

scheme is a huge undertaking for a small community like that of Western Australia. I am pleased indeed to know that there is not such a heavy loss on the work as many anticipated, and that it is coming nearer to being a profitable concern every year. If the metropolitan supply were taken from Mundaring it would be assisting not only to make this scheme a better one from a payable point of view, but would also assist the people on the goldfields to get water at a lower cost than they do at present. The whole matter deserves more consideration than it has yet received from the Government or from the influential newspapers. I have spoken to a few people who have knowledge of these matters, and when they had the figures before them they were satisfied that there would be an abundant water supply for the whole of the metropolitan area to be obtained from the Weir at Mundaring for at least 10, 15 or 20 years; always provided that the goldfields were not requiring much more water than they now receive. If we do not take this water from the metropolitan area, and thus assist the scheme, what will happen to Western Australia should the goldfields not continue to have the same population in the future that they have now and will therefore not require the same quantity of water from the scheme? By making these few comments on the Address-in-Reply I do not wish to show that I am antagonistically inclined to the Government. Far be it from that. Nearly all the proposed measures are of a very liberal nature and will receive my whole-hearted support. My only complaint is that a few of them do not go far enough. But that too may be rectified. Taking it on the whole it is a very liberal programme, and I honestly hope that many of the measures that are outlined in this speech will be put on the statute-book of Western Australia, and that the Government, or any Government who may be in power, will receive my whole-hearted support in carrying through any legislative enactment that I think, in my humble way, will be of value to the general mass of the people of Western Australia.

On motion by the *Hon. M. L. Moss*, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.16 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 9th July, 1907.

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The **SPEAKER** took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the *Premier*: 1, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Colonial Conference, 1907; 2, Additions and Alterations to Gaols Regulations.

By the *Minister for Mines*: Regulations under the Mines Regulation Act.

By the *Minister for Works*: 1, By-laws passed by the Road Boards of Nullagine, Marble Bar, Mt. Margaret, Yilgarn, Bunbury, Nelson, Dardanup, Preston, and Moorambine; 2, By-laws passed by the Goldfields Water Supply Administration.

By the *Treasurer*: 1, Amended Audit Act Regulations; 2, Order in Council under Section 35 of the Audit Act.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The **PREMIER** (*Hon. N. J. Moore*) moved—

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of busi-

ness on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4.30 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onward.

Mr. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford): As on similar occasions, he appealed to the House to alter the hours of sitting. For years we had started late in the day and finished late at night or early in the morning; we had started late in the year and finished late. We always made a bad start and an equally bad finish. Early in the session members did not attend to their duties, apparently because of the heavy responsibilities which they assumed during recess. Was it desirable that members should be allowed to give the best portion of their day to private business and the worst to affairs of State? Some did not reach the House till 7.30, and not till 8 o'clock did they get a grip of business. Then, about 11, they became talkative, when members who had attended to business were thinking of going home. No member could do his duty so well in an afternoon shift as in a day shift. The Federal Parliament realised that better work could be done during the day, and therefore sat at 10 a.m. Let us start early and finish after an eight-hour shift. Then we should do so much work in the early months of the session that we should not have to rush business as the most important business was rushed at the tail end, when not only members but the Press were in the habit of appealing to Parliament to curtail speeches and give Ministers an opportunity of going into recess to attend to departmental administration. Last year that appeal was made as usual, and the administration was effected from Japan, Black Range, and other outlandish centres. When a Minister like the Premier, acting also as Treasurer and Minister for Lands, found time to go to Black Range, it could not be said he was devoting to administration that leisure for which he appealed. The House had on some occasions met at 2.30, but even that hour was too late. Start early and finish at the dinner adjournment, and we should have better results. Members would say they had private business to

do, but was it fair that they should put their private business first and State business second? If they must attend to both, why not give the best portion of their time to the public?

Mr. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) moved an amendment—

That "4.30 p.m." be struck out and "10.30 a.m." inserted in lieu.

The experience of the past showed that it was much better to have earlier sittings. Probably the Treasurer would be armed with the old excuse that without late sittings Ministers would not have the opportunity to administer their departments or to bring down Bills to the House. No doubt Ministers had a difficulty in that respect, but the Government had already had seven months in which to closely watch the administration of departments. Last session Ministers repeatedly asked members to go into recess so that they might have an opportunity of administering their departments, but that administration was done from a distance. The Treasurer claimed that the recess was necessary to enable him to go through his new department, and especially to enable him to deal with the Government Printing Office. In fact, the Treasurer had pointed out that during recess the last of the difficulties of the printing branch of his department would be swept away because he would go closely into it; but the distance from which the Treasurer viewed his department was too great to enable him to make the reforms in the printing branch which had been necessary for some time. The amendment was to enable a division to be taken on the subject which hitherto had been debated without a division. No business man would start his business at 4.30 o'clock in the afternoon and hope for any degree of success. It behoved members, owing to the way the State was drifting and owing to its financial position, to give the amendment every consideration, and to vote so that the House might meet earlier and so that members might give their best services to the State, which they were sent to Parliament to do.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	22

Majority against .. 5

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Butcher
Mr. T. L. Brown	Mr. Davies
Mr. Collier	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Holman	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Horn	Mr. Gull
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Hicks
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Stunart	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Layman
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Male
Mr. Walker	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Ware	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Troy (Teller).	Mr. S. F. Moore
	Mr. Price
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Varyard
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

The PREMIER having, as in duty bound, consulted the Leader of the Opposition before arranging the hours, did not anticipate that the hon. member (Mr. Bath) would be adverse to the proposal. Of course the member for Guildford was not Leader of the Opposition, but many members opposite would have been glad to have voted other than they did. Many members could not devote the whole of their time to Parliamentary work, and to sit at that hour proposed in the amendment would restrict the House to men of independent means or to those who had no business or profession. The Federal House met on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 2.30 o'clock, and on Fridays at 10.30 o'clock. That was with the object of allowing members to catch the express to Sydney or Adelaide. Here it was usual for the House to meet at 4.30 o'clock, but later on we might fall in with the suggestion of meeting at an earlier hour. Towards the end of the session he would be pleased if we could adjourn at a reasonable hour.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by *the Premier*, ordered : That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Gov-

ernment business shall take precedence of all Motions and Orders of the Day.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by *the Premier*, Sessional Committees were appointed as follow :—

Printing Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Bath; to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing Returns and Papers presented in pursuance of Motions made by members, and all Papers laid upon the Table whether in answer to addresses or otherwise.

Standing Orders Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Foulkes, and Mr. Daglish, the Chairman of Committees, and Mr. Walker; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any Committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

Library Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Male, and Mr. Walker; with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

House Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Gordon, Mr. A. J. Wilson, and Mr. Taylor; with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the House Committee of the Legislative Council.

STANDING ORDERS REVISION.

The PREMIER: In reference to the Standing Orders Committee for the session, some slight amendment was necessary to the present Standing Orders, and it would be embodied in a report to be presented by the Committee.

DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Motion to Adopt.

Second Day.

Resumed from the opening day, 4th July.

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): Before dealing with the motion for adop-

tion of the Address-in-Reply, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your return to the occupancy of the Chair apparently in the best of health; and I only hope that the promise which has been held forth by the Premier as to the business of the House being conducted during this session within reasonable hours will mean that the conduct of the business will not be too exacting on you, or on the Chairman of Committees, or on those other hon. members who act as deputies. I would also, while on the matter of congratulation, like to congratulate Ministers on the splendidly healthy appearance with which they meet the House. When we recognise the very arduous duties they have to perform during recess, and when we consider the assiduous way in which they have attended to their administrative duties, their present appearance is a tribute to their recuperative powers, because we would naturally expect from the very heavy work they have had to perform, and from the way they have stuck to their office chairs, that they would have presented a careworn appearance when they met Parliament at the opening of the session. In dealing with the Address-in-Reply, I would like to say that the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male), in speaking to that question, made what I consider was a very eloquent and effective speech; and so far as his remarks upon the North-West of this State are concerned, I may say he made a powerful appeal for that portion of the State, a portion he represents in Parliament; and the people of the North-West have reason to congratulate themselves on having such an effective and eloquent representative as the member for Kimberley. But the effectiveness and the eloquence became somewhat dulled when the hon. member departed from the speech which he had so carefully prepared, and proceeded to deal with certain material which, I think, had been furnished to him either by the Premier or by the Attorney General. The member for Kimberley referred to the fact that in the course of a speech in the Queen's Hall which I delivered some little time ago, I had misled the

people in regard to some particulars which I gave on the population of Western Australia. Now I think that the hon. member, or the Minister who prepared that portion of the hon. member's speech, misled the hon. member; because the particulars which I furnished in that speech were absolutely correct; and if the hon. member wants the authority for the statement which I made, I have it here in the monthly *Statistical Abstract*, compiled in the Government Statistician's office, issued I presume by the authority of the Minister who controls that department, the Colonial Treasurer, and printed by the Government Printer. The figures I gave in that speech are contained within the covers of this monthly return. I stated that a great deal had been said in various speeches by Ministers in regard to the immigration policy, and I took the trouble to go through this return and find out precisely what had been the result of the immigration policy of the State. I found that even with all the immigrants who have been brought here, with all the money which they have been alleged to possess, and with the increases we have had from other sources, during the first five months of this year we lost in population, apart from the gain by excess of births over deaths, to the extent of 217. That return includes all the people who came in either under the immigration policy of the Government or under any other policy; and when we remember that it includes those immigrants who, instead of going on the land as we have been informed they are, are at present engaged in competing in the labour market—and I know of immigrants on the goldfields who, according to information which has been made public, are supposed to be engaged in developing our natural resources somewhere in our agricultural areas, are actually working in mines on the goldfields—when we know also from records of our police courts that some of them are or have been in gaol, that in fact they make opportunities for getting into gaol to such an extent that one of our resident magistrates has been given a considerable amount of work and has made some

caustic remarks on the class of immigrants brought out under the immigration policy; that after all these people have been brought in, I want the member for Kimberley, and several other members, to note that by excess of departures over arrivals we lost to the extent of 217. I want farther to point out that the loss in people of British or other European nationality was greater than this; for I said there was some compensation in the fact that there had been a considerable increase in Asiatic population. I went on to give figures; and I got those particulars from this production. And I found—I have authenticated the figures since—that there had been an increase of something like 150 Asiatics, including 21 Malays, 86 Japanese, 15 Javanese, 7 Manilamen, 51 Hindoos, and 10 Timorese. While the member for Kimberley may have considerable knowledge of the North-West portion of this State, he apparently has very little knowledge of the only reliable source from which we can get this information, the *Statistical Abstract*; and if the hon. member wants to know more of the subject, he is welcome to my copy of the return, or he may procure a copy for himself and he can then verify the figures given by me in the Queen's Hall. With regard to the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown), he has had his tilt at the Labour party. We have grown to regard that as a regular sessional occurrence; and I have only to say this, that it is an infliction which we will attempt to bear bravely; and if the electors of the metropolis can stagger along under the burden of having the hon. member as their representative, I think members on this side of the House can bear the infliction. A most important matter which is slurred over, I will say in an eloquent fashion, in the Address-in-Reply is in connection with the financial position of the State. I notice that the Treasurer, who has charge of that department, during the course of a tour throughout his electorate was pleased to remark that although he had perused the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, there was nothing in it to reply to; and then the hon. gentleman proceeded

to occupy practically the whole of his speech in replying to the speech delivered by me in the Queen's Hall. At least, if he did not devote the whole of his speech to it, that was the only portion which was telegraphed to the morning papers. The Treasurer went on to say that the Leader of the Opposition was a man with a little heart, and that it was an awful thing for me to decry, bewail, bemoan, and belittle this State. I think the Treasurer must have been consulting a dictionary of synonyms to get all those verbs strung together. I want to say with regard to possessing a little heart that donkeys and mules possess big hearts, but their stupidity does not necessarily fit them to deal with the financial position of the State. I would rather face the position as it is and recognise exactly where things are going wrong, in order that an attempt might be made to rectify it, than make remarks or put forward statements which are not a true reflex of the absolute condition of affairs. And the hon. gentleman, in saying that I have belittled this State, said something which is absolutely incorrect. If the Treasurer and his colleagues identify themselves as the State, if they imagine they are the State, then possibly I may have belittled them; but so far as the State is concerned, I say I have always been one to recognise the advantages we have, one who has recognised that we have in Western Australia a colony equal to the others; and I wish to say also that my opinion of this State has been improved by reason of the fact that it has been able to survive the financial administration of the present Colonial Treasurer. When we examine the excuse which the Treasurer has urged for his acts and the acts of his colleagues, and which has been repeated by the journalistic apologists for the Government, we find it resolves itself into this convincing testimony to their policy of deliberate deception at the last election; because, at that time members must recognise that the position which the Government and the newspapers of the day take up in regard to the present financial position of the State is precisely the attitude taken up by the Labour Government in

1904 ; and the excuses which are urged by the Government for failing to carry out the policy initiated by the Rason Administration in 1905 are exactly the explanations which were given in 1904 as to why the policy which had been pursued previously should not be continued in future. But while the position was recognised then, we find that on many occasions, although the Treasurer was a member of this House, as were his colleagues, and the party which is now the Ministerial party knew the position was as the Government stated it to be, they went to the people saying they were going to alter this state of things, that they were going to initiate a vigorous works policy, going to expend large sums from the revenues of the State, going to do something which they knew it was absolutely not in their power to do and which the opportunities of the State would not give them a chance of doing—in fact, they merely fooled the electors. They said, "Only let us get into Parliament and things will be different." By these promises that things would be all right they practically, as I said before, obtained Ministerial portfolios by false pretences. And now when we point out their inconsistency, when we criticise them and point out that they must be honest as to the position, that they have no alternative left to them, they whine piteously and bring all the influence of their journalistic friends to bear, about unfair treatment of the Government. They say we (the Opposition) treat the Government unfairly in criticising them as we have done for failing to perform the promises made in 1905. I know what the Premier and his colleagues will say, that they are not the Rason Administration. But they are part of that Administration ; most of the members of the present Government were members of that Administration, and the party which sits behind them at the present time were returned to support that Government, and they are supporting it at the present time. It has been claimed by the Premier in his policy speech that they have effected economies in administration ; but we have not had it pointed out in any of

their speeches where economies have been effected. If hon. members will examine the financial position for themselves, they will find that the only claim to economy the Government can make is that instead of building certain works, instead of turning out public works from revenue, they have resorted to loan funds. If the Treasurer can tell us that this is economy I would like to know from what source he gets his meaning for economy. Not only have the Government transferred expenditure from consolidated revenue to loan funds, but much of the loan funds has been expended on non-productive works, on public buildings ; and it was left to the present Administration to initiate a policy which has never previously been adopted since we have had Responsible Government. It was left to this Government to initiate the policy of constructing public buildings, roads, and bridges from loan funds, whereas previously, since Responsible Government was granted, such works were constructed from consolidated revenue. Yet in spite of all this financial administration, in spite of all this alleged economy, we have a probable deficit at the end of the financial year exceeding £200,000. What are the proposals of the Government to meet that deficit ? We have in the first place the proposal for a land tax, and by throwing away the reputation of the Attorney General and £30,000, which might have been raised if the Government had not embodied their exemption proposals in the land taxation, they propose to raise £60,000 to bridge over this deficit of £200,000.

