opposite had gone into the department, gazed into a mirror and immediately came to the conclusion that stagnation was staring him in the face. In order to show that stagnation does not really exist in the Lands Department I desire to quote from a return showing the conditional purchase lands selected during the year ended 30th June, 1911, and also during the year ended 30th June, 1912. During the earlier period, when everything was supposed to be making such wonderful progress, the total so selected was 1,923,172 acres, whereas for last year it was 1,970,082 acres, or an increase approaching 50,000 acres over the total of the previous year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They were applications approved?

The PREMIER: Yes. And the number of holdings taken up during 1911 was 4,265, as against which during last year they amounted to 4,871. So it will be seen that the stagnation existing in the Lands Department at the present time has had the effect of settling more people

on the land than was the case in the previous year. Moreover, we could easily have increased that total if we had pursued the policy of our friend, now seated opposite, when Minister for Lands, namely, to settle people on the land as soon as it was surveyed, without any consideration as to the results likely to be obtained. My colleague, the present Minister for Lands, has persistently refused to allow certain subdivisions to be thrown open for selection, and he has done this, not indiscriminately, but on a set basis. He has insisted that certain particulars shall be furnished before the land is made available for selection. Under his system unless the Minister for Lands is satisfied that the sub-division is within an assured rainfall area, and within reasonable time will have a railway authorised by Parliament, and constructed, he discountenances any selection of the land in that area. If that policy had been pursued by our predecessors we would not have people persistently coming to the Government and asking for assistance on the score that railways promised years ago have not materialised, and that no water supplies have been provided. Our friend opposite gave no consideration whatever to water supplies. He used to go about the country, always boasting of the 600,000 acres he desired to have selected, with the result that we have since had these people clamouring for the provision of water supplies and railways, as promised by the previous Government. The conditions insisted upon by the present Minister for Lands are that there shall be reasonable provision for water supply, that the Agricultural Bank shall have approved of loans in the district, and—

Mr. Mitchell: Is the Agricultural Bank still making advances?

The PREMIER: When the record of the operations of the Agricultural Bank for last year is given to the House my hon. friend will find that it beats all his records of previous years. The present Minister for Lands also insists that there shall be railway facilities, either already provided, or approved by Parliament, and that the rainfall is sufficient to ensure a reasonable prospect of success. Those

are definite lines upon which the Minister for Lands has decided as a test whether sub-divisions shall be thrown open for selection, and in many cases he has refused to allow this to be done because satisfactory answers could not be given to his questions. That will eventually be of benefit to the State, and of benefit also to those who, in the fulness of time, will take up the land. I do not propose to deal any further with that subject. The Minister for Lands will himself have an opportunity of explaining to the House just what his department has been doing, and I think the House will then be satisfied that there is no stagnation in the department; that "stagnation" is merely a political cry for the purpose of teasing the ears of the public. Now I come to the question of loans. It will be remembered that during the election, and indeed since the election, our friends opposite have attempted to make the people believe that we are a non-borrowing party; that we would refuse to borrow money for any purpose whatever. But, as I asserted from the Opposition benches, this party is prepared to borrow money for works of a reproductive nature calculated to assist the progress of the industries of the State. We have kept faith with that statement. We have borrowed over two millions of money, and our loan funds are in a better condition to-day than when directed by our friend opposite, who continually presents to the public the idea that he was a great financier. Moreover, while he has criticised my action in raising a loan in London at $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., all the authorities that exist in his part of the globe, in London, and, indeed, on the Continent, generally are against him and with me on this question. Numerous Press cuttings have been sent out by the Agent General from newspapers not in sympathy with the Labour party, and these journals apparently are of the opinion that I have done better this year on the loan market than has anyone else. The *Financial Times* said, amongst other things—

The stock is, of course, a first-class investment, being, in fact, a full-fledged Trustee issue, and it looks

cheap compared with the other loans of the State. There is no other $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. Western Australian stock with which to compare it but the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cents. command a price of $95\frac{1}{2}$.

Again, another paper printed the following:—

Western Australia Government $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent Inscribed Stock.—We see nothing in the least attractive about the stock at the issue price of 99, and we advise our readers to have nothing to do with it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The other paper said it was a good thing for the investors.

The PREMIER: Yes, a sound investment, and that paper knows something about finance. Under these circumstances, I contend that I acted wisely. Let me say in regard to the cheap sneer our hon. friend indulged in the other night, that no other Premier controls the finances of the State while I remain in my present position on the Treasury benches, and that I am not concerned about criticisms from other such sources. When we decided to raise that loan in London we acted on the advice of those able to advise us well, and then only after considerable correspondence; in fact I could read correspondence to show that we did not rush on the market, but carefully considered the matter with our advisers in London. Let me read the following extract from a private letter received from London:—

The last great Canadian loan for seven millions, issued on account of the Canadian Northern Railway, but of which the Canadian Government guaranteed the principal and interest, has not proved very successful. The public only took up 10 per cent of the issue. It was a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent loan issued at £93, and the price this week is £92. I think it was decidedly unwise to bring down a loan of such magnitude as seven million pounds in one instalment, as it had a depressing effect on stock generally—the Canadian stock having gone down from 100 to 98, while all other stock has depreciated from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 per cent.

Again, in connection with the New Zealand loan, the following Press cable message was received from London:—

The *Times*, commenting on the prospectus of the New Zealand loan of £4,500,000 issued at £97, with a currency of two years, observes that although many view short-dated issues with disfavour, nevertheless it was probably New Zealand's best way out of a difficult position. Good judges, however, are of opinion that it would have been better finance to issue a long 4 per cent. for the chance of renewal two years hence.

Now, I think I have already quoted sufficient to show that on that occasion, from the opinion expressed by those who ought to be able to express an opinion, all things considered, we acted in the best interests of the State, and wisely. The Queensland Government are now of opinion that they will have to pay four per cent. on their future loans for some time, at any rate. Now, to pass on. My hon. friends opposite are very concerned as to what the present Government are doing with our Savings Bank, and in regard to retaining that institution for the State. Let me again say, as I have previously said, that I am not a bit concerned about retaining the Savings Bank as such for the State; I want the funds of the bank conserved to the State, and I believe I can better conserve those funds at the present time by entering into partnership with the Commonwealth. I am assured by the Federal authorities of 75 per cent. of all future deposits, and all of the money that is at present standing to the credit of the Savings Bank, and that is a better bargain than merely retaining a bank in opposition to another Savings Bank to be established in the interests of the people, and losing a good deal more than the 25 per cent. we are now surrendering. I am acting on the lines of trying to bring about justice to the State by a combination of control on the part of the Commonwealth and State, so far as Savings Bank functions are concerned. When the time is ripe to make an announcement as to how far matters have gone in that direction, I will do so, but not till then, because when we

are negotiating in matters of this kind it is not desirable to make a public statement too early. I was interested in hearing the leader of the Opposition say that he thought that with a little tutoring from himself I should be able to learn how to conduct the affairs of the country.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are not an apt pupil.