The Premier : I said there was no proposal for taxation to wipe out the accumulated deficit, but with the additional taxation we should live within our income.

Mr. BATH : The Premier now says they could not hope to wipe out the accumulated deficit.

The Premier : I said the statement that was made.

Mr. BATH : It resolves itself into this ; the proposition is to transfer the accumulated deficit to loan indebtedness and wipe it out in that fashion.

The Premier : Not necessarily.

Mr. BATH : That is absolutely the only alternative which the Premier or the Treasurer will have. They have either to wipe out the accumulated deficit by increased taxation—

Mr. Walker : Not in one year.

Mr. BATH : Not in one year, but the Premier has just assured us that by their taxation proposals they did not hope to wipe out the accumulated deficit. The fact of the matter is that it is intended to transfer the accumulated deficit to loan indebtedness, and at least the only other alternative for making up the deficiency between the £60,000 it is proposed to raise by land taxation, is that some of the wealthy men of the community should die, and after all the newspaper rejoicings which we have seen in connection with the deaths of some of our wealthy men whose estates have paid about £16,000 and £18,000 in probate duty, it resolves itself into this, that absolutely the only resort the Treasurer has to re-establish the financial stability of Western Australia, is that some of our wealthy men should make sacrifices of themselves and die. The Treasurer reminds me of an undertaker, in that he is waiting for these people to die in order that he can re-establish the financial position. That is ungenerous. If the hon. member wants to make any martyr for this bleeding country, why not make a martyr of himself and die in order that the revenue can be fixed up, and not wait for other unfortunates to die ? The worst feature which I see in regard to the proposals for, shall I say adjusting the finances, is the sinister hint given by the Premier as to the sinking fund, and I congratulate the member for Kimberley in his opposition to this proposal. It would not only be disastrous to the country, but it would mean that in a few years, even when the sinking fund eliminated from the arrangements, that with our interest bill the trouble would be come just as great a burden for the Treasurer. If he can raise loans in the London market without any provision for interest, then he is a more skilful financier than I took him to be. The Honorary Minister has said that we cannot alter

the arrangements in regard to past loans, but I am referring to future loans that may be raised. I say it will be just as disastrous to our credit not to make future arrangements for a sinking fund as the Premier's proposal to make arrangements with the Commonwealth for taking over our debts on a half per cent. basis.

The Premier : Half per cent. more than the other States.

Mr. BATH : The hon. member refers to what the other States do, but on other occasions, when he wishes to boost Western Australia, he parades the fact that we in Western Australia do better than they do in the other States. We should gauge our financial arrangements, not by the precedence of the other States, but we should maintain the attitude which has been taken up by Western Australia, and see if we cannot do in the future as we have done in the past. The Treasurer in the course of his speech, I think at Busselton, referred to the remarks which I made in regard to the expenditure of loan moneys. I did say there had been a waste of loan money in certain expenditure. It is not exactly a waste, but a misuse of loan moneys to expend them on public buildings and roads. In the records of the Loan Bills the Government and of their immediate predecessors, we find a number of items on which loan moneys have been expended which will not bear the light of an investigation by those skilled in finance. It is only necessary, to show there has been a lack of wisdom in the expenditure of loan moneys, to cite the instance that in spite of the fact that during the past year something over £600,000 or £700,000—we have not had the complete figures for the year—have been expended in various directions there has not been any increase in the revenue. The Treasurer and other Ministers are always saying it is a wise developmental policy in which they are embarking, in expending loan moneys on the resources of the State, and the natural result is that as we develop the resources we shall have an increase in revenue. If loan moneys are judiciously expended, it is only to be expected that we should have an increase in the reven-

ue. But what are the facts? Instead of an increase in the revenue for the past 11 months which have expired, there is a decrease from those very sources of revenue that should have been stimulated by the expenditure of loan moneys—a loss of revenue to the extent of £100,000. The railways have caused a loss of £73,000. The result is shown in the fact that the percentage of sinking fund to our revenue has greatly increased during the term of the present Administration. I know it will be argued that there has been a reduction in the surplus returned from the Commonwealth, but taking the figures of the territorial revenue, apart from what has been returned from the Commonwealth, the increased percentage is apparent. For 1902, 1903, 1904, and 1905 the percentage of the sinking fund to the internal State revenue was about stationary, something about 28 or 29 per cent., but during the eleven months of the past financial year just expired the percentage increased from 29 per cent. to 34 per cent., or an increase of 5 per cent. in one year. That is a position that should give the Government pause. It should lead to an investigation as to the nature of the works on which loan moneys are being expended and which justified the strictures passed in the Queen's Hall here as to the manner in which the Government were expending the loan moneys of the State. The hon. gentleman has pointed to the other States as showing that we in Western Australia are in a much better position, but we must recognise that until the last year or two the other States have had an exceedingly bad time as to their financial arrangements, and the fact that they have surpluses and can make satisfactory adjustments as to their loan indebtedness falling due, is due more to the generous bounty of nature than the financial administration of the State. In South Australia they have had a surplus for the first time for a number of years, and it is a pleasing fact to see that the Labour Government in that State, during the first time in its history, have passed a self-denying ordinance and placed their surplus of £280,000 to the redemption of loan. That is under the Act which was

passed last year, by which any surplus must be devoted to that purpose. There is a moral that sticks out from the present financial position, that in order to make up for the loss of revenue occasioned by the reduction of the sliding scale we should have direct taxation. Some members, notably the member for Perth, refers to the fact that we have lost through the sliding scale, as if it was a great calamity coming over the State. I say the money is in the pockets of the people. If anyone compares the prices at the present time with the prices existing prior to the reduction of the sliding scale he will see there has been a considerable reduction in many items affected by that scale. The whole position is that by the loss of the sliding scale we have given an opportunity to the Administration to adjust their taxation equitably. Members who represent agricultural constituencies think in the natural order of events, that the big consuming populations on the coast and on the goldfields should pay the piper; but it is not a just division of taxation and needs alteration in the interests of the whole of the people. Members have to bear in mind that if the people do not have to pay these high amounts they have more of their wages or their earnings to buy the farmers' products. It is better for members to say "We are prepared to face taxation on an equitable basis in order that these people shall be relieved from the unjust burden of taxation they have had to bear in the past." It will be an advantage to the agricultural community, because the people will have more to spend in buying agricultural products. The attitude taken up by the Government, and those who are continually excusing and apologising for them, is that they have recognised that direct taxation is necessary and that they introduced it last session, and that the failure to hold the February session was absolutely inevitable. I desire to ask, why was it inevitable that the February session, which the Premier and his colleagues solemnly promised the Assembly last December would be held, should be postponed or abandoned? I fail to see any justification for the

abandonment of that promise given by the Premier. Of course we have it stated in the opening Speech that it was owing to the absence of many members of Parliament from the State. It is not surprising, therefore, that such an excuse as that placed in the mouth of his Excellency the Governor, as a justification for the abandonment of the promise, should have caused practically the whole audience to snigger when the statement was made. If Ministerialists who were pledged to support the policy of the Government were honest in their pledges to their constituents, and were desirous of carrying out the policy to which they were committed, there could be no excuse whatever for being absent from their duties, and failing to attend the special session which was suggested. Had the session been held it would have meant that instead of having an accumulated deficit of £220,000 as at present, we would have had at least £60,000 towards the reduction of that deficit. It is not an honourable excuse to urge that the absence of members of Parliament justified the abandonment of that session, and it certainly shows on the part of the Government an absolute dereliction of duty, that after making the promise they made, they should have abandoned their intention and so lost £60,000 to the revenue of the State. So far as the proposals for the future management of our Railways are concerned, I believe that the people of the State as a whole—or at all events a great majority of them—are at one with the Government in the termination of the late Commissioner's agreement. But when it comes to the Government's proposals for the future management of the railways, there is strong ground for criticism. From what can be gathered from the brief references made by the Premier, they propose to continue the policy of the past by appointing a Commissioner who will be, to a large extent, independent of the Minister for Railways, who is responsible to this House, and therefore to the people of the State. Such a policy, so far as Western Australia is concerned, will be detrimental to our interests. The member for Kimberley, in referring the

other night to this question, said he thought that we should get an autocrat of perfect disposition, who should be placed in charge of the railways of the State. In this or in any other community, there is no man, however ideal he may be at the present time who, when vested with autocratic powers for administration of the railways, would not degenerate in a very short while, and degenerate in such a manner as would be detrimental to the best interests, both of the railway system and of the people who own it. It is to the interests of hon. members on both sides of the House to see that the Commissioner of Railways is responsible to the people of the State through the Minister for Railways for the time being, and through Parliament. We have to determine what shall be the policy upon which the railways shall be conducted. We have hon. members, notably agricultural members, who say that we must pursue a wise developmental policy, and others who say that the financial position should be the first consideration. It resolves itself into this. On the completion of the proposed railway programme of the Government, there will be considerably more than one-half of the loan indebtedness embarked in the railways; and it will mean that we have either to get from these railways directly in revenue, the money necessary to pay interest and sinking fund, or we shall have to go to the tax-payers and say, "You must make up any deficiency." There is no justification for the attitude adopted by some members who say that we must have no new taxation, but that there must be a developmental policy irrespective of whether the railways pay or not. The result of this course of conduct would be that one section of the community would practically have to pay for advantages gained by another. Such a policy must end disastrously for all concerned. There must be, in the present position of the State, a great deal of consideration given to the development of our resources, mining, agricultural, and pastoral; but we have to bear in mind that there is a large loan indebtedness in the railways upon which we have to pay interest in some way or

other. The holders of Western Australian stocks must get their interest, and the position is that either this money will have to be paid from the railway revenue or from the direct taxation of the people. In connection with the present position of the railways, there is no doubt that savings can be effected. There is one particular direction in which a considerable sum might be saved, and that is, in the cost of administration. This cost compares very unfavourably with the other States, and it appears that our railways are altogether overloaded with the charges included under the heading of administration. Much saving could be effected in this direction to the advantage of the railways, and perhaps ultimately would result in the bringing about of a reduction in the present railway rates. There is another point which I have emphasised before, and that is that if we are to embark on a developmental policy for the encouragement of one industry or the other as the result of which it may perhaps be necessary that some direct loss shall be sustained by the railways, through their being unable to pay interest and sinking fund, the people who will have to pay the direct taxation to make up for this loss should be informed exactly and accurately how we propose to aid the industry in question and how much it will cost. We must have a clear idea as to the policy in regard to the railways generally, and we cannot obtain this until we are provided with sectional returns so that we shall be enabled to know exactly what each system in the State is doing, and whether one system is paying, not only for itself, but also for some other line. All the sections should not be lumped in one return. At the present time there is a feeling abroad that perhaps one or two of the systems are being called upon to bear the burdens for the remaining railway sections in this State. If that is the position it is certainly an unfair one.

The Premier: It is a very difficult position to arrive at.

Mr. BATH: It is not difficult in the other States, and it should not be difficult here to obtain exact sectional returns.

The Premier: In the other States they adjust the returns. Where a spur line is credited with more than the due mileage run, a certain amount is taken off the main line. It is all a question of adjustment. In Queensland the Commissioner adds considerably on to the earnings of the spur line, and debits it to the main line.

Mr. BATH: There is no necessity for such a course to be adopted. We might not be able to get the exact items, but there is no difficulty in crediting a line with the traffic it brings along and debiting it with the expenditure in order to find out the exact state of affairs. If adjustments are allowed to be made the position is that those in charge of the railways can adjust the returns so as to make something appear better than it really is. We want to know what each system is doing, what it is contributing to the revenue, and whether it is being worked at a profit or loss. If we know these facts we can go to any section of the community—either goldfields or metropolitan—and say: "Here is an industry—coal or agriculture—and with a little wise encouragement this industry and this district will go forward." We will also be able to say to them that this encouragement will cost a certain amount which they will be called upon to bear. I have no doubt that if the position is placed before any community in this manner, they will be prepared to give any industry that it may be thought desirable to encourage, a fair chance. But if it is done in the present haphazard way, and rates are reduced without people knowing anything about the position, the inference naturally is in the minds of the people who are called upon to pay the expense, that it is a case of one portion of the community paying for the sake of another portion, or in fact, that it is robbing Peter to pay Paul. I would like to refer to the spur lines which have been mentioned by the Premier. A great deal has been said by the various Ministers in the country as to the great developmental policy of the Government and of their wise expenditure of loan funds on spur lines. If good and wise results have followed this

policy, why should the Premier be afraid to let the State and Parliament know exactly what those lines are doing? We should have some returns regarding those railways showing how they are progressing, and what business is being carried over them. If this were done it would mean that when other proposals are brought before the House, members would be in a better position to vote upon the questions. In the other States the cost of administration of the railways is much lower than it is here, and they are in a position there to give returns and to let the public know what the various branches of the railway system are doing and earning. If they can do this elsewhere surely it can be done in this State. The Government appear to pin their faith to what they call the magnificent agricultural policy of land settlement; but the Premier should remember that in introducing the amending Land Bill of last session he referred to the fact that he was actuated by the small percentage of cultivated land as compared with the total area alienated. It is significant that, although he has referred to the large area alienated last year, he has failed to show that the average of cultivated to alienated land is one whit improved. We are exactly in the same position now as we were then, for less than three per cent. of the area of land alienated from the State is now under cultivation. This fact does not reflect credit on the administration of the Government, and in view of the way in which land is being disposed of, this is not a very sound policy.

The Premier : You cannot expect that that Act, which has only been in force for four months, has yet had the effect of increasing the cultivation of land to any great extent.

Mr. BATH : You would expect it to have some effect. I have also been accused of looking askance at the dairying proposals—the milking machines—of the Honorary Minister. I have no desire, if we can develop a dairying industry in this State, to place any obstacle in the way of it, or to look askance at it in any way. I would point out, however, that we have a large number of

settlers who have been brought into Western Australia, who have settled on the land, and who have expended their money in buying machinery for wheat growing and for preparing their lands for the purpose of wheat growing, and perhaps mixed farming. What should be done is that these settlers should be placed on a sound footing before the Government branch out into new schemes. The people in the wheat-growing areas are having a bad time through the existence of a milling combine in this State. We find that during the season those who had to sell their wheat were forced to accept from 3d. to 6d. per bushel less for it than was given for it in the Eastern States. Why was this? There was not sufficient justification, owing to the smallness of the surplus over local requirements, for buyers to come here from the Eastern States and compete with the local buyers, and this fact gave the local millers the chance of bleeding the struggling farmers of this State. Where were the Premier and his colleagues that such a state of affairs should be allowed to exist?

Mr. Walker : Is there a mill at Busseton?

Mr. BATH : Or at Cottesloe? On the other hand, although the farmers were getting from 3d. to 6d. less here than was obtained in the Eastern States, when they went to the mills to obtain the offal or by-products, they had to pay from £1 to £2 a ton more than the farmers in the Eastern States had to pay.

Mr. Gull : How do you propose to alter that?

Mr. BATH : By abolishing the milling ring.

The Premier : What do we propose? To make advances to the farmers on their wheat.

Mr. Scaddan : That will be giving money to the miller.

The Premier : Certainly not.

Mr. Johnson : You gave the flour millers a reduction of freight.

The Premier : No; we did not.

Mr. BATH : I say, the best method of giving the farmers a chance is to prepare to enable them to export their wheat on

the most economical basis ; and the best means of doing that is not by subsidising private enterprise, as the Minister for Agriculture proposes.

The Honorary Minister : When did I propose that ?

Mr. BATH : Because that, in the long run, will be only subsidising people to bleed the farmers. We should follow the example of South Australia, by establishing a State export dépôt to give the farmers an opportunity of obtaining something like a decent return for their produce. We should also enlarge the functions of the State Banks. We have now an Agricultural Bank which in a certain degree assists the farmers ; but when they are assisted to the limit, if they wish to make additional arrangements they have to pay anything from seven to ten per cent., whereas in South Australia the State Bank would assist them right through, at any time during their operations, at a rate not exceeding five per cent. I say we should amalgamate the Agricultural Bank and the Savings Bank. This would mean economy in administering the two banks, and would at the same time enlarge their functions so that farmers could, as in South Australia, obtain accommodation at a reasonable rate. Perusing the mining policy of the Government we find a proposal for an amendment of the Mining Act, a proposal to abolish the labour conditions on which our mining tenements are held ; and the Minister for Mines and the Premier wish to assure the people of the State that this proposed amendment is designed in the interests of the small leaseholder and the prospector—the small leaseholder and the prospector every time. Why, the phrase will become as proverbial as “the poor widow” and “the lone orphan.” The fact is, the leaseholders and the prospectors of this State are strongly opposed to the proposal. They recognise that it is not in their interests but really in the interests of those who wish to have a monopoly of mining operations in Western Australia. To be convinced of this we have only to refer to the remarks of the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) when introducing the Mining

Bill of 1903, and we shall find in his speech a complete reply to the present proposal. He said :—

“ Our leases contain certain covenants for the yearly payment of rents and the using of the areas *bona fide* for mining purposes in accordance with the regulations. Throughout Australia similar conditions apply, but they are in nearly every instance more stringent than those of Western Australia. First and most important of these are our labour covenants ; and the request that we should abolish them has been made to us from London.”

In 1903 the Minister says the request was made from London. Now he says, to try to force it down the throats of the people, that it comes from the leaseholders and prospectors of this State. His speech continues :—

“ We are asked to insist on a certain sum of money being expended yearly, and to dispense with the labour covenants. Now I do not suppose anyone wishes to hold a mining property and not to work it. I think in almost every instance when a capitalist or any other person holds a property that is worth working, he will be only too pleased to proceed to develop that property, so that he may as soon as possible obtain for himself a return. But there are exceptions ; and if we take away the labour covenants, we place in the hands of the leaseholder the power to shepherd, the power to do as little development as he possibly can, and to hang on for the purpose of trying to obtain what I may term the unearned increment, to profit by the developmental work being done by the other leaseholders alongside. But I go farther, and will try to point out that did we not insist upon our labour covenants, I am sure that this House would not be satisfied with £1 per acre per annum from any gold-mining leases we at present have in Western Australia.”

Such were the opinions of the Minister in 1903. He said then that the proposal

emanated from London. Now whence did the new proposal of the Minister emanate ? It emanated from a banquet held at the Palace Hotel, Perth, where certain gentlemen who hailed from London—the proposal still comes primarily from London—certain gentlemen who wished to secure the freehold of our mining lands, asked the Minister for the freehold on the plea that capital would then flow into the State. But what is the experience of the other States ? In spite of the rise in the price of copper, there are throughout New South Wales and Queensland dozens of properties which could be worked to-morrow and worked at a profit, but men are unable to get them because they are held under freehold. The owners have held them for years, and the only chance for those willing to work is to pay a royalty ranging from 25 to 30 or 40 per cent. I can cite an instance on the goldfields of a property which has had exemption after exemption, which has been worked only spasmodically, and which is now being exploited by a party of working miners, who, with three-pennyweight ore, are paying forty wages men and making a profit for themselves, though they have to pay to the company which shepherded that property 15 per cent. in royalties. That 15 per cent. would mean everything to the working party ; it would mean that they could develop the property and improve their machinery. But because we had Ministers who had gone behind the labour covenants and granted that company exemption after exemption, the working party have to pay a royalty of 15 per cent.

The Attorney General : What does the royalty cover—merely the right to mine ?

Mr. BATH : It covers the right to mine the dirt ; to carry on mining operations.

The Attorney General : Anything else ?

Mr. BATH : I cannot say. The Minister for Mines, in the speech from which I have just quoted, said : "I think we are justified in insisting on the labour covenants, because he knows that it will prevent leases being shepherded."

That is why every man interested in the mining industry of this State, every leaseholder and prospector, is opposed to this proposal to abolish the labour covenants, because he knows that it will only encourage shepherding ; that men will then be able to hold such areas as they hold on many of our fields, at Kookynie for instance, where people hold 300 or 400 acres and work only a quarter of the area ; at Peak Hill, at Menzies, and at other centres, where leaseholders and prospectors have been fighting time and time again to oppose exemption, recognising that the shepherding of such leases has been detrimental to the mining industry. The Minister for Mines and everyone else with a knowledge of the history of mining in this State knows what is at the root of any lack of investment in our mining industry. It has not been a question of labour covenants on the leases, but a question of how investors have been robbed and plundered by mining promoters here and in the old country. We have only to go through the lists of companies formed either in Western Australia or in the old country to meet instance after instance of companies formed with large capital, where the mining promoter has scooped the pool, and where in some cases there has never been a reef within the area. I know of one company floated in 250,000 shares of £1 each to work some 250 acres on the Eastern Goldfields. The company was formed ; after it was formed certain prominent mining experts in Kalgoorlie went out to look for the land, and one of them said, when the question arose which way should they go : "We will go east, because we always have good luck when we go east." They went out, pegged an area, sunk shafts, and drove, without finding a reef ; and finally they had to bring dry-blowers to try to find a run of gold. That is only one instance of many on the Eastern Goldfields. Then we have companies which give the promoters a large portion of the share capital, leaving an altogether insufficient amount for working expenses. I have here a prospectus issued only recently, in which the promoter of the

company absolutely scoops the pool; where, unless it has extraordinarily good luck, there is absolutely no chance of the company's ever being placed on a sound basis. This is the prospectus of the Birrigrin Gold Mines Ltd., fifty miles beyond Black Range. The capital is divided into 100,000 shares of £1 each, and the promoter takes 65,000 out of 100,000—50,000 fully paid-up shares, £6,000 in cash, and as to the remaining £9,000 he has the option of taking it in fully paid-up shares, or in cash, or partly in shares and partly in cash, as the directors may decide. Seeing that he will have 50,000 out of 100,000 shares, and that there is on the directorate another man of the same name, evidently a brother, who also holds shares, and that the promoter reserves the right of subscribing for 10,000 reserved shares at par, for twelve months from the date of the first allotment of shares, it will be seen that the decision as to whether he shall get the other £9,000 in cash or in paid-up shares rests practically with himself, and probably he will take the £9,000 in cash. What does he do? In return for this, he, as the vendor or promoter, agrees to put a battery and treatment plant on the mine. But where does he get the treatment plant? I have been informed, though I am not sure, that he gets the plant from the Leinster mine, where it has for years been rotting and rusting, practically without being worked. True, it is handy to Birrigrin, easily transported there; and for this the promoter gets £65,000 out of the £100,000. And the total working capital the company can get is £35,000, of which it is proposed to call up £10,000 and to hold the rest in reserve. In a year or two we shall have the President of the Arbitration Court saying that the company have subscribed for 100,000 shares, that the men must therefore pay interest on the whole of the capital, and that the wages must be adjusted in order to effect that result; whereas we have here a proposition which gives the promoter of the company the bulk of the interest, and gives a capital of only £35,000 to work the property and to place it on a dividend-paying basis.

Propositions such as this, handicapped as they are from the start, have ultimately the effect of scaring investors from our mining properties. If the Minister would only turn his attention to that and not to the proposal to go against the interests of the mining population, the interests of the State, by abolishing the labour covenants, he would be doing more in the interests of the mining industry.

The Minister for Mines : What am I going to do to the Companies Act?

MR. BATH : The hon. gentleman carried an amendment last session, but he has not the opportunity of dealing with this flotation of companies, this arrangement of shares, by which the mine is handicapped from the start. At least the Minister said last session, when he was tackled on the question, that he did not propose to do anything in the matter. In connection with the mining industry also, we have it stated in paragraph 8 of the Governor's Speech that the "satisfactory development in the levels of many of the properties proves conclusively that the lodes not only live but carry high values at depths." If members will only peruse the report of the Mines Department for last year they will see that, while the lodes may be living down, it is a very regrettable fact that the miners who are employed in these mines are suffering severely in health, are being maimed and injured and many of them killed by reason of the conditions which exist in these mines. I have only to point out that the very proposals which were so strongly opposed by the Minister for Mines last session are those which are absolutely essential in the interests of the men who work in our mines, especially in our big mining propositions. The figures which are given in the report of the Mines Department for this year, the returns in regard to killed and injured, I believe are being quoted in many of the newspapers in the Eastern States of the Commonwealth, and I believe that they are being quoted as being a very regrettable condition of affairs in regard to the carrying on of mining in Western Australia. These newspapers point out that the percentage is abnormally high, and they say there is need for amend-

ment of the mining regulations in Western Australia in order that this condition of affairs may be remedied. By reading the record of the accidents which occur in our mines one will see that the great majority occur in the stopes, and it is there that attention should be directed, but it was just on these points that the Minister opposed us last session when we sought to have conditions which would safeguard the men working in our stopes.

The Minister for Mines: You had not much to say on that question when you were talking to a goldfields audience.

Mr. BATH: We not only have the proposal of the Government to encourage a mining monopoly by their amendment of the Mining Act, but we also have a proposal to encourage a meat monopoly in the northern districts of this State by subsidising freezing works. What does it practically amount to? It practically means that we are subsidising the meat ring who have had the consumers of this State under their heels for more than ten years. We have these people complaining that there is no outlet for their stock and that they must have freezing works in order that they may build up an export trade for an outlet, while we have the people of the State from the goldfields to the metropolis still paying the extravagant prices which they have had to pay so long for their meat supplies. Two staple articles of diet, especially on the goldfields, or where working populations congregate, two items which are essential, which should be the staple articles of diet, are placed to a large extent beyond the means of the people by the very high prices which they realise. For meat and fruit the people of this State are paying altogether too high prices. I know it is said that the fruit-growers are not getting anything like the prices they should get; but if that is true, instead of encouraging those who are responsible for the high prices, we should attempt to devise some means by which the consumer may get his fruit or meat at a reasonable rate, while the grower may also have a fair return for the capital he has expended in producing it.