The PREMIER: Let me say at once that I will admit that his tutoring has, to some extent, helped me to properly conduct the affairs of the country; not by following his example, but rather by avoiding it wherever possible—by first of all finding out the way in which my friend opposite acted in a similar position and then taking directly contrary action. That I find is the wisest attitude to take in the interests of the State. I am not going to be forced by the leader of the Opposition into giving premature information to the public concerning any State affairs. As I have said in connection with the Savings Bank business, there are times when it is necessary that nothing should be said in connection with negotiations which are in progress. That is exactly what has happened in connection with the steamers. While it is true that we purchased those steamers just before the meeting of Parliament, yet we commenced negotiations for them before last Christmas. We took early steps to procure those steamers and when we acquired them we made the fact public. It is true that it is the policy of the party sitting on the Treasury benches at the present time to nationalise industries, particularly when those industries are controlled by combines and rings that are injurious to the public welfare, and those industries which we have nationalised, or attempted to nationalise, up to date are those which have been conducted in a manner injurious to the welfare of the people of this State. I was surprised at the remark of the leader of the Opposition that the shipping ring and the timber combine were going to form a combination to fight the Government in connection with this enterprise.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not say so.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman distinctly said so.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Premier must accept my denial, because I did not say so.

The PREMIER: I will not accept it because I have the hon. member's speech here.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Well, quote my speech. Let me put the Premier right. I said that they would not be crushed out without a struggle, or words to that effect.

The PREMIER: Here is the *West Australian* report of the speech of the leader of the Opposition, and referring to the timber mills and the shipping ring he said—

It must be remembered that they will not get rid of the sawmill owners easily. They, together with the shipping companies, were going to put up a fight for the trade.

A combination to prevent the Government from cheapening the food supplies of the people.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not at all.

The PREMIER: The hon. member also made an admission that will be very interesting to the Women's National Liberal League, because he said that he favoured nationalisation so long as it is done honestly. What must one infer from that? That he believes in the nationalisation of industry so long as we do it honestly. Then, he has pronounced himself in favour of nationalising the shipping service, the timber trade, the milk vending, and other industries as well.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not say so.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said that he did not object so long as we did it honestly.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I do not object to you carrying out your policy so long as you do it honestly.

The PREMIER: Then I cannot understand why the hon. member delayed the business of the House in moving a vote of no-confidence in the Government when we were only carrying out our policy.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are doing it illegally.

The PREMIER: We are not. The hon. member also asserts that there is no wish on the part of himself or those support-

ing him to combat any legitimate effort to reduce the prices of food supplies. We heard exactly the same words from his boss, Sir John Forrest, when he opposed the Surplus Revenue Bill in the Federal Parliament. That hon. gentleman said that he was not opposed to the old age pensions, but he acted in such a direction that if he had been successful he would have defeated the old age pension scheme. The same attitude is now taken up by the leader of the Opposition, for, whilst he says that he is not combating any reduction of the prices of food supplies, he is making every effort to prevent that taking place by opposing the Government in their efforts in connection with the shipping and other services. I said last night that our friends opposite were responsible for conducting the only State butcher's shop in the country. The leader of the Opposition contradicted that, but he forgot, of course, that his Government had run a butcher's shop at Rottneest. It is the only State-owned butcher's shop in the State, and it operated under the administration of our friends opposite.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Childish!

The PREMIER: They were absolutely trading with the public there the same as a butcher's shop in the city. In fact they had a monopoly and refused to allow anybody else to sell a pound of beef on the island.

Mr. Green: That is State socialism.

The PREMIER: Yes, and it is all right when done by our friends opposite, but it is entirely wrong when we do it in accordance with our declared policy. My friend also attempts to make this House believe—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where is the grocer's shop you mentioned?

The PREMIER: We have established a grocer's shop and it is making a decent profit, and is a great convenience to the people on the island in summer.

Hon. Frank Wilson: But you said that we were running it.

The PREMIER: The late Government built it and proposed to run it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, to let it, I expect.

The PREMIER: Now the members opposite attempted to make the House believe that the steamers purchased in accordance with our policy were nothing more nor less than scrap iron.

Mr. George: Well, are they not?

The PREMIER: No, they are not. Take the case of the "Wexford." We paid—I may just as well give this information to the leader of the Opposition who is so anxious for it—we paid £10,500 for this piece of scrap iron, and I am informed by the Agent General under date of the 24th May—

It may be a satisfaction to you to know that I received an offer of £13,000 for the vessel as she lies at the present time, but I did not think it advisable to complicate matters by communicating to you, as I have no doubt she will be admirably adapted for the trade for which she is required.

That disposes of the suggestion that this vessel is mere scrap iron. The "Wexford" was built in 1901, she carries 600 tons of cargo, has a draught (loaded) of 12 feet, and her coal consumption is 11 tons for a speed of 10 knots, which is her average. The next boat is the "Mongolia."

Hon. Frank Wilson: British built?

The PREMIER: She was built in 1901, and we are paying £39,500 for her.

Hon. Frank Wilson: British built?

The PREMIER: She is a steel vessel, her tonnage is 2,937 gross and 1,638 net. She can carry 2,170 tons of cargo, her length is 344 feet by a breadth of 43 feet and a depth of 24.3, and she draws some 19.5 feet when fully loaded. Her class is 100A1 at Lloyds. She is fitted with twin screw and triple expansion engines and she speeds up to 18 knots. The vessel is electrically lighted throughout, has a smoking room and a ladies' saloon on the upper deck, and a four-berth hospital, an ice plant, and other conveniences.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is she British built?

The PREMIER: It does not matter about the building. We bought that boat for the West Australian trade and she is absolutely suited for it. I have the following information from the Agent General in regard to the vessel:—

Carefully inspected "Mongolia"—fine ship—built for Russian Government, Vladivostock-Shanghai trade. Cost over £100,000, last year £60,000 asked. Now offered to me £39,000 subject to immediate reply. Specially ventilated for tropical trade. She could carry 400 head cattle. Guarantees 30 tons of 2,240lbs. Wales coal only for 12 knots. Consider her bargain. Adelaide Steamship Company, Limited, endeavouring obtain option to purchase but Danish directors hold off pending my prompt reply.