The Treasurer: Will not cold storage do it for them?

Mr. BATH: Even if the Government do not propose to subsidise freezing works, the fact that if those who practically control the meat supply in the North-West—and there are few firms—started the works, in the near future we would be faced with the problem as to how to deal with them. We know how they have done in America. We know how they started and encouraged these people and how they subsidised them, but now from the President down all classes in America are trying to get rid of the incubus of the trusts. In America it is the great problem as to how to deal with the rings, meat trusts and others, which have the people there under their heels. So even to-morrow, apart from subsidising their works, if these people who would control the works at Wyndham—they give the small man very little chance at present—if they were at liberty to inaugurate these works they would establish them so firmly that it would take all the statesmanship and all the ability of Ministers to bring about a remedy for the monopoly created. It is detrimental to the interests of the consumers to think of subsidising these people.

The Premier: It is a subsidy for which they will have to pay interest and for which every small man in the area will have equal rights with the big man.

Mr. BATH: Even if they pay interest it means that the consuming population will have to find the subsidy in the first instance to give these people a greater grip on them, to give them a better trade to fleece them in the future.

The Minister for Works: What do you mean by subsidy?

Mr. BATH: I am taking the definition of the people themselves. It is to give them money to assist them to establish these works.

The Minister for Works: It is not to be given.

Mr. BATH: Then why does the Minister call it a subsidy? The Honorary Minister like every other Minister dealing with the subject, has referred to the fact that the Government were subsidising

ing these people. Even if the Government assist them in this way they are giving these people the first right to do it, and it will mean that no one else will have an opportunity of going in. However much Ministers may argue, the question resolves itself into this, that it is only giving these people the greater opportunity of fleecing the citizens of the State than they have had in the past, and that has been a pretty big one.

Mr. Gull : Have you any alternative suggestion ?

Mr. BATH : I would point out that the hon. gentleman himself and others on the Ministerial side prevented any opportunity of dealing with it last session by their attitude towards the proposals of the Government in the Land Act Amendment Bill dealing with the leases ; and the Premier as Minister for Lands practically assisted these people, since he has been in office, to their present paramount position in allowing them to continue their leases at a reduced rental, by allowing them to come under the 1898 Act. I dealt with that previously and pointed out to the Minister for Lands that these people had secured this right, that they were transferring their leases from under the old Regulations to under the 1898 Act, and that by so doing they were not only getting the full increased term under the Act, but were also in many instances getting their leases at a reduced rental. So far as the Government proposals in regard to local option, electoral reform, and other matters are concerned, it is difficult for the Opposition to say what our attitude will be until we have the particulars. Of course the references of the Premier to these matters were of the briefest nature, and they may mean one thing and may mean the exact opposite. They may mean that we will have electoral reform which will give absolute facilities for people to get on the roll and exercise votes when the election time comes ; but when we recognise that in 1905 the electoral laws were so administered as to disfranchise thousands of electors in this State, 517 alone in the Menzies electorate, we require some alter-

ation to the policy the Government have hitherto pursued. We will give every assistance not only to give the people the franchise, but to so administer the laws that those who apply for votes will have the opportunity of getting on the rolls and exercising votes when the opportunity comes—not as previously referred to—I can only characterise them as subterfuges—in order to prevent people, even after filing their claims, from exercising a vote when the opportunity arises. In regard to land taxation the Opposition will do as we did last session. When the Government have submitted anything like democratic proposals we will vote for them, and I can say, and I think if members will compare the record of last session with the attitude Oppositions have adopted to Ministries in the past, they will see that the Opposition was more generous to the Government last session than any previous Opposition was to any previous Ministry that existed. So far as the land tax legislation, the Land Acts and the amendment of the Savings Bank Act were concerned, the Opposition facilitated their passage through the House. In fact we came to the rescue of the Government several times and helped them to carry their measures against the opposition of Ministerial supporters ; and if the occasion arises we will do the same again. But when it comes to proposals such as subsidising a meat monopoly, or a flour milling monopoly, or helping combines of any description or attempting to pass such legislative atrocities as the Police Offences Bill and measures of that kind, I can only promise that the Government will have our uncompromising opposition.

At 6.15, the *Speaker* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : One of the most pleasant features in connection with the opening of Parliament is the congratulation which is showered freely upon the gentleman who presides over our deliberations. I am sure I am voicing the opinions of members

generally in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on apparently being in the best of health, and upon your being ready and willing to guide us again in those paths of debate in a manner absolutely essential for the decorum and dignity of our ancient institution. At the same time I extend my congratulations to my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition, upon his being re-elected to that position. I may perhaps be permitted to express the pious hope that he may long retain that position, which he decidedly adorns. [*Mr. Hudson*: That is sarcasm.] May I not be permitted to use a little sarcasm in the same way that the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition, was guilty of when speaking quite recently? Reference has been made to the fact that the February meeting of Parliament was postponed, and I can only say that it is not necessary for me to reiterate the reasons which actuated the Government in postponing the February Session. It was felt that there were many members absent—included among whom were those who would have been of assistance in passing the land tax measure when it was transmitted to another place—and at the same time it was realised that it would have been inadvisable to have brought about a conflict between the Houses at a time when we were approaching the London market for a loan, in order to carry out the works which Parliament in its wisdom had sanctioned in the preceding session. Many members on both sides of the House were unwilling to sit, owing to the fact that this Parliament, if it runs its ordinary span of three years, will have another session next year, which would mean that, during three years, there would have been four special sessions. A farther reason for the postponement of the February Session was that it was thought advisable that the State should be represented at the conference of Premiers and Ministers which was to be held in Brisbane, in view of the fact that many matters of vital interest to Western Australia were to be considered there. The policy of the Government was set forth in the pre-session speech. I do not propose to-

night to recapitulate what I said on that occasion, but I will confine myself as far as possible to an endeavour to reply to some of the criticisms the Leader of the Opposition has cast on that utterance, and on the actions of the Government generally. Naturally the financial administration of the Government has received a large measure of attention, and the most pessimistic conclusions have been drawn from the present state of affairs. None welcomes criticism more than I, more especially if I recognise that it is given with a view of improving the state of affairs as far as possible and of pointing out defects in any proposals the Government may bring forward, either in the way of legislation, or of construction of works. I recognise that the Leader of the Opposition has to-night in a straightforward manly way pointed out the various points in which he differs from the Government. We recognise that we can expect no more from him; we realise, as he stated in closing his remarks, that last session he gave his support to many measures which possibly some of our supporters considered more advanced than they were prepared to give entire support to. More we do not expect, and of course we anticipate opposition from him with regard to those measures brought forward with which he does not agree. At the same time I am sure he realises that, while the present Government, or some members of it, were in Opposition the Government of which he was a member and which was then in power gave credit to those members for the support they gave the then Ministry on many matters of great importance. Mr. Daglish, the then Premier, stated before he left office that he desired to express his great indebtedness to the members of the Opposition for the assistance and courtesy they had extended towards him while in power; and by his remarks he showed that he thoroughly appreciated the support which had been accorded to him by members sitting opposite. [*Mr. Scaddan*: You did that at the end of last session.] It is the usual thing to do. Mr. Daglish, it will be remembered, was not quite so cordial in his remarks

concerning the support he had received from members sitting on his own side of the House as he was with reference to the conduct of members sitting opposite. [*Mr. Hudson*: He is hardly as plausible as you are.] I have not yet learned that art. Why it is one of my weaknesses, but I hope that before the completion of my political education, I will improve in this as in other respects. *Mr. Bath* in referring to the Premiers' Conference at the speech he made recently in Queen's Hall said it was positively idle for the Western Australian representatives to go to the parochial, pettifogging State Premiers asking for that consideration they had a right to demand from the Federal Parliament. Apparently, as far as *Mr. Bath* is concerned, which was a virtue in him is a fault in me, for it must not be forgotten that at the previous conference *Mr. Bath* himself was one of the representatives.

Mr. Bath: The attitude of the State Premiers then convinced me of the futility of these gatherings.

The PREMIER: I wish you had called on me before I left and told me that.

Mr. Hudson: More plausibility.

The PREMIER: In speaking at the inter-State Conference held in Melbourne last October, *Mr. Bath* referred to the attitude adopted by the States, and said:—

"We came here with the desire and with the expectation that we would receive some consideration, because we did not conclude in Western Australia that the views as enunciated in the papers were expressive of the opinions either of the politicians of Victoria, or of those who would be represented at this Conference, but, from the whole attitude of the Conference, the only conclusion I can come to is that the other States absolutely disregard Western Australian interests except as a ground for exploitation. That is the only way in which they regard her—an appendage of the Commonwealth, a community cut off from the seat of Government, labouring under many disadvantages by reason of her

isolation—and the only use she is to the Commonwealth is as a field for exploitation for the rest of the Commonwealth. I resent that, and it is certainly not likely to smooth over any friction that exists in Western Australia, but is rather inclined to accentuate the feeling she has against the unfair treatment which has been meted out to her."

The Conference just concluded in Brisbane was the result of the Conference held in Melbourne, and at which the Leader of the Opposition was present. It was necessary that we should have representatives there, if for one reason only, that we might be able to protest against the treatment which had been meted out to Western Australia. [*Mr. Hudson*: And you moved for a black Australia.] That has nothing to do with the financial question. The two questions that we attended the Conference to deal with particularly were (1), the transference of the State debts; and (2), the return of a fixed amount. The effect of that Conference has been that at last we have had an opportunity of putting up an emphatic protest so far as Western Australia is concerned against the treatment accorded to us, and possibly my colleague and I have had an opportunity of convincing some of the more reasonable people in the East that Western Australia is entitled to special treatment. The first matter of importance brought forward was a suggestion as to fixing the amount to be returned by the Commonwealth. Sir John Forrest's proposal was that that amount should be estimated as an average of the ten years ending December 31st, 1910. Our proposal was that we should make the estimate on the 5½ years ended June 30th, 1906. That is to say, we argued that it would be very much better for the State Treasurers of the various States to be in a position to know exactly what the fixed amount would be; under the Federal Treasurer's proposal the amount would be problematical. The amount that would have been returned on the first 5½ years was worked out by our representative and, with the ex-

ception of Victoria and New South Wales, it would have been a fair and equitable distribution. We find that the annual average as far as Western Australia is concerned—that is including the special tariff—would amount to £886,460 per annum, while the actual amount returned for last year, ended June 30th, was £872,316. That is to say that our average on the 5½ years operations would have been £14,000 in excess of the amount returned by the Commonwealth for the year ended June 30th, 1906. New South Wales would have been naturally the greatest loser, inasmuch as the tariff did not come into operation until something like a year after the establishment of the Commonwealth, and that State, having been a free-trade one, would necessarily lose the amount of the protective tariff. Their true average would have been £2,240,285 as against £2,742,900 actually received last year, while Victoria's average would have been £28,000 less than the amount received last year. Queensland would have under the average of 5½ years £8,000 less than they had during the preceding year, while South Australia would receive £561,752 as against the annual average of £500,380; while Tasmania would have received approximately £3,000 more under the 5½ years distribution than she actually had, that is to say, she would receive £255,637, the amount returnable from the Commonwealth as against £258,984 which she actually received last year. The next important question dealt with at the Conference was in reference to the transference of the State debts, that is really the transference of the management of the State debts, and this was a matter which we as West Australians were not particularly keen about owing to the fact that it was not feasible to us that we were to reap any particular advantage. As a matter of fact it was well known that our loan indebtedness was the result of a judicious expenditure of loan moneys backed up by a big sinking fund, and we are not pressed with impending redemptions. In 1909 we shall have half a million Treasury bills to redeem which will be no great task on us. In 1910 we

shall have £1,266,000 of local inscribed stock maturing, and of this £750,000 is due to the Savings Bank, while the balance is held by a well known institution with which we will have no difficulty in making farther arrangements. In 1915 we have £86,000 falling due and in fifteen or sixteen years we shall have one million pounds becoming due—all of these are four per cents. For the redemption of these amounts we have a sinking fund of one and a half per cent. In 1927 we have two and a half millions falling due on which we have to provide 3½ per cent. That amount is the Coolgardie Water Supply loan, and at the expiration of that time we should have no necessity to raise an amount for redemption purposes, but should be in a position to have a surplus as far as that loan is concerned. In 1935 the bulk of our debts mature, but they carry with them one per cent. sinking fund, so that in this connection we should not have to face any difficulty. At the same time we realise that if it was decided that there should be a transference it was advisable for us to accept any suggestion which might be made by the Federal Treasurer to assist us as far as our sinking fund is concerned. It was hinted, provided we agreed to this, that there would be a possibility of an arrangement by which the sinking fund might be met by the State contributing a half per cent. instead of one per cent. as we do at the present time. Boiled down, it would mean that instead of paying off our loans at one per cent. for 47 years we could redeem them by a half per cent. over 66 years. In the meantime, the State would have to pay the difference between the half per cent. and the one per cent., and allowing for compound interest, it would amount at the present time to, instead of paying something like £20,000 per month as our sinking fund contribution it would come down to about £90,000, relieving the Treasurer of an amount of £150,000 for the first year. I merely mentioned this in the policy speech, but I did not say the Government were committed to it in any way. I did not discuss the question in Cabinet farther than this. I said the Government were pre-

pared, if it were decided that the State debts were to be transferred, to consider such a proposal. The Government are not committed to the proposal, but the suggestion was thrown out at the Conference, and it was only reasonable that the people of the State should know that if it were decided to transfer the State debts, there was a possibility of such an arrangement being effected. At the same time we realise that as far as the trustees of the sinking fund were concerned they would have to provide the one per cent., but that if the suggestion of the Commonwealth were adopted, we would pay them one half per cent. for 66 years, while they paid to our credit one half per cent. for 47 years.

Mr. W. C. Angwin: Was the whole of the policy speech based on similar grounds?

The PREMIER: I am simply making a statement so that members may know on what conditions the Commonwealth would accept the transfer of the States debts. There is one other point on which we joined issue in regard to the financial proposals of the Commonwealth Treasurer, and that was our freedom to borrow. We took up the same attitude that was taken up by the representatives of this State at the previous Conference. We thought that one of the principal features to be considered for the transference of the State debts was our absolute freedom to borrow, and although that may not appeal with the same weight in some of the Eastern States which are more highly developed than we are, we must realise that in Western Australia with the territory like we have—practically one million square miles—it must follow that we cannot develop our State to the same extent as Victoria would with its area of 86,000 square miles, that is to say, there they have a small State developed to a very high degree, and as far as Victoria is concerned it is under intense culture as compared with Western Australia, for they have about one-eleventh of our area while they have five times the number of people located within their borders. It is a State that is traversed with railways, cross-cut in

every direction, and they possibly would not be in the same position as we would, and not require the same freedom to borrow as we would, inasmuch as they would be able to construct more works out of revenue than we could. I referred to the fact that four States practically agreed to support the contention of Western Australia in regard to the necessity of having absolute freedom to borrow, that is to say, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia were all of the opinion that it would be unwise to give up their freedom in that respect, and as a result the decision which had been come to by a previous Conference was reversed. As regards the decision of the Federal Parliament, I can only say that the Federal Government representatives attended at this Conference in the person of the Federal Treasurer, Senator Best, and the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr. Groom. They were present during the debate on the transference of State debts. In regard to the transference it follows that the States would necessarily be responsible for the interest and sinking fund as far as we are concerned. Since the advent of Responsible Government, sixteen millions of money have been floated, but by reason of our increase of population and the accumulation of the sinking fund, our net indebtedness *per capita* is actually decreasing, that is to say, that on 30th June, 1907, it was £64 19s. 4d., while on 31st December last it was only £63 8s. 8d., although in the meantime we had raised loans to the amount of £5,383,215, and so wisely had the money be expended, that for the year ending 30th June last the net revenue paid in sterling to the Treasurer by the Railways, the Goldfields Water Supply, and the Fremantle Harbour Trust after the working expenses had been deducted—that is interest on the loan capital—their contribution to the public debt interest was £544,319 out of £612,543, that is to say, five-sixths of our loan capital expenditure returned us £13 out of every £15 paid in the way of interest. There were several other matters brought forward at the Conference and the member for Dundas has

referred to some action which I took in regard to black labour. The proposal I made was this, that the Federal Government should so administer the Act that it would not interfere with the industries established. At the present time the pearling industry at Broome has a promise from the Federal Government to retain a certain number of Asiatics employed—I think 300.

Mr. Underwood : There are 3,000 at Broome.

The PREMIER : I think there are something between 300 and 400 men, and the Federal Government were prepared to allow the number at that. In the event of a man dying the employer was unable to replace him, and if a man left and went to some employment on shore the employer was not in a position to replace that man. All the employers asked was that they should be enabled to keep their establishment up to the 350 or 450 men. The Federal Government gave them a promise to that effect, and all I did in the resolution was to ask the Federal Government to so administer the Act that no action of theirs would press hardly on that industry which was already established. No proposal whatever to introduce black labour was made by me. (*Mr. Walker interjected.*) I said that they should be allowed to keep the same number of men that they had at the present time.

Mr. Collier : You asked that they should not restrict the importation of crews for working the vessels. That is the wording of the motion.

The PREMIER : If you look up the *Hansard* of those proceedings, I think you will find that is the explanation I gave. I was approached on the matter before leaving ; the case was put before me ; I thought it was a fair thing, and so brought it forward. [*Mr. Walker* : They got at you.] In regard to the question put by the hon. member as to what economies have been effected by the Government, I may refer to one or two in connection with my own Department, which I claim my hon. friend has carefully avoided. Generally he is particularly generous, but in this case I

think he must have neglected to notice the fact that during the last two years the expenditure in the Lands Department has been reduced by something over £30,000, while the revenue has increased—

Mr. Bath : From the sales of land.

The PREMIER : Partly from the sales of land ; but I wish to point out that the fact of there being an increase of revenue means there are more clients on the books of the Lands Department, and that must necessarily entail increased expenditure. [*Member* : No.] Certainly it does. Does not every man who takes up a block of land—and there are at present about 30,000 names on the books—entail additional expenditure in collecting revenue, by the fact that the condition purchase inspectors have to inspect these particular blocks and report on them ? As every block is taken up, it necessarily follows that the expenditure is increased.

Mr. Bath : The bulk of this increased revenue was derived from the sale of Sandstone township lots and from the transfer of mineral residential leases to freehold.

The PREMIER : For your satisfaction, a little later I will give exactly what that amounts to ; but so far as the Sandstone lots are concerned, only a small portion of that increase, about £14,000, goes to last year's revenue and is spread over four quarters.

Mr. Bath : But you have less book-keeping now than under the residential lease system.

The PREMIER : After the residential leases have become freehold ; but until those blocks have become freehold, the expenditure will not be reduced at all. One reason why the expenditure has been considerably reduced is owing to our having introduced the principle of survey before selection. This principle, which I have introduced since I have been in office, means that much of the travelling expenses which were previously debited for survey have been done away with. Under the free selection, a surveyor might be here one day surveying a selection and next week he might be twenty miles away surveying another,

and then might have to come back and survey a block adjoining that which he surveyed three weeks before. The surveyor would have to be paid his travelling expenses, besides being paid for tie-lines to join up the blocks. Under the principle of survey before selection, surveys are made at a much reduced cost; and as it means in many instances that one boundary is made a common boundary for two or three blocks, it necessarily follows that the cost of survey is materially reduced. Also so far as the drafting branch is concerned, it means that instead of sending out a diagram for each block the survey of several blocks is now sent out on one plan; consequently a considerable saving is effected so far as the drafting is concerned. In regard to one or two other economies which have been mentioned and to which the Leader of the Opposition drew attention in his speech at the Queen's Hall, these are principally in connection with the Lunacy Department, the Charities, and the Police. In regard to these, I would like to point out that while the number of lunatics has increased, the *per capita* cost in 1902 of 16s. 3d. has this year been reduced to 13s. 2d., which shows that the cost of administration has not increased.

Mr. Taylor: You must make allowances for the improved accommodation now.

The PREMIER: I do not think we have reaped much benefit from that yet, though Dr. Montgomery states he expects when the present contract is completed to effect a saving of something like £3,000 by the concentration of branches of his department. So far as the Charities are concerned, it has been pointed out that there are 50 more inmates in the "homes" during the financial year than there were in the previous year, and in addition there are about 40 more children who have been sent in by magistrates, and over whom the department has no control. We cannot deny the fact that during last year there has been a fairly tight time, and it necessarily follows that there would be increased expenditure from the Charities vote as compared with past years. And

I can hardly see why we should be expected to economise in that vote; for surely if there is any distress at all, this is a time to be generous, even if we have to overdraw a little as far as Charities are concerned. In regard to the Police vote, though a reduction has been effected to the extent of something like £2,000 in administrative expenses, and although there was last year an addition of something like £1,000 a year provided on the Estimates for extra payment to native trackers, yet notwithstanding this increase my colleague expects at the end of this financial year to be able to show a saving of £2,000 or £3,000 in the expenditure under that vote. Another statement made by the hon. member in his speech at the Queen's Hall was that more was expended from revenue in the year 1904-5, including £79,000 for standardising the railways, and that since then succeeding Governments had continued this work out of loan funds. During 1905-6, the year succeeding the one to which the hon. member referred, a sum of £47,276 was expended from revenue in the same direction. The amount which has been expended from revenue in the same direction this year is not yet available, and will not be until the Commissioner has completed his report. The hon. member in his speech proceeded to refer to the fact that although amending land legislation had been brought into operation, there had not been an increase in the area of land brought under cultivation.

Mr. Bath: No; that there had been no increase in the percentage of production.

The PREMIER: I would like to point out that the amending measure has not really had time to operate yet, considering that it was only proclaimed on the 1st of February last. For years past we have heard complaints against the successive Administrations, and against the administration of the country generally, to the effect that a large area of land was being alienated while the improvement conditions were not of such a character as to ensure the proper improvement of the land which was being alienated. I think it must be credited

to the present Government that they have at least made a step in this direction. The improvement conditions provided in the amending Land Act will mean that within 10 years a man will have to spend an amount at least equal to the value of his land, in prescribed improvements; whereas under the old conditions it was possible to hold that land for 10 years, by merely putting a ring fence round it. [Mr. Heilmann: There are hundreds of dummies now.] We were the first Government to bring in legislation to limit the area which may be held by any one individual. If that legislation had been introduced five or six years ago, there would not now be the same necessity for a land tax as there is at the present time. I think even members opposite will give this Government credit for bringing in a measure which at least has the effect of insisting that persons who acquire land shall not only effect improvements, but that the amount held individually shall not exceed the prescribed area. No man can now hold more than 2,000 acres under conditional purchase or 5,000 acres of non-cultivable land, except in the event of his being a married man, when he may exceed those areas by 50 per cent.

Mr. Collier: The great trouble is that the residential conditions are not fulfilled.

The PREMIER: I do not attach so much importance to that as to the fact that the land is being worked. Why should you, because you hold 500 or 1,000 acres of land, be compelled to live on it, provided you are prepared to get a man to go on the land and do the necessary improvements?

Mr. Daglish: You ought to provide for that.

The PREMIER: There is provision in the Act for a man to do double improvements in lieu of residence. In regard to land settlement, during the last year we have been able to improve something like 26,000 acres of Crown lands by ringbarking, cutting down the scrub, and in some instances clearing a certain portion of each block. That is a principle which I have adhered to, the principle of improvement before selection as far as possible. In several instances,

and in one particular area I have in my mind's eye, we have been able to ringbark something like 12,000 acres, at a cost of 1s. 7d. per acre. We propose to add this cost to the value of the land, and the man who selects in this area will be in the position that, by paying 1d. more per acre per year on his land, he will be able to get a start of practically one season, while at the same time the extra expenditure will be much more valuable to him than would have been the actual cash expended. We propose to extend this principle to a great extent, and at the present time certain areas are being selected in which we will be enabled to carry it out. And farther, we are thus in a position to offer employment to many men who may be at the time unable to get other work. They are put on the land; but instead of providing them with day-work, we pay by results. In some instances men make good money at the work, but in other instances men do not do so well. It naturally follows that those men who are not prepared to do a hard day's work do not receive the same amount as men who are prepared to do so. In regard to the Agricultural Bank, I may say that the liberalising measure introduced last year is being largely availed of throughout the State. [Mr. Bolton: By the right class of people?] Yes. We have been able to extend the transactions of the Bank. As an instance of that I may say that since February something like £112,900 have been applied for by about 100 applicants. Since the Act was brought into force there has been a large number of applications for assistance sent in, and it was necessary to take prompt measures to secure the immediate dealing with those applications. I therefore instructed that the whole of the land inspectors should be put on to the Bank inspection work, with the result that within a month the whole of the applications had been brought up to date. Since February something like £112,900 has been applied for; and if the present rate of demand continues, it will require a farther capital authorisation for the Bank by

April of next year. The hon. member complained that the Government, instead of instituting schemes for starting dairies, should recognise that Western Australia was fitted ideally by climate, situation, etcetera, for wheat-growing and mixed farming. On the one hand the hon. member asks that the Government should recognise the fitness of this country for mixed farming, and on the other he complains that the Minister for Agriculture is busying himself with the dairying industry. Surely dairying is a branch of mixed farming, and in the work he is doing to assist dairying I should say the Minister is carrying out the policy which the hon. member himself proposes. He recognises that the Minister has already done sterling work, and that by importing cows he is now in a position to enable men with small means to make a start at a very reasonable cost as dairy farmers. We know what the dairying industry has done for Victoria, and that at a cost of about £300,000 Victoria established a dairying industry. Under Federation we are not in a position to offer bonuses of 2d. or 3d. a pound for butter exported as was done in Victoria; but we must therefore by liberal advances to our settlers ensure that we shall not in future have to pay such large sums for imported butter. The hon. member referred to the administration of the Railway Department. The Government have already intimated what changes they propose to make. We ask that Parliament should so amend the Act as to permit of a higher salary being offered to the gentleman who is prepared to fill the position of Commissioner. [*Mr. Bolton* : Is that the only amendment ?] That is one of them. There are many other amendments, some of which have been submitted to me by the institution in which the hon. member interjecting is interested, and to which I am prepared to give every consideration. When Parliament has given us that authority we propose to invite applications. We have fully considered the relative merits of one or three Commissioners, and we think it best in the interest of the State to

continue the one-Commissioner system. We have the experience of New South Wales, with three Commissioners who were not on speaking terms with one another, the administration, therefore, not being all that was desired; while so far as I can judge from my inquiries in Queensland, where there is but one Commissioner, Mr. Thallon, it seems to me that the railways in that State are more satisfactorily administered. [*Mr. A. J. Wilson* : What is his salary ?] I think it is something like £2,000. Mr. Thallon, I may say, has practically grown up with the Queensland railways, having for many years been associated with the traffic branch, and being afterwards appointed Commissioner. Quite recently we have seen many comparisons, not only of the administration but of the working cost of railways, more especially the comparison of our railways with those of Queensland and South Australia. Queensland has undoubtedly brought down to a minimum the working cost. As a result of the last two years' operations it has, I understand, been brought down to 3s. 0½d. as against our 5s. 6d. and as against last year's cost in Queensland of 3s. 6d. [*Mr. A. J. Wilson* : Queensland has lady stationmasters.] At the same time, any unbiased man who has travelled over the Queensland railways must be struck with the fact that their maintenance and their conveniences are not comparable with ours. Surely, however, there must be a medium between the 3s. 0½d. and the 5s. 6d. At the same time, I should like to point out that the public of Queensland are much more long-suffering than the public of Western Australia. If our people had to put up with what some of the Queensland people endure—a train once a week—I think we should see more in the Press and hear more in Parliament about our railway management.