That is interesting news to my friends opposite. The same scrap iron that the Government have purchased was sought after by the Adelaide Steamship Company to replace the "Koombana."

Mr. George: Was that a fact?

The PREMIER: It is a fact. I hope the hon. member is not asserting that the Agent General was making a mis-statement.

Mr. George: Oh, no, I thought it might be a rumour; rumours of that sort do get about.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Where was she built; was she built in England?

Mr. Heitmann: According to Lloyds she was built in England.

Hon. Frank Wilson: According to the newspapers she was built at Trieste.

The PREMIER: The price paid for the "Mongolia" is £39,500. I am satisfied, from a statement which appeared in one of the daily newspapers, the *Daily News* I think, that the Adelaide Steamship Company was offering a considerably higher amount than £39,500, because they had based their figures on information they must have obtained from someone in that office. I think they stated the price as £60,000 or £70,000, so that the only fly in the ointment is that we secured the boat which the Adelaide Steamship Company tried to get.

Mr. George: Perhaps they will give you a profit on your bargain.

The PREMIER: For the "Darius" we paid £17,000, less an amount to be deducted for installing electric light, which the previous owners have contracted to do. She was built in 1892 and has a gross ton-

nage of 3,295, and a net tonnage of 2,130, with a speed of 10 knots, and will carry from 400 to 500 head of cattle. The other boat is the "Una," for which we paid £2,000, and we had to accept the "Una" at that time because time was the essence of the contract. May I explain for the information of the House that the reason which prompted the Government in buying the "Una" was that we were called upon to either agree to the loss of a steamer plying on the South-East coast or pay a subsidy of £3,250 to the Adelaide Steamship Company. We were, up to May of this year, paying a subsidy of £750 for the continuance of that service, and the Federal Government paid £3,250, a total of £4,000 for the mail service along that coast.

Hon. Frank Wilson: We were not paying that amount; the Federal Government were paying most of it.

The PREMIER: We were paying £750 when the contract expired and fresh tenders were called. The Adelaide Steamship Company were the only tenderers and they immediately raised the price from £4,000 to £6,500.

Hon. Frank Wilson: For the same boat?

The PREMIER: The same boat, the same work, and the same conditions, and they wanted £2,500 per annum above what was being paid previously. The Federal Government wired to the Government of this State pointing out that they were not prepared to pay the increased amount. They could get a good land service for £1,080, but as they considered sea service was the better and was an advantage to the settlers in that part of the State, they were prepared to continue to pay £3,250 a year, but nothing above that amount, and if we desired to continue that service we would have to find the balance, namely, £3,250. Those who were able to advise us in the matter informed us that we could put a boat on to run that service, and the whole expense would not amount to much more than the £3,250 that we would obtain from the Commonwealth by way of subsidy, and the earnings of the boat would be almost wholly profit on the transaction. Whether it is profit or not, if

we even made a loss we would be actually showing a profit on the transaction by saving the difference between that amount and the £3,250 we were called upon to pay by way of a subsidy. For the purpose of taking up the contract on its due date, we bought the "Una," which, as the Honorary Minister mentioned by interjection the other afternoon, our predecessors bought two or three times over without coming into possession of the boat, and as soon as the "Wexford" arrives and takes up the work we are going to run the "Una" in connection with public works in the North, where she will pay for herself by the freights she will save. Now, we come to the point whether there is anything in the attack of our opponents that we have acted illegally. In the first place, I want to explain definitely that this Government are just as desirous, while sitting on the Treasury benches, as when we were in Opposition, that Parliament should control the finances of the State, and that the Government shall not expend money without an appropriation. I want to tell my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, who knows so much about sound finance, and who controlled the Treasury for so long that if he does not know he ought to, that we have the necessary appropriation granted by this House, and by the other House as well. If he will read the Appropriation Act, 1911-12, assented to on the 9th January, 1912, he will find that in that Act there is an amount of £250,000 by way of advance to the Treasurer. Does he not know that that amount by way of advance to the Treasurer was provided by himself as Colonial Treasurer, and that he made provision in the Estimates and Appropriation Bill to provide himself with £250,000 under that head? Does he not know that it was for the purpose of allowing the expenditure of money legally which in previous years he and other Treasurers expended illegally?

Hon. Frank Wilson: No, I never. I did not introduce that £250,000 in the Estimates. It was there in Mr. Gardiner's time previous to the last Labour party. I think he introduced it seven or eight years ago.

The PREMIER: Does not the hon. member know that there had been no authority until this was provided in the Appropriation Bill for the provision of a Loan Suspense Account? That Loan Suspense Account was only a way of providing for expenditure incurred without an appropriation. When they had no appropriation from Parliament they immediately opened a Suspense Account, and carried it forward to the next year, but they had expended the money without appropriation. Now we have paid for the steamers out of an appropriation granted by this House.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not for that purpose.

The PREMIER: "To enable the Treasurer to make advances to public officers and on account of other Governments, etc., and to pay expenses of an unforeseen nature." It was absolutely impossible to foresee that we would purchase a steamer costing £39,500 when we met Parliament last year.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You were negotiating before Christmas and only brought in your Estimates then.

The PREMIER: Yes, before Christmas.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And should have brought it in then.

The PREMIER: We could not say what it was going to cost the State, and we would have no right to ask the House for an appropriation in that way until we could satisfy the House just what it would run into. We have done exactly as our predecessors have done.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: We have charged expenditure of this kind to the Treasurer's Advance. We have got the money legally under an Appropriation Act, but I am not certain that our friends opposite have always done the same thing. They have expended money under Treasurer's Advance for a trading concern without the consent of Parliament. They bought a cattle station without the approval of Parliament, and that purchase has never been approved of yet. We will be called upon, and to-day I had intended to move for leave to introduce a Bill to legalise

the expenditure incurred by my predecessors for excesses in the year ended 30th June, 1911. That measure will be submitted on Tuesday next. I find a loan amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds—I am referring to the Loan Suspense Account expenditure—for which there is no authority, and there is one item—a station purchased for the Aborigines Department, £18,061. This is not a small item, and the question arises whether this is good business, because, while it might be possible for someone to blow up a steamer, it is not very difficult for aborigines to kill the cattle on the station, and the station would not be of much value then. When our friends complain of our action they should first of all look through their own record and see that the same charge cannot be hurled against them.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That was fully announced in the House, and approved by supporters of the present Government.