Mr. Taylor : In what part of Queensland is there only one train a week ?

The PREMIER : I believe, in some parts of the Far North. Mr. Thallon is of course met with the disadvantage that he has no less than six distinct railway systems. If he wishes to send railway

stock from the Ipswich workshops, instead of sending it by rail he has to ship it to one of the ports.

Mr. Taylor: That is a fact. Beyond Rockhampton there is no railway communication.

The PREMIER: True. I forget whether there are five or six distinct services. The hon. member (Mr. Bath) said it was desirable to institute here the system of sectional returns. That is largely a question of cost. If we provide sectional returns, the administrative cost will necessarily be increased.

Mr. Scaddan: Why? You can obtain sectional returns to-day. The employees obtain them.

The PREMIER: Well then, it is a question of apportioning the amounts to be credited, say, to a spur line and to the main line. Take the case of a spur line leaving the main line at 100 miles from the terminus. Are we to credit that spur line with, say, 30 miles as against the 100 miles on the main line? because we must recognise that but for the extension of the spur line the earnings of the main line would have been less. In Queensland I inquired into the method adopted in apportioning the credit to the various lines. Suppose the rate were 1s. for every 10 miles, let us take the case I have mentioned. For a through distance of 130 miles, the amount would be 13s. But in Queensland, instead of crediting the spur line with 3s. and the main line with 10s., a certain sum is deducted from the main line and credited to the spur line; the main line is credited with 8s. and the spur line with 5s., instead of the 10s. and 3s. respectively which would be apportioned if an actual mileage basis were adopted. I inquired on what basis that was done.

Mr. Scaddan: That practically follows the opinion of our local officers.

The PREMIER: It is purely a matter of administration; and we think it fair that the spur lines should get more in proportion. At the same time, we think that a considerable saving could be effected, and as far as possible we are desirous of securing that saving. We do not intend to make any difference in our treatment of various classes of em-

ployees. It will be the duty of the Minister to consult with Mr. Short, who will for the next six months be Acting Commissioner; and it is anticipated that in the event of Parliament approving of our proposal to increase the salary, applications for the position of Commissioner will not be receivable before the 1st January next.

Mr. Bolton: Suppose Parliament does not agree to the proposals.

The PREMIER: Well, it is no use meeting trouble half way. Under the existing Act the policy of the Railway Department can practically be dictated by Parliament. The powers of the Commissioner are really confined to the administration of his department, the engagement and dismissal of employees.

Mr. Horan: The Act mentions "maintenance, management and control."

The PREMIER: I think you will find the language is the same in many similar Acts. What do we find in several of the other States? That the Commissioner is sent for, and the Government of the day expresses the opinion that in order to encourage some particular industry some concession should be made.

Mr. Gull: Is it always made?

The PREMIER: Not always; but that is the position of Victoria and Queensland at the present time. I understand that no difficulty is experienced in the matter.

Mr. Scaddan: Your objection is to the man who held the position, and not to the system?

The PREMIER: I take it that in such circumstances there must be a certain amount of give and take on the part of both the Government and the gentleman who may be acting as Commissioner. We have been spending an immense sum of money on improving and maintaining our railways. [*Mr. Bolton:* Wrongly, too.] Well, there is perhaps something in what the hon. member says. If we are able to get the assurance of representative engineers in the Eastern States that our sleepers, for instance, will last eighteen or nineteen years, we are open to criticism if after six or seven years we spend a large sum in pulling up sleepers which in the opinion of or-

dinary laymen are practically as good as on the day they were put down. But, having considerably improved our maintenance, having put down in many instances 9 by 4½ instead of 8 by 4 sleepers, and 60lb. instead of 45lb. rails, surely, if there is no increased traffic, if there are not heavier trains running on the line, the cost of maintenance should be reduced, and it is reasonable to suppose that some of the men can supervise greater lengths than they now take in charge, provided that neither the traffic nor the weight of the train is increased, and provided that the line is in better repair. At the same time, we are extending lines in various directions, and there should be room on the extensions for the men affected by such a saving. Our railway system can I think be extended without increasing the staff at all; and in most cases the men now employed must be given employment on the new railways which are in course of construction. The member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) took me to task on several occasions for the fact that I was in a position to administer so many departments, and that notwithstanding I had time to make jaunts to Victoria, Black Range, and various other places. I think that the members for the districts I have traversed will recognise that we did not lose any time on these trips. We managed something like 800 miles by rail and something like 400 miles by coach in 10 days; so we cannot be accused of losing very much time. I consider it advisable that Ministers should have an opportunity, more especially where there is a large amount of money to be expended, of inspecting those districts in which works are being constructed.

Mr. Heitmann: Would you override the officers' reports?

The PREMIER: Yes; I would override an officer's report if I were satisfied in my mind that I knew more about the work than the officer did. I am prepared to take the responsibility of my actions in that respect, and I say with all due humility that I consider I know as much about railway construction as possibly some of the gentlemen sent to report on

it; therefore I think I am in a position to say whether a railway should be extended, and if so what the cost should be. I would like to point out that, notwithstanding that the member for Guildford was of opinion that I had not enough time to administer the various departments, when he got into trouble with his constituents, when he did not know which way to turn, when there was a dispute between two sections as to where a road should go, that gentleman, instead of deciding the question himself, put it on to the hard-working Minister for Lands. To be consistent, would it not have been far more reasonable indeed for him to take the responsibility himself of giving the decision? But no, he must avoid the responsibility. Possibly there was in view an election in the near future and he thought it would be advisable not to offend the other party and to put it on to me.

Mr. Bath: You disagree with the Attorney General, because your colleague says that if he is absent a day the work gets into arrears, and his department is nothing like yours in regard to the quantity of work.

The PREMIER: In regard to the financial question, as members are aware during recess a certain amount has been raised on the London money market amounting to £1,000,000 while something like £90,000 has been raised within the State. [*Mr. Bath:* At what cost?] Today I am in the position to give the exact cost. I would point out at the outset that the loan was raised we cannot say under the best circumstances, owing to the fact that British Consols at that time were lower than they had been for the last 40 years. Comparing the figures with June, 1905, when the previous loan was raised, Consols stood in June, 1905, at £90 7s. 6d., while in February of this year when the loan was raised they stood at 86½; while the bank discount in February this year was 2½ per cent. as against 5 per cent. in June, 1905. Notwithstanding this fact, the loans turned out practically the same, though there is a slight advantage in the last loan. The rate of interest per £100 given to the original investors if the stock be held

for repayment at the earliest date of maturity, was £3 17s. 6d. on the loan which was authorised in 1901 and raised in June, 1905, as against £3 16s. for the loan raised on the authority given in 1906 and raised in February of this year; while if the stock be held for repayment at the last date of maturity the interest would be £3 14s. 9d. on the loan raised in June, 1905, as against £3 14s. 1d. on the loan raised this year. As a matter of fact the interest on the present loan is something about 1s. better than that on the loan raised in June, 1905. The hon. member also referred to the fact that he was averse to the proposal of the Government to assist in the establishment of freezing works. [*Mr. Bath*: To subsidise them.] The hon. member puts it "subsidise." To clear his mind of all misapprehension—he may term it "subsidy" and we may term it "advance"—what the Government are prepared to do is to advance the sum of £35,000 pound for pound on the amount provided by the people prepared to go in for the work; but it is not to exceed £35,000. [*Mr. Troy*: Buy £35,000 worth of shares in the work.] We say that if they are prepared to put up works to the value of £70,000 we are prepared to loan them £35,000, taking security on the plant and at the same time framing such regulations that every man, whether he is a large or a small pastoralist in that district, will have the opportunity of securing the treatment of his cattle at the same price.

Mr. Bolton: You know there are no small men at Wyndham.

The PREMIER: Certainly there is a lot of small men there. Did not the member for Kimberley point out that something like 17,000 head of cattle during last season were sent to Queensland so that the cattle might be canned there, and is it not therefore good business for us to encourage the establishment of freezing works at Wyndham?

Mr. Scaddan: If you find half the capital, why not have a half interest?

The PREMIER: We advance £35,000 and have a lien on the whole thing.

Mr. Daglish: What is the interest to be paid?

The PREMIER: We propose 4 per cent., but it is not to take effect until after three years. There will be three years free of interest.

Mr. Daglish: What is the term of the loan?

The PREMIER: The full particulars have not been fixed up. We propose to let these people make an offer to treat cattle at a certain price, and in considering any offer naturally we will be guided by the amount paid by the pastoralists in Queensland. At present in Queensland there is a Dairy and Produce Encouragement Act. The amount of money to make advances from this Act is provided by a stock tax in the various districts of the State. I think the State is divided into three or four districts. From this fund a loan is advanced pound for pound on which interest is being paid. We have no fund at present to draw upon, and we do not desire to lose the time that must elapse before we could get a certain amount of funds to operate on, and we propose to make this arrangement. As I pointed out, much of the stock is going from East Kimberley to Queensland, and we want to put a stop to that. Members have referred to the fact that the price of meat, so far as the goldfields market is concerned, will not be reduced; but we are meeting that objection by opening up the stock route which Mr. Canning has recently come over. Mr. Canning is satisfied that a stock route can be established. It must follow that the cattle can be brought down to the Eastern Goldfields more cheaply than by taking them to Wyndham, more especially the ticked cattle. While the ticked beast can get food he does not fall away much in condition; but while he is travelling in a steamer he does not eat his fodder; and as the tick practically lives on the cattle it necessarily follows that in many instances the beast loses as much as 100lbs. in weight while on the steamer. If we can drive them through the stock route which Mr. Canning considers can be opened up, I say we shall be in a position to supply the Eastern Goldfields with meat at a much reduced cost to that at present. In connection with that work I feel that

members will join with me in recognising the work which Mr. Canning has done. I hope that members will have an opportunity of meeting him on his arrival here. When the party are prepared to take their lives in their hands like Mr. Canning's party have done—there is no limelight on them while opening up country like that—I think it is only fair that we as members should recognise the work done by them. Reference was made by the Leader of the Opposition to the fact that our sinking fund was amounting to a very large proportion of our revenue. I would like to point out that we are in a much better position than any other State with the exception of New South Wales. In New South Wales in 1905 the general revenue was £12,283,082, while the interest on the public debt at the 30th June, 1906, was £2,088,883, being 17 per cent. of the public debt. In Western Australia our interest is 17 per cent. and our sinking fund nearly 6 per cent., or a total of 23 per cent. of our revenue. In Victoria in 1905 they had a general revenue of £7,803,916, while the interest in 1906 was £1,904,011, or 24 per cent. of the revenue. Tasmania had a revenue of £900,657, while their interest was £352,596, or 39 per cent. of the general revenue. In South Australia they have practically the same percentage, that is to say, while their revenue is £2,716,413 their annual interest is £1,077,788. In Queensland the general revenue for 1905 was £3,737,691, while the interest was £1,546,881, being 41 per cent. of the general revenue. That 41 per cent. is for interest alone and not for sinking fund. Our percentage includes sinking fund. As I pointed out earlier, the interest for the works in Western Australia represents 13/15ths of the revenue, that is to say 5/6ths of our interest is provided by these works, and of this the railways represent £10,178,100, telegraphs £243,520, water supply and sewerage £3,228,340, harbours, rivers, lighthouses, etc., £2,382,431, making a total amount invested in works of that character of £16,032,391. There is another matter to which I would like to refer. The Leader of the

Opposition took the Government to task by saying that instead of loan money being wisely expended on purely reproductive works, it had been spent on works which should have been constructed out of revenue. In this connection he referred to the spur railways which he said could only be characterised as political railways not justified by the circumstances. I think that statement of his can hardly be justified by facts, when we reflect that out of our proposals last year, totalling in all 570 miles of railways, actually 350 miles were in constituencies represented by opponents of the Government. [Mr. Heilmann: That signifies nothing at all.] Well I infer from your statement that you insinuate that these railways being given to the constituencies of members opposite would secure their support, and yet Mr. Bath says that they are political railways not justified by circumstances.

Mr. Holman : What about Kaufman's railway ?

Mr. Scaddan : We are all agricultural members over here (Opposition side).

The PREMIER : These railways to which I refer are goldfields railways, and, if I remember rightly, the hon. member supported spur railways when he was a member of the Royal Commission on Immigration. He was a great advocate of spur railways, and the agricultural community are to be commiserated with on the fact that he is not representing an agricultural district. We recognise that the experience he has gained after making investigations in agriculture, has resulted in his support of the spur railway system. I do not know that I need say anything farther excepting that I would point out that, as far as the financial position is concerned, there have been occasions when Western Australia has had a greater deficit than at present—that is when the revenue has been considerably below the expenditure. In 1896 Sir John Forrest had a credit at the end of the year of £315,362 : in 1897 the debit balance was £186,803, while in 1898 that debit had increased to £247,350. That is to say that between 1896 with a credit of £315,000 and 1897, he spent £502,000 more than he received.

Since that date the position of the finances has fluctuated.

Mr. T. Walker: Are you not cutting down expenses? You are not undertaking great works like Sir John Forrest.

The PREMIER: We are, and we have to find interest and sinking fund for the works Sir John Forrest initiated.

Mr. Walker: How can you compare the condition of things now with what they were then?

The PREMIER: Because things are not any too good, that is no reason why we should sit down and be afraid to launch out in directions where such is necessary.

Mr. Taylor: Well, why don't you?

The PREMIER: Are we not doing so? See what we have done during the past few months. Take the railway construction on the Norseman line as an instance. Parliament only gave authority for this work last December, but the rails will be laid to Widgemooltha in a couple of months, and other spur railways have been completed. We are going to hurry on with the Mt. Magnet—Black Range Railway, although the survey is not yet completed, and the same remark applies to the Pilbarra line. What more can we do in the way of pushing on the affairs of the country? Before I sit down I would like to make one reference to Federation. I must say we all must resent the attitude taken up by the Eastern States in regard to Federal matters, and more especially to the references which have been made recently by a Federal Minister in regard to Western Australia. By to-day's mail I received an affidavit, duly signed, in reference to a statement made by the Federal Minister for Customs. It is as follows:—

Mr. W. C. Mason's Affidavit.

I, William Coomer Mason, of 46a St. Mary's Road, Sheffield, make oath and say that on the sixth of May, 1907, I attended at the Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield, on the occasion of an address given by the Honourable Sir William Lyne, K.C.M.G. My principal object was to obtain all the information possible concerning Australia, as I, together with my son-in-law, Herbert Barber, of Blackmoor Crossing, near Penistone, and our families, were contemplating going as assisted emigrants to Western Australia in company with F. Lane, lately a practical farmer of that State, with a view to following there the calling of agriculturists.

At the close of the address I sought and obtained a personal interview with Sir William Lyne, and put to him the following question:—"What sort of country is Western Australia for farm labourers? My son-in-law there intends going there." (At this point indicated with my hand Mr. Barber, who was then at the back of the hall). To this question Sir William Lyne replied in the following precise words:—"The worst country in the world." Later in the same afternoon I repeated the statement made me by Sir William Lyne to my son-in-law, Herbert Barber, adding on my own part, "What do you think of that?" To which he replied, "That settles; I shall stay where I am." I make this statement on oath, conscientiously believing the same to be true.—(Sgd.) W. C. Mason.

Mr. Taylor: Have you sent a copy of that to Sir William Lyne?

The PREMIER: I intend to do so, as I consider that as a Federal Minister represents the whole of Australia, such a statement should be resented. It is all very well for persons who occupy the positions of States Ministers to criticise Western Australia and to do what they can against us, but it is an entirely different matter when such a course is adopted by a Federal Minister.

Mr. Angwin: He denies it.

The PREMIER: He attempted to in the papers.

Mr. Angwin: I saw him myself and he denied having made the statement alleged.

Mr. Foulkes: Have you copies of the letters which passed between the Agent General and Sir William Lyne?

The PREMIER: Yes, and if desired I will place them upon the table of the House.

Mr. Taylor: Read them.

The PREMIER: The letters which passed between the Agent General and Sir William Lyne are as follow:—

Agent General to Sir W. Lyne.

Dear Sir William Lyne.—I send you herewith a copy of a letter that has reached me from a Mr. W. C. Mason of Sheffield, in which he states that in answer to an inquiry he made to you personally at Sheffield, you informed him that "Western Australia was the worst country in the world for a farm labourer." I need hardly point out to you the serious damage such a statement, purporting to emanate from a gentleman occupying your responsible position, is having—and is likely to continue to have, unless contradicted—upon the interests of the State I have

the honour to represent. I shall be glad, therefore, if you will be good enough at your earliest convenience, to let me have an account of what really occurred, with your permission to publish same if necessary. Thanking you in anticipation, I have (etc.).
C. H. Rason.

Sir W. Lyne to the Agent General.

Dear Sir,—I do not know whether your letter of the 13th inst. concerning Mr. W. C. Mason, of Sheffield, regarding Western Australia means to infer that in a public meeting I made a statement derogatory to Western Australia, because if so, it is not correct. A gentleman did speak to me either before or after the meeting, I am not sure which, and asked me whether Western Australia was a good colony for farming. My reply was that I did not think it was the best, as I thought some of the other States were better. I have been over the whole of Australia and what I said is correct, and when anyone asks me for information, surely I have a right to answer it without question. I was not recommending one State against another, but simply answering a very proper and correct question.
—Yours faithfully, *William John Lyne.*

Reply by the Agent General.

Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your favour of yesterday's date in answer to my letter of the 13th inst., and much regret that you should have considered it proper to reply in the tone you have adopted. My letter could not possibly be construed to convey any offensive inference : it merely asked you to give your own version of what actually took place. My correspondent wrote that you told him that Western Australia was the "worst country in the world for a farm labourer," and repeated the statement a second time. I inferred nothing, merely—and I hope with that courtesy which is due to your position—asked you to inform me whether the remark attributed to you was correctly reported. Had I not submitted the question to you, I should have been failing in what I conceive (rightly or wrongly) to be my duty to the State which, forming part of the Commonwealth, I represent in this country; a question which I submit with all respect still remains unanswered. In the concluding paragraph of your letter you say "I was not recommending one State against another, but simply answering a proper and correct question," yet in your own statement of your actual words, you quote your expression "I did not think it was best, as I thought some other States were better." This clearly was not an answer to the man's question as repeated by yourself. I understood you yesterday during our conversation to say that Mr. Mason's letter is entirely due to a misunderstanding. I offer no comment, although you apparently invite me to do so, as to what is and what is not within the rights in this connection of a Minister for the Commonwealth.—Yours faithfully, *C. H. Rason.*

Mr. Foulkes : Was any reply sent to that last letter?

The PREMIER: Sir William Lyne did not reply to the last communication sent to him by the Agent General.

Mr. Bath : There is another Federal Minister you might well mention, and that is the Federal Treasurer. What would be the effects of the carrying out of his proposals as far as Western Australia is concerned?

The PREMIER: If you look up the records of the Conference held at Brisbane you will find that my colleague and I did not neglect to remind Sir John Forrest of what was due to Western Australia. I had no occasion to harass Sir John Forrest. He was in this position. He was doing all he possibly could to conserve the interests of the Commonwealth, and at the same time no doubt he was endeavouring to bring the proposals with regard to the financial situation to a termination. Naturally he was very anxious that we should adopt his proposals. In fact, we have evidence that he felt himself that if he were in a position to be able to state that as a result of that Conference the whole of the States would be prepared to accept his proposal, it would no doubt have strengthened his position considerably as a Federal Minister.

Mr. Foulkes : Would it have strengthened our position?

The PREMIER: He did not get what he wanted, and as far as our position is concerned I think it has been strengthened as the result of that Conference, as we were able to reverse the decision which was arrived at by a previous Conference as to the transference of State debts.

Mr. Angwin : Was the position he took up detrimental to the interests of the State?

The PREMIER: Write and ask him. I will take an opportunity later on of speaking on the railway proposals and some of our suggested new legislation. I would point out that, as far as the railway proposals are concerned, the cost will be considerably increased, owing to the fact that the price of steel rails has gone up very materially—practically £2

per ton. This means that lines constructed now will cost £160 a mile more than they would have cost two years ago, owing to the big advance in the price of rails. [Mr. Bolton : Will the price be maintained?] We took the opportunity last December of securing 250 miles of rails at a cheaper cost than we should have to pay were we compelled to get them now. The rails we secured were for the Ravensthorpe, Coolgardie-Norseman, Greenhills-Quairading, and Donnybrook-Upper Preston Lines.

Mr. Taylor : Owing to the additional price of rails you will have to postpone the construction of some of the new lines.

The PREMIER : If it is found that some of the sums voted are not sufficient to provide the rails for the lines, it will be necessary for us to re-appropriate money from a sum of £100,000 voted for additional railway lines. In conclusion I would say that I appreciate the concluding remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. I have always found him an honourable opponent, and, notwithstanding the fact that we severely criticise one another on occasions in the House, I have always been in the position to realise that we are able to meet as friends outside the Chamber. We do not expect support where he does not agree with us in principle; but I can only hope that at the conclusion of this session we shall not be worse friends than we were at the conclusion of the last.

Mr. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Pilbarra) : The Premier concluded by saying that he did not expect from this (Opposition) side of the House support on measures with which we could not agree; and I assure him it is well not to expect it, for I feel certain he will not get it. And there are several proposals in his programme with which this side will disagree. Like the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) I will refer first to the Nor'-West. That member says the present Ministry will go down to posterity as the Never-Never Ministry, as the Ministry for the Nor'-West; and the Minister for Mines has told us that after

a man has been in the Nor'-West for three years he is "ratty."

The Minister for Mines : How long were you there?

Mr. UNDERWOOD : For a considerable time, long enough to learn that some people are ratty before they go there. The matter of greatest interest to the Nor'-West is the proposal to build the Port Hedland-Marble Bar Railway. With the other speakers I must congratulate the Government on something, and I congratulate them on having at least seen what most other people saw years ago—the absolute necessity for this railway. Recently we have heard much talk about the Nor'-West and its resources, in fact, the resources of that part of the State have been consistently brought before the public during the last few weeks, and therefore it is perhaps unnecessary for me to speak at length regarding the railway. I am confident that it is thoroughly warranted from a financial point of view. The country to be opened up is certainly of great extent. It contains an undoubted mineral belt, and will possibly prove one of the best resources of the State. We have there, in addition to the country traversed by the Minister in his recent trip, a great area extending practically from Nullagine to Peak Hill, and an area of great width reaching west almost to Onslow. Several geologists have visited and reported on the district, and each of their reports has justified the railway project. In this connection I wish to mention the statement reported to have been made at Menzies by the Minister for Mines. If the report is correct the Minister said, "Even Mr. Underwood had held out an alternative hope that this railway would be built by private enterprise; but the Moore Government would not allow private enterprise to do it." I wish to say, if Mr. Gregory made this statement it was absolutely incorrect, because I never held out any alternative hope at all regarding the construction of that railway by private enterprise. I have been a strenuous opponent of its construction by private enterprise, ever since the proposition was made.

The Minister for Mines: Where does that statement appear?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In the *Morning Herald*, the day after I saw you at Leonora. Another Government proposal for the Nor'-West is the Roebourne tram, a work that is thoroughly justified. If members could visit Cossack to see the difficulties surrounding the residents of that port, there would be no hesitation in voting the money. As has been explained, the present port of Roebourne is Cossack, or rather Cossack Creek. It is impossible to get into or out of the port with even a small sailing boat, except at high tide; and all goods brought in have to be lightered from out in the offing, though there is within a few miles a splendid work known as the Point Sampson Jetty, built by a recent Government at a cost of over £20,000 and lying absolutely useless because it is not connected; because there is no road extending from the jetty inland. A tram connecting that jetty with Roebourne would certainly be of great assistance to the district, and would help to people what is likely to be a great copper-producing country. I fully agree with the erection of light-houses on that coast. This matter should have been attended to a long time ago. The natural difficulties of the coast are considerable. Most members have heard of its high tides and strong currents, also that it is famed for what are called willy-willies or cyclones. Again, mariners who know it well tell us that it is studded with uncharted rocks. Under those conditions the cost of carriage on that coast is perhaps unduly high, though those conditions are not the cause of the high cost of carriage, as I intend to show later. To the members for York (Mr. Monger), Swan (Mr. Gull), and Perth (Mr. H. Brown) and others who frequently refer to the great wrongs done to this State, and the large sums of money that Sir John Forrest as Federal Treasurer has filched from this State for the benefit of South Australia and Victoria, I should like to point out that these lighthouses are likely soon to be taken by the Federal Government, which will then have to assume the loan indebted-

ness for the works, and to defray the expense of upkeep. We shall then have a chance of getting back some of the money that has been filched from us by the Federal Treasurer. I commend that view of the case to those members, who I am sorry are not here to benefit by my remarks. As an Australian and a West Australian, I say I consider the work is thoroughly justified. I look upon that North as the vulnerable point of Australia; and it is the duty of all Australians to endeavour to populate the North. The best protection we can have when the enemy comes is the presence of white men to defend the country; and to induce those white men to people the North we must give them every possible facility. From a national point of view the work is thoroughly justified. It is justified from the point of view of those parochial gentlemen who hold that the Eastern States are always robbing us. One thing must be regarded as the complement of any developmental policy in that part of the country. I refer to a better steamship service. The member for Kimberley said nothing of that, but I trust it will be mentioned by other members. I have again gone thoroughly into that question, and another member of the House has collected some very rare figures bearing on the subject. We find in the North that the shipping companies are combined—not to put too fine a point on it—to deliberately rob Western Australia. We find that those black-labour boats trading to Singapore do everything possible to take trade from Western Australia through Singapore. They employ black labour to begin with. The whole of the supplies come from Singapore; the companies so arrange their freights that the wool is dumped at Singapore instead of at Fremantle. On the other hand, we find that they diminish their freight charges as they get farther south from Singapore on the down trip. For instance, we find that they charge a higher freight to Broome than to Port Hedland, and a still lower freight to Cossack, reducing the charge till they get to Geraldton. By this means they are able to undercut the freights from England to Fremantle.