The PREMIER: Certainly not. On 30th September, 1906, there was £204,962 16s. 9d. debited against Loan Suspense Account which was not assented to by Parliament and authority was only given for it on 14th December, 1906. On 31st December, 1908, there was £267,953 4s. 9d. debited against Loan Suspense Account, for which there was no authority of Parliament, and that was assented to on the 6th February, 1909. On 30th September, 1909, there was an amount of £10,548 9s. 9d. debited against Loan Suspense Account, for which there was no authority of Parliament, and that was assented to on the 21st December, 1909.

Hon. Frank Wilson: All to carry out works approved of by Parliament.

The PREMIER: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Every one of them.

The PREMIER: On 31st December, 1910, there was an amount of £88,873 5s. 10d. debited against Loan Suspense Account, for which there was no authority of Parliament, and that was only assented to in a Loan Act on 16th February, 1911. On 30th September, 1911, there was an amount of £12,572 17s. 11d. debited against Loan Suspense Account, without

the authority of Parliament, and the Loan Act to cover that expenditure was only assented to on 9th January, 1912. Thus we had to legalise the actions of our predecessors. Let me explain some of this expenditure. The honourable gentleman admitted that he had expended a large sum in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Works. I said we would have done the same in similar circumstances. That was an amount of £26,309 16s. 8d., a fairly large sum. Perhaps that could have been foreseen or at least some of it. The aborigines' station cost £18,061, and that was never sanctioned by Parliament; yet the department secured a cattle station, costing that sum.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I suppose you will sell it now.

The PREMIER: Then again, Parliament never authorised our predecessors to purchase Crowley Park, for which they paid £15,582 10s.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will you sell it?

The PREMIER: The point is whether our friends are justified in charging us with doing something illegal, which we have not done, when they have been guilty of doing something worse. They have done things which are illegal, and they have not obtained the authority of Parliament for them yet.

Hon. Frank Wilson: These were justifiable. The others are wrong.

The PREMIER: Then the previous Government made loans for the purpose of Vermin Boards, amounting to £16,448 16s. 4d. without an appropriation of Parliament. My friend opposite will probably say a Bill was passed by both Chambers permitting these loans to be made. The Bill distinctly stated that the loan should be appropriated from time to time by Parliament, but they did not ask Parliament to appropriate the money. They had that £16,448 without authority, and then, both here and from public platforms, they indignantly accuse this Government of having done something illegal and extreme, as if they themselves had been absolutely guiltless. Why, the same thing applies with regard to the purchase of the Dalkeith estate!

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is no analogy whatever.

The PREMIER: The Dalkeith estate purchase was never mentioned until the whole transaction was completed. We mentioned in October last on the public platform, and have ever since mentioned, our intention of procuring steamers to trade to the North-West. That was published; but our predecessors did not make public that it was their intention to purchase the Dalkeith estate. They paid £11,000 without the authority of Parliament to purchase that estate. I could mention many other items.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Keep on.

The PREMIER: I think I have mentioned enough. Their purchases approached a million of money, ours do not approach £100,000. Speaking of the Dalkeith estate reminds me that last night, when the leader of the Opposition was speaking, I asserted he had the Dalkeith estate offered to him, prior to its being submitted through Mr. Charles Sommers, for exactly the same figure as that at which it was purchased, namely, £11,000.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member denied it.

The PREMIER: On the 3rd October, 1910, Mr. W. R. Verco, as agent for Mr. James Gallop, submitted the Dalkeith estate, comprising about 146 acres, to the Government at £25,000, which offer Cabinet declined. In February, 1911, Mr. Robson submitted the whole estate at £11,000 to the land purchase and estate officer—the proper people to deal with the purchase of land, and authorised by Parliament to deal with the purchase of land—but he was advised after the Hon. Mr. Daglish—a member of the Government of the present leader of the Opposition—had been consulted, that the Government did not want the whole estate. On March 7th, a month afterwards, Mr. Charles Sommers, on behalf of the mortgagee, offered the property to the Premier at £11,200, and Mr. Stronach, after inspection, valued it at £11,605. The Premier notified Mr. Sommers that Cabinet approved of an offer of £10,000. The offer was refused, and the Government, upon Mr. Sommers reducing the price to £11,000, purchased at that figure. And they purchased it without reference to

the officer who is authorised by Parliament to deal with the repurchase of land, and without his having any knowledge of the fact that the Government had decided to repurchase, until Mr. Charles Sommers rang him up and told him, I merely make this statement in order to put myself clear that the statement I made last night was absolutely correct.

Mr. George: What is the inference?

The PREMIER: There is no inference. The leader of the Opposition denied last night that the estate was ever offered to the Government, prior to Mr. Charles Sommers offering it, for the same figure, £11,000.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I told you there was no written offer of the estate by Mr. Robson, and that it never came to my knowledge at all. Mr. Robson told me himself that he had not put in a written offer of this estate for £11,000.

The Minister for Mines: The fact is in evidence on the files that the offer was made.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is there an offer from Mr. Robson? There is no such thing; he told me himself he had not put it in.

The PREMIER: I do not care what Mr. Robson told the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Robson had offered the estate to the land purchase officer for £11,000 in February, and it was refused by the Government, but was afterwards accepted from another agent, Mr. Charles Sommers, at the same figure.

Mr. George: Who refused the offer?

The PREMIER: The Government refused it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They did not; it never came before them.

The PREMIER: The hon. member must accept responsibility for the action of his Minister, and it was through the proper Minister that ought to be consulted in such matters, that is, the Minister for Works, under whom the land purchase officer operates.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not produce the offer?

The PREMIER: I am quoting from a precis of the file put up for my information. Does the hon. member mean

that the officers of the department are making false statements to me?

Hon. Frank Wilson: I say that there was no offer; you cannot produce the offer.

The PREMIER: That is too thin. I was dealing with the Dalkeith estate, together with other purchases made by the late Government without Parliamentary appropriation; and if hon. members will read my statement, that our friends last night made so much of, in connection with the Bullfinch railway, they will find that the statement I made on that occasion is in accordance with the present actions of the Government, and in accordance with future intended actions of the Government. This was my statement on that occasion—

We want to compel this Government, together with any other Government, to first of all get the authority of the representatives of the people before they spend the people's money.

That is, to get an appropriation of Parliament, that the Government must have an appropriation before they can spend public funds. As I have pointed out already, we have that appropriation by Parliament, and members opposite cannot now complain that we have done something in a direction they, the Opposition, did not desire. So far as the House is concerned, we have acted in the direction desired by the House, and in accordance with our policy, and, moreover, in accordance with a policy to which the leader of the Opposition pledged his party. At the general election, in delivering his policy speech, he stated his Government were prepared to charter steamers to trade with the north-west ports to bring stock to the markets.

Hon. Frank Wilson: If necessary.

The PREMIER: As the campaign proceeded public opinion was getting so strong, and the hon. gentleman being able to recognise it, he immediately changed his ground and stated that, if necessary, his Government were prepared to buy a steamer for the purpose of bringing down stock from the North-West—

Hon. Frank Wilson: "If necessary."

The PREMIER : The difference, of course, being that we found it absolutely essential, and in accordance with our policy. We have secured the necessary steamers; and it is not contrary to any Act of Parliament, notwithstanding the hon. member's quotation from the Audit Act, and it is not without any Act of appropriation. There are two or three firms, known as the meat ring, that have been controlling our meat supplies to their advantage and not to the advantage of the grower or consumer. In fact, one firm alone—we need not look very far to discover them—have netted something like £70,000 by merely buying and selling last season. They happen to be in a position where they can compel the small grower to sell his stock to them, otherwise he cannot get rid of them at all.

Mr. Moore : Who are the firm?

The PREMIER : I am not going to mention any firm. The hon. member can get all the information if he desires. Probably he is in a position to do it. Hon. members opposite have made a very good defence in the interests of the meat and shipping rings. Probably they are in full possession of the privileges they have been enjoying and we are making an onset on.

Hon. Frank Wilson : You are going to help them make some more.

The PREMIER : The hon. member will discover if that is correct or not when we proceed. Our object is to relieve the small grower from the grip of these few firms and, while giving him a fair deal, at the same time enable him to put his product on the market at a fair price to the consumer. I think we can do that if given an opportunity by Parliament. The leader of the Opposition attempted to make us believe that the price of meat was controlled by supply and demand. It would be so if the supply and demand were not controlled by a ring. When there is interference with free supply and demand, then we cannot say that the price is balanced or arranged by supply or demand.

Hon. Frank Wilson : What causes the fluctuations in prices?

The PREMIER : They have been caused only recently since the Government have been making an attack on the preserves of these people.

Hon. Frank Wilson : They have gone up steadily since you came into office.

The PREMIER : It must be remembered that the members of the meat ring were the only people who could get space on the steamers plying to the North-West. They had practically the whole of the space, and the result was that if the market became glutted, they could immediately hold off; it would pay them better than bringing down a full ship load, which would interfere with their prices. There are other reasons also why the small grower is not able to get his stock on the market, but at this stage I am not going to inform the House and the public how we are to deal with this phase of the question; but we have not lost sight of it; putting on State steamers to ply between Fremantle and the North-West is not the alpha and omega of the policy of the Government in connection with our meat supplies. Now, so far as sleepers are concerned, and sawmills generally, our friends opposite were responsible for first of all erecting a State sawmill. In fact, they erected two. They said it was for the purpose of supplying sleepers for the Railway Department.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) : Without the consent of Parliament.

The PREMIER : Yes. Moreover, the mills we are putting into our forests are for the purpose of providing sleepers for, among others, the Minister for Works, in order to construct railways in our own State.

Mr. George : Did not the Commissioner of Railways put up that saw mill?

The PREMIER : I know what the hon. member is trying to lead me to say.

Mr. George : No, I am not. I wanted to put one up in my time as Commissioner, but I could not get the money.

The PREMIER : Who prevented the hon. member from getting it?

Mr. George : I do not know. We were hard up; we had not your sanguine hope of paying debts with an empty purse.

The PREMIER: Neither the Commissioner of Railways, nor anybody authorised by Parliament to carry on a particular service of the State, is by virtue of that power to commit the country to the expenditure of unlimited money on any concern without the authority of Parliament.

Mr. George: He did not do so.

The PREMIER: Yes. With the approval of our predecessors, the Commissioner of Railways spent money for the purpose of erecting a State sawmill, and what is virtue in our predecessors ought to be considered such in the present Government, but apparently it is some reason for attacking the Government.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There is no comparison at all.

The PREMIER: Let me again explain that the contract for the supply of sleepers to the Federal Government will mean bringing into the State something like half a million of money for the sleepers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the price?

The PREMIER: I think that is of some advantage to the people of the State.

Mr. Wisdom: Have you got the contract?

The PREMIER: Yes, I have the contract.

Mr. Wisdom: Have you got the power-lising?

Hon. Frank Wilson: King O'Malley says you have not got the contract.

The PREMIER: It, of course, depends just on how our friends would view other Governments. I am prepared to accept the definite guarantee given by another Government, be it Labour or Liberal, as in the terms of a contract; and I have received that from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. This is what he says, I shall read his telegram—

Pending certain action necessary on the part of South Australian Government, which it is hoped will be taken shortly, this Government unable at present enter into agreement for supply of sleepers for Transcontinental Railway. Guarantee to complete necessary arrangements with your Government at earliest practicable moment for supply of one and one half million sleepers

conditionally upon requisite statutory action under Section 3, Subsection 2, of Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta Railway Act, 1911, being effected by South Australian Government.

Mr. Wisdom: Was the price arranged?

The PREMIER: We tendered and our tender was accepted and it will mean considerable wealth to this State. Our friends opposite are continually chirping about this Government not giving attention to the interests of the State, but if we had not tendered to supply sleepers for the railways, notwithstanding the fact that we have a big timber combine in this State, the contract would have gone to another State of the Commonwealth, or perhaps outside Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why should it have gone outside and why could not the private firms tender?

The PREMIER: Because they could not supply the quantities required in the time.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the time?

The PREMIER: I am not building the railway. I want to point out furthermore, that it was a matter of urgency and that tenders were closing on the 30th April. We could not wait until the meeting of Parliament and ask Parliament for authority to tender. We had to accept the responsibility of tendering on behalf of the State because tenders had to be in the hands of the Commonwealth Government before the end of April. Our tender was accepted and we are now making preparations for the supply of the sleepers.

Mr. Wisdom: What is the price and what is the time?

The PREMIER: The hon. member will get that information in due course.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why do you want to hide these things?

The PREMIER: So far as the State brickworks are concerned, let me say that as the Minister administering the Workers' Homes Act I find some difficulty in putting Part 3 of that Act into force. A number of applicants have withdrawn their applications because they discovered that when tenders were called on the plans

which had been approved, the amounts were over the maximum specified under the Act. This was due to the high cost of material. In one instance plans and specifications were prepared about twelve months or more ago and when tenders were at that time called for the erection of the building the lowest submitted was £514. The man concerned did not go on with the building but he made application again lately under the Workers' Homes Act for an advance, and then once more called for tenders and the lowest submitted on that occasion was £632, over £100 more than the first tender. That is due in no small measure to the cost of material having gone up considerably.

Mr. George: Wages have gone up to.

The PREMIER: I am satisfied that when the State brickworks are in full operation we can produce bricks, work our men under reasonable conditions, pay them fair wages and pay interest and sinking fund on the capital outlay and produce bricks at half the present cost. If we can do that we will accomplish something that will be of material benefit to the workers and to the people generally.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Always a big "if" about it.

The PREMIER: I had intended to refer to the retirement of public servants, but I will say shortly that the hon. gentleman opposite has given up controlling huge business concerns long enough, but still will know something of the methods which are adopted to victimise employees. We have no desire or intention to do that and it has never been considered by this Government what action public servants may have taken in connection with public matters when we decided upon their retirement. Our decisions were based on sound grounds and it was unbecoming on the part of the hon. gentleman opposite to suggest that the retirement of one gentleman was brought about principally because of the part he took in connection with the tramway strike. So far as the trades hall is concerned, here again our friends thought they had something on which they could base a charge against the Government and

perhaps make the public believe that we had done something which was illegal.

Hon. Frank Wilson: So you have.

The PREMIER: Surely we as a Government are entitled to make a promise to anyone who approaches us, and, with regard to the trades hall, we as a Government are prepared to take the responsibility of the offer we made. Did the hon. member himself when making a promise ever say that he would propose to do a certain thing subject to Parliamentary approval?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Yes.

The PREMIER: No. The hon. member used to take the other attitude and declare "we propose to do it, notwithstanding what our opponents may think of us." This is the awful crime we propose to commit: We propose to do less for the trades hall in Perth than previous Governments have done for trades halls in other parts of the State. In Fremantle a previous Government granted to the trades hall land to the value of £2,000, and in addition a money grant of £2,000.

Mr. George: Who did that?

The PREMIER: A previous Government, and not a Labour Government. Then a previous Government granted a pound for pound subsidy to Kalgoorlie for a trades hall, and the same principle has been followed in regard to most of the workers' halls throughout the country, and after all, workers' halls are just the same as trades halls.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: They are no mere political bodies than is the Royal Agricultural Society. In Victoria land was granted, and not by a Labour Government, for the purpose of a trades hall to the value of £33,000, in New South Wales land was granted for the purpose of a trades hall to the value of £6,000, and a money grant of £2,000 was made, and, as I have stated, in every part of this State grants were asked for workers' halls and were given.

The Minister for Mines: The Government of the hon. member opposite gave £200 to the Sandstone workers' hall.

The PREMIER: All that we proposed to do was to make a money grant of

£1,000. It is true that we proposed to repurchase their land by paying the same amount as they gave for it, and they got it cheap. Then we promised to grant a lease of the land re-purchased in Beaufort-street at its valuation (as re-purchased) at 4 per cent per annum with a re-appraisement every 20 years. If that is not a better deal than allowing them to have a freehold, I do not know what a good business deal is. Then again, it is proposed to advance the balance necessary to complete the building from the Savings Bank, such amount to bear interest at 5 per cent. That, too, I think is good business from the point of the investment of Savings Bank funds. This is the awful thing we propose to do, and because it so happened that those controlling the trades hall were of the same political creed as ourselves, it is an awful crime, but when our friends opposite granted £2,500 and committed this Government to an additional £2,500 by way of a grant to the Royal Agricultural Society, it was a graceful act and was necessary in order to assist the progress of the State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: So it is.

Mr. George: What does that Society bring to the railways every year?

The PREMIER: I might say, who produces the wealth of the State which is enjoyed by a privileged few? I want members opposite to be fair and consistent. If it is right in their case, they should recognise similar action in our case. Then we have heard something about land transactions. The present Minister for Lands had a land transaction with me about seven or eight years ago, and the extent of it amounted to about £5, and at a time when free selection was in operation and there was no bar to anyone transferring land. The Minister for Lands was so honest with regard to this transaction at the time that he refused to hold the land because he could not reside on it, and he converted it to a conditional purchase. That is the awful crime which has been committed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You had it for 15 months and did not reside on it.

The PREMIER: Then the Lands Department should have forfeited it.

The Minister for Mines: That was the administration of the previous Government.

The PREMIER: Let me say that there are other land transactions that may just as well be mentioned, and if it is worth while to delay the House a quarter of an hour or so in opening out on the awful crime committed in a transaction worth £5, it might be worth while to delay the House for a few moments while I mention something about a land transaction amounting to some several thousands of pounds in which our friends opposite are interested. In December 1909 the Narrattarra estate was repurchased for £24,000, and the then Minister for Lands, now the member for Northam, introduced a Bill to amend the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. Under the old Act not more than 1,000 acres could be selected by any one person; the amendment gave power to grant 2,000 acres and it was explained by the Minister that there were times when 2,000 acres were necessary because it might be poor land, and it was for the purpose of allowing that inferior land to be taken up to the extent of 2,000 acres that the amendment of the Bill was being introduced. I believe the very first transaction under that new Land Act was the granting to R. F. P. Mitchell, son of the then Minister for Lands, 1,998 acres; just about the limit under the amendment made, at £4 15s. per acre.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That is poor land!

The PREMIER: The total purchase money was £9,450. There was also granted to Mrs. C. R. Mitchell, the wife of the then Minister, 1,052 acres. This is not much in itself, but when we compare the fact that he had introduced the Bill just previously for the purpose of allowing more than a thousand acres to be taken up by one person, and that the first persons to select land there were the wife and the son of the Minister, one begins to wonder.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is there wrong about it?

The PREMIER: This is where the wrong comes in: F. R. P. Mitchell owned

1,898 acres of conditional purchase land on the 4th March, 1910, when the first application for the Narratarra homestead was lodged; that would put him out of court under the law of the land.

Mr. Mitchell: That had been transferred.

The PREMIER: That would put him out of court under the law of the land.

Mr. Mitchell: It was transferred.

The PREMIER: Yes, on the 11th March, 1910, these two blocks were transferred to Roy Bedford Mitchell. A lease of the Narratarra homestead was granted to Mr. F. R. P. Mitchell as from the 1st January, 1910. His application was illegally received on the 4th March, 1910. He was then registered as owner of 1,898 acres of conditional purchase land, and his application was illegally received. Mrs. James Mitchell was granted 1,052 acres, although she held other land to the value of £6,500. I believe that the Lands Purchase Act was intended to apply to any person, whether the land was leasehold or freehold. If that be so, then Mrs. Mitchell was not entitled to that land.

Mr. Mitchell: The Premier knows full well that is not the Land Act. It is not fair that he should assert it to be.

The PREMIER: I appreciate the point, but I believe Parliament intended that no person should be entitled to take up conditional purchase land if that person were the owner of either freehold or leasehold. Mrs. Mitchell obtained that land when in possession of other land. She had two blocks of 900 acres near Goomalling at the time, and she was permitted to give up this area, the whole of the amount paid thereon, namely £29, being transferred to the Narratarra block. Was that the way the Minister treated everybody?

Mr. Mitchell: Yes.

The PREMIER: Even the very survey fees paid on the land near Goomalling were transferred to the Narratarra block.

Mr. Mitchell: That is the custom.

The PREMIER: But in any other case, where it is not the Minister's will, the State gets the survey fees over and over again and it does not refund them.

Mr. Mitchell: That is not so.

The PREMIER: I say yes. The transfer of these survey fees was contrary to the established practice.

Mr. Mitchell: Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: It was so. At Narratarra an area of 804 acres was selected by Mr. James Mitchell, then Minister for Lands. This, mark you, was a re-purchased estate for closer settlement, not for family settlement, but for closer settlement; and James Mitchell at that time owned 5,787 acres valued at £30,690. Under the Land Act the owner of more than 2,000 acres cannot further select, and in my opinion that was intended to apply to the owner of the land, whether leasehold or freehold.

Mr. Mitchell: No.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Tell us where you held land yourself illegally.

The PREMIER: This land at Narratarra was re-purchased for closer settlement, and it has at last reverted almost wholly into the hands of three persons, practically into the hands of one family. It is interesting to note that Mr. F. R. P. Mitchell, as soon as his Narratarra land was granted to him, began applying for an extension of time in which to pay his land rent. He was granted that extension, but not under the conditions which applied to similar concessions made to other settlers. He was asked merely to pay 6 per cent per annum on deferred payments. This was most unusual, especially for a re-purchased estate, the payments for which are controlled by the Lands Purchase Act. Only one precedent existed for it, namely that in regard to the land owned by Mr. Hounslow, also on Narratarra estate; that was the only precedent they had for that action. Mr. F. R. P. Mitchell applied for a special lease of the land between the land owned by the Mitchells to the centre of the Chapman River. This was granted without any reference to the local governing authority. Certainly this was most unusual, as other settlers were made to fence their boundaries and leave the foreshores open to the public. Nor is that all. On the 25th September, 1911, a letter was sent to Mr. F. R. P. Mitchell without there having been any enquiry from him. It was just prior to the elec-

tion, when things were not looking too good for the then Government, and this letter stated that as long as a ring fence were erected, the improvements required on land owned by Mr. James Mitchell, Mrs. C. R. Mitchell, and Mr. F. R. P. Mitchell could be all done on one block. No Ministerial approval was issued for this unusual concession.

Mr. Mitchell: It is very usual.

The PREMIER: Then the time has arrived when we should alter it. Are we to re-purchase large estates and allow one family to get practically the whole of it and put their improvements all on one block? It was never intended under the Act. As the original homestead was granted at £4 15s. per acre, and seeing that it was very highly improved, it means, probably, that the improvements already effected would allow Mrs. Mitchell to get the Crown grant without any further improvements beyond that of a ring fence. The question is, should the State re-purchase land to enable a Minister and his wife to secure that land under non-residential conditions? Hundreds of selectors were being refused land by the Land Board at the time, yet rich land holders are allowed to acquire rich land in this way. Can it be said to be a good policy?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not have an inquiry?

The PREMIER: There is no need for an inquiry, for all the facts are on the files, and the person most interested here to-night has not denied any of my statements.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Your conclusions are all wrong.

The PREMIER: I wish that they were wrong and that my friend opposite was not in possession of some of it, and I was. My conclusions are that the present member for Northam, whilst Minister for Lands, secured for himself, his wife, and his son, a large portion of an estate repurchased under the terms of the Act for the promotion of closer settlement.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why should they not, they are just as good settlers as any others?

The PREMIER: I hold that it was never intended that we should re-purchase large estates for that purpose. Of course the leader of the Opposition found great glory in referring to a £5 transaction between the Minister for Lands and myself seven years ago when the conditions were very different. But he finds it very awkward, when his own supporters are charged with transactions of the nature I have mentioned.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Not at all.

The PREMIER: No, certainly not. At any rate the public can now judge for themselves. Again, the hon. member said that the administration of the Lands Department by the present Minister for Lands had caused the banks to stop the credit of the farmers.

Hon. Frank Wilson: So it has.

The PREMIER: That statement, in my opinion, is a scandalous one. The policy of the banks throughout history, not just now when a Labour Government is in office, is in times of stress, even under the old Conservative Governments as well as under more recent Governments, to put the screw on. They do it under any form of Government. In times of stress the banks are always the last to risk their money, and the first to put the screw on the borrower, and it is exactly what they they would have done had a Liberal Government been in power instead of a Labour Government. The member for Northam, when Minister for Lands, waxed wrath, at the opening of the Tammin agricultural hall, at the action of the banks in refusing to make advances to farmers in the Eastern districts. That was when the present leader of the Opposition was heading a Liberal Government, and yet he tries to infer that this Government are responsible for the banks putting the screw on in times of stress.

Hon. Frank Wilson: So you are.

The PREMIER: They have done it in every drought in every part of the world. Therefore, what is the use of the hon. member trying to make that a charge against the present Government?

Hon. Frank Wilson: You destroy their security and they call in their loans.

The PREMIER: That is not so. There is another matter which I think it would be well I should make some mention of, and that is the question of Parliamentary authority for the actions of the Government. I remember receiving a deputation headed by the present leader of the Opposition, and also amongst the number was the ex-Minister for Works, Mr. Daglish. In the report of that deputation published in the *West Australian* of the 23rd March the leader of the Opposition, dealing with the Wickepin-Merredin line, and the decision of the Government to straighten up that route, is shown to have used the following words:—

If the line was carried to the west he thought they would find that it would go outside the 10-mile radius permitted by the Act. The mandate of Parliament was contained in the schedule to the Act, and if any deviation was made it must be within 10 miles of the route fixed in the schedule. If the Government went outside the 10-mile limit they would lay themselves open to an injunction from the Supreme Court preventing them from proceeding with the construction of the railway.

The hon. member asked me to give an assurance that we would not go outside the limit prescribed in the schedule without first obtaining Parliamentary authority. I gave an assurance that such would be the case, and I intend to keep that promise. But it comes well from the hon. member to come into my office and seek a promise of that nature, when his Government had been responsible for illegally constructing a railway outside the limit authorised by Parliament, a deviation which has never been authorised yet. I have here a plan showing in red the railway as constructed from Katanning to Kojonup, another line showing the route approved in the Bill, and a small blue line at the bottom, showing the limit of deviation permitted in the Act. Here is another line showing the route on which the Government illegally constructed the railway and for which they have never obtained Parliamentary approval. I may add that we have tried to

discover the file and find it missing; when last heard of, it had been laid on the table of the Legislative Council. The hon. gentleman came here in wrathful indignation at our action in altering the Wickepin-Merredin route, but when I look up the records of his own Government I find that he has exceeded the limit specified in the Act, and has illegally constructed a line.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I have never seen it before.

The PREMIER: Exactly. The late Government never controlled the departments of State; Ministers were too busy planning out schemes for defeating their opponents to attend to the business of the country, but the present Ministers are attending to their offices, and in doing so they are finding out these things which should not be done. It ill-became the leader of the Opposition to warn me against constructing a line outside of the limits approved by Parliament when his own Government had been guilty of such an action.

The Minister for Works: It would be interesting to know where the file went. The leader of the Opposition has a good idea where the file has gone.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What do you mean by that statement?

The Minister for Works: As Minister for Works you should have found out where the file had gone.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Rubbish! you are trying an insinuation.

The PREMIER: I am going to conclude by referring to statements made at Liberal rallies at Bayswater, Wanneroo, and other remote quarters, where the Government were accused of failing to keep the promises given to the electors in September last. We promised to borrow money for reproductive works, and we have kept faith with that promise by carrying on the public works of this State. In fact, our public works policy compares more than favourably with that of any previous Administration, and we have borrowed £2,300,000 for the carrying out of reproductive works. We promised to give attention to genuine land settlement, and we are doing that, with

the result that there is to-day a record area under cultivation, and we are proceeding fast to clear further areas for the plough.

Hon. Frank Wilson: That is not the result of your efforts.

The PREMIER: We promised to attend to water supplies, and to water conservation generally; we have kept faith with that promise, we have established a Water Supply Department, and have done more to provide water supplies in the agricultural and mining districts than any other Government in the history of the State. We promised not to starve the railway service, and we have given more attention to those using our railways than ever has been given previously. We promised to abolish the special charges on district railways which were an unfair impost on the later settlers and we abolished them as from the 1st July. We promised also to attend to the health of the community, and we have secured a piece of land splendidly situated for the purpose of a consumptive sanatorium in the hills. We have rendered more financial assistance to the hospitals than for many years previously. We are now preparing plans for the erection of a maternity hospital in the metropolitan area, and eventually we intend to extend it by attaching maternity wards to hospitals in the country. We promised to give special attention to the education of our people, and one of the first essentials to that end was to give better salaries to the teaching staff, and these have been granted. We promised to establish continuation schools in different parts of the State, and already we have taken steps to establish one in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder district and in other places. We also promised to give attention to the training of special teachers for small country schools. That is being accomplished at the rate of about fifty per annum, and in other directions we have done wonders in giving attention to our education system. We promised to give the people of the metropolitan area an opportunity of deciding when they would enjoy a weekly half-holiday. We did so, and they are now enjoying a Saturday half-holiday which they were denied

by our predecessors. We promised to nationalise the tramways and we are doing so, and next week we will be bringing in a Bill to take over the tramways at a price for which they could not have been obtained a few months ago. We promised appeal boards to public servants who did not come under the Public Service Act, and also to give attention to the conditions under which they are working. We have done much in that direction also. We have given attention to the grievances of public servants—grievances which have existed for a number of years. They have complained month after month and year after year, and perhaps they are now the happiest servants in the history of the State. We promised to give attention to a pure milk supply, and took the first step of providing a pure milk supply to the Children's hospital, in order to save the lives of the young sufferers, and we have extended it to the whole of the hospitals. While we are concerned about the people who are in our hospitals, we want to go further and keep them out of the hospitals, and we might extend the scheme by providing a pure milk supply for all and sundry. These promises have been kept within a few months of our existence as a Government, and there are plenty more to follow. What we ask is that Parliament should give us an opportunity to put into operation our policy in the direction in which we desire. If Parliament will do that we are prepared to stand or fall as a party and as an Administration with regard to the operation of the policy, and as to whether it is in the interests of the country or not. We believe it will be materially to the benefit of the people if our policy is put into operation, and during the time we have been in office we have done our utmost to give effect to it. It has meant very hard work on the part of the Ministers of the Crown. Had it not been for the splendid assistance rendered by the honorary ministers, the Hons. J. E. Dodd and W. C. Angwin, I am doubtful whether we could have accomplished anything of the nature that we have. It has been a tremendous task, because our experience has been that new undertakings are treated by public servants in a some-

what shy manner. They do not like undertaking new concerns, and the Minister has to give special attention if he wishes them to be successful. No one can say that the present Government have neglected their duty, and I claim that they have done better work than has been done by any previous Administration in the history of the State.

On motion by Mr. Mitchell debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 9th July, 1912.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Annual report of Mines Department. 2, Rules and Regulations under (a) Matrimonial Causes; (b) Port regulations; (c) Medical Department. 3, By-laws of the Meekatharra board of health. 4, Papers relating to the appointment of Mr. W. E. Sudholz as manager of the State Steamship Service Department (ordered on motion by Hon. R. J. Lynn).

QUESTION—WORKERS' HOMES ON GOLDFIELDS.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Have the Government made any provision for procuring suitable land for the purpose of erecting

workmen's homes in or around the municipalities of Kalgoorlie, Boulder, Coolgardie, and Leonora? 2, Has any notification been given through the public Press to the residents on the goldfields that the Government are now prepared to erect and lease workers' homes?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, No; as no applications for workers' homes have been received from the districts referred to. 2, No; nor have such notices appeared in the Press in any district.

QUESTION—SAVINGS BANK POLICY.

Hon. M. L. MOSS asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Have the Government come to any decision as to the conduct of the business of the Government Savings Bank at places in the State outside Perth and Fremantle? 2, If so, what are the proposals for carrying on the business in future at such places other than Perth and Fremantle? 3, If no decision has been arrived at, when is it intended that the matter involved in these questions will be considered?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The matters contained in the question of the hon. member are now under the consideration of the Government.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You told me that eight months ago.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, the matter is still under the consideration of the Government.

Hon. M. L. Moss: It takes them a long time to get a move on.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: In the meantime they will be too late.

PAPERS—COMPENSATION CLAIM OF E. MEAD.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West) moved—

That the Agricultural and the Crown Law Departments' files dealing with the claim of Ernest Mead, of Brunswick Junction, for compensation for loss sustained by him in consequence of fire escaping from the State farm at Brunswick, be laid on the Table.