The figures will no doubt be given to the House, absolutely proving the statements I make. As to the Pilbarra railway, many gentlemen have told me that they were not too sanguine in support of it because, when the country is opened up, the Eastern States will possibly be able to ship a lot of stuff direct to Pilbarra. But if those gentlemen who are anxious to prevent the Eastern States from getting a little trade were to pay more attention to our black neighbours in the North, those gentlemen would in my opinion be far better Australians. I have heard various proposals for remedying the great evil of extortionate freights and charges and the evil of forcing through Singapore trade which justly belongs to Western Australia. Many suggestions have been made to me for subsidising private enterprise. I am beginning to conclude that private enterprise consists in the enterprise of certain private gentlemen who get their fingers into the public pocket. I can assure the House that I am loth to support any more private enterprise schemes. In my opinion the easiest and best method of totally defeating the black-labour people and securing to the State the trade that should belong to it is to provide a State steamship service to our North-West ports. This of course is socialistic, and on that ground the member for Kimberley cannot perhaps support it. At the same time, that member will support the construction of a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar. And I would like to say it does appear to me it is just as easy to carry the people's goods up the coast, and also the people themselves, as it is to carry them inland after they get to the coast. I think it is the duty of the Government to introduce some Government steamers on that coast. I am convinced that before we can have the full benefit of a developmental policy in that part of the State we require this Government service. In regard to the freezing works at Wyndham, I should like to say I believe it is the duty of the Government to assist and foster, as far as possible, every industry in the State, whether pastoral, mining, manufactur-

ing, agricultural, or any other industry, and I believe that freezing works in various parts of the north of the State would certainly give an impetus to stock raising in the State. But what I have heard of these proposals so far—the Premier gave us a little more light into it this afternoon—is that it has been a subsidy to the meat ring, and seeing it is a subsidy to that ring, I can assure the Government they will receive strong opposition from the Opposition side of the House. I have made some inquiries into the working of that meat ring, and I find it deliberately—well, robbing the consumer and the producer of stock. We are not far behind in things that America has produced in the way of rings. We find that the small stock owner, and there are small men there, are at the mercy of the meat ring. This ring almost absolutely compels the small man to sell to them. We find this meat ring monopolises the whole of the cattle trade from Kimberley, and the small man who is endeavouring to send his cattle down has to pay Connor, Doherty, and others running the ring, a royalty for the privilege of sending cattle in their boats. We know what they are doing to us by the price we have to pay for meat down here. The Government are farther strengthening the hands of the ring by giving them a subsidy of £40,000. The member for Kimberley says they have not asked for it. We know who waited on the Minister and asked for this grant. We know that Frank Connor, member of another place, headed the deputation. We do not know a great deal, but we are often likely to guess right at times, and if we see a prominent member of the meat ring heading a deputation which asks for a subsidy on the meat works, it is only reasonable to conclude he is in it. Leaving the meat ring we will come to the rabbits. I agree with the member for Kimberley in this regard, that the Government should immediately construct the fence to prevent the rabbits getting into Kimberley. In speaking during last session I opposed loan money being expended on the rabbit-proof fence, and stated that the rabbits were held inside of it,

and the member for Gascoyne took me to task somewhat, but almost before the ink was dry on that speech in *Hansard* my statement was fully endorsed by the head inspector of the department. He stated that the rabbits were inside and that it was impossible to get them out again. I say this with regard to the Minister for Agriculture, because we have heard of his wonderful doings, and that he does a lot of work.

Mr. Hudson: He started in a motor car to my electorate the other day but did not get there.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In that instance he got there, as in other instances, after the horse was stolen. My experience of many things on the part of the Minister for Agriculture is that he locks the stable door after the horse is stolen, the same as he has done with regard to the rabbit-proof fence. I trust this policy will not be adopted in regard to the rabbit-proof fence to keep the rabbits out of Kimberley. If the fence is not commenced in the near future it will be better to let it go altogether. On the other hand I say that Kimberley is a splendid pastoral country, and it will be invaluable to Western Australia in the future. We must also bear in mind that this country is not alienated, it belongs to the State, and I feel that by protecting the country from this pest, and it is undoubtedly the greatest pest Western Australia ever had, we shall be doing something at least for posterity. I feel sure the Kimberleys will prove to be a source of considerable wealth to the whole of the Commonwealth. I trust the Government will not follow the same line of policy in regard to this fence as they have in regard to the other fences. However, in regard to this matter I can endorse the remarks made by the member for Kimberley, that the present fence has driven the rabbits in there. They would not have been there for many years to come if the rabbit fence had not been constructed, but now the fence is constructed they come up against it and run off, and unless some check is made in the near future Kimberley will be overrun with rabbits just the same as every other part of Western Australia will be. There is another matter in regard to dingoes. I

would just point out that the dingo is a considerable pest. I think some of my friends on the other side will agree with me in this matter, and if it is possible to check or entirely eradicate the pest, we should do so. I think that the pastoralist is certainly not very hard pushed. He is a man on the average who is doing fairly well; perhaps he is doing better than those in other industries in the State. He is able to pay something towards the cost of destroying the dogs, and I think I can say he is prepared to do so. The year before last—I have not the figures for the year just closed—nearly £2,000 was spent in the destruction of dingoes. I think that work could have been done more effectually with a little management. I consider that legislation should be introduced and a tax imposed for this purpose, and then all the pastoralists would at once be compelled to pay something towards the destruction of dogs. The man farthest out has to kill the dogs and the man near the coast has the best of it in other respects and in regard to dogs also.

Mr. Hudson: Outside the Government pay 5s., inside they pay 10s.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In regard to this matter those rearing sheep are put to greater expense in this matter than those raising cattle; in fact the man raising cattle allows the dogs to accumulate on his run, but the man next to him, who is trying to rear sheep, has to go to the expense of killing the dogs. The Government could fairly introduce legislation whereby a tax could be imposed, and the amount raised thereby subsidised. In this way all hands would be compelled to take their share in the destruction of dogs. I have a letter from a person up north regarding this matter, and he says:—

“I may state for your information that I wrote to all the gentlemen who represent northern and north-west constituents, as well as to the Premier, and received very sympathetic replies from all of them, with the promise to bring the matter before the House at an early date.”

I looked through *Hansard* and found the only member who mentioned this in the

House was the member for Magnet, who asked the question, whether the Government intended to introduce legislation on the matter, and the Premier replied "yes." This seems so characteristic of the present Administration, sympathetic messages and promises, but if they would only kill dogs instead of killing time, as the member for Mount Magnet says, perhaps the State would be in a better condition. We have heard "trying it on the dog," but the pastoralists in the North-West have tried the Premier's promises on the dogs and found promises ineffective. In regard to the stock tax, of which we have heard so much, I join with the Premier in congratulating Mr. Canning on the success of his trip, and not only on the success of his trip, but on his undertaking the trip at all. I feel sure it will be of great benefit to Western Australia that the stock route has been discovered. At the same time I asked the Premier the question, if he intended to allow tick cattle to come down that track, but the Premier did not answer. In my opinion there will have to be great care exercised as to what cattle are allowed to come down that track. If tick cattle are allowed to come down the tick will spread through various districts. I am mentioning this matter early for fear that the Agricultural Department will get in after the tick has spread again. The member for Kimberley made some remarks regarding the necessity for introducing legislation to prevent the illicit buying of pearls in Broome. That has given me an opportunity of saying a few words on what I have heard of Broome. I think before we do anything for Broome we should examine what advantage Broome is to us. I am certain that Broome at the present time is no use to Western Australia financially; it is derogatory physically and morally. We find that practically the whole of their supplies come from Singapore and other Asiatic ports, that their workmen are all Asiatics, and that almost everything required comes from Asia, while the pearls go away to Asia. Then there is the great boast by the member for Kimberley that the North-West is supplying half the pearls of the world. I think

it is a great pity that Western Australia is not getting a better advantage out of half the world's supply of pearls. I am pleased the Premiers' Conference has not power to settle things, and I am glad there is a Federal Parliament, and that the State Premiers cannot do all they desire. The Premier told us that he was doing something very great when he tried to get a motion passed before this Premiers' Conference that the number of the aliens in the pearling industry should not be decreased. I certainly think the Federal Parliament will shortly have something very different to say. I contend that white men can get these pearls; and if they cannot, then it is far better to leave the pearls lying at the bottom of the ocean. [*Mr. Male*: They will not do it.] Broome is the greatest sink of iniquity outside of Asia. [*Mr. Male*: Have you been there?] We heard the Premier ask how many Asiatics there were. So far as I can judge there are about 2,000 to 3,000 Asiatics at Broome, and about 300 white people; and it is positively known that illicit pearl dealing is rampant, and that there are few who are not dealing in these pearls. There is a strong suspicion that a good deal of opium smoking goes on amongst these Asiatics. [*Mr. Bath*: And worse than that.] We know of many worse things than that. I maintain that if Broome is really to keep going it should be kept going with white men; and if it cannot be kept going with white men it should be closed down entirely, and these Asiatics sent back to their own country. There are many people well versed in the affairs of Broome who contend that a massacre there is quite probable in the near future. I have stated previously that it should be the policy of every true Australian to endeavour to populate that North-West country with white men so that we will have men there to defend us when the enemy, who is sure to come, will put in an appearance. In the event of an enemy coming to Broome what will happen? The member for Kimberley tells us that these gentlemen are on the books as "British seamen." Well these "British seamen" of Broome will simply

turn round and cut every white throat, sack the town, and clear out with their masters' luggers. I would like to say a few words in regard to the statement made as to the ability of white men to work in that country. I have heard many men who have never been in the North-West—I am speaking now of the old North-West—state that white men cannot work there, and I have read it too. I can say as a man who has been there and has lived in it for eight years, who has pursued every kind of occupation, in the sun and in the mines, that white men can easily do it, and that the proposition that white men cannot work there has absolutely no foundation in fact. We have heard considerable talk about the difficulties of the North-West. We have heard our friends of the Parliamentary Party who visited that part of the country complaining about the great difficulties of their trip; and the Minister for Mines, I believe, considered that it was no picnic. The recent trip of the Parliamentary Party was no picnic; but at the same time it would take an enormous stretch of imagination to make it an arduous task. I do not wish to boast, but I carried my swag about 600 miles in that country between December and February; and my track was not blazed with broken bottles. [Mr. Horan: No more was the Parliamentary Party's, as you well know.] With regard to the statement that white men cannot be employed in the North, I wish to give it emphatic denial as a man who has worked there. Now we come to a matter a little nearer home, and that is tick camels. We heard a little about these camels last year. The member for Murchison asked one or two questions with regard to them. We found that there was a great deal of publicity given to this camel question, and almost everybody interested knew exactly the day on which the camels were to land at Port Hedland, that is everybody I presume except the Agricultural Department. These 500 odd camels arrived at Port Hedland, and after a couple of them had been landed the police stopped the landing because the beasts were covered with tick; but the magistrate there overrode

the decision of the police and ordered them to go on landing the camels. Then the people of Port Hedland of course wired to Perth regarding the matter, and the Premier telegraphed back stating that the camels were not to be landed until the stock inspector arrived. This is the first point to which I wish to draw attention. The telegram left here on Thursday morning, and special arrangements were made for it to go along the wires. In the ordinary course of events the telegram should have arrived at Port Hedland at dinner time that day. I do not say when it arrived, but it came to light at Port Hedland at dinner time on Friday, immediately after the last camel had been landed. Whether the telegram got to Port Hedland previously or not I cannot say, but I know that special arrangements were made in Perth to send that telegram there immediately. We all know that if one wants to land a dog at Fremantle, even from Victoria, the stock inspector must be there, and that the dog has to be quarantined for a considerable time and inspected; but the Agricultural Department, with the really best Minister of the lot, timed the stock inspector to arrive at Port Hedland about five days after the camels had landed, and he had to drive 50 miles over the bush before he arrived at the last of the camels. They were spread right over the bush before the inspector got to them, and then the Government came with the excuse, with the poor subterfuge, that it was only private enterprise and that a few people who had camels there were complaining and that there was nothing in it. I maintain that the statement was an insult to the people of Port Hedland, and I beg to hand it back on their behalf. The inspector came up there and he assured the people that the ticks were all dead; yet we find that these ticks have got into all the other camels, and we have assertions made that they are in at least one horse. I say that the Agricultural Department was culpably negligent in that matter. Whether the tick was dangerous or not it does not matter; we do not allow a snake to bite us and find out afterwards whether it is poisonous.

When the tick were seen on the camels, the camels should not have been landed, and the magistrate who overrode the police should certainly get his cheque at the earliest possible time. [*Mr. Scaddan*: Hear, hear. And a few others.] The excuse they have about these things is that tick will not get on to any other animal, that the camel is the host of this tick, and that all round there is really no danger. This is what they tell us after the camels have got over a great cattle and sheep-producing district. In regard to this host theory, I would like to say that we all know that the kangaroo tick will live on a dog, and also on a human being; and I think it will be found yet, unfortunately, that the camel is not the only host of that tick introduced through the neglect of this great Agricultural Department into the largest stock-producing district of the State. In conclusion I would like to say that there is still farther trouble in regard to this matter. With these camels there were 48 Afghan drivers who were allowed by the Commonwealth Government to land. I would point out to the members for Swan, York, and Perth that the Federal Government took the precaution of sending an officer to Port Hedland before the steamer arrived, while the State Government sent their inspector after the camels had spread over the district. The much abused Federal Government, which is robbing this State and doing a lot of other things, at least tried to protect us and gave their officer at Port Hedland every assistance in the matter, while the State Government let the camels spread all over the place. These Afghans had to return to India, and only a few weeks or so ago the police were prepared to put them on board, but the Afghans refused to go, and the magistrate again ordered the police to desist and not to touch the Afghans. [*Member*: Who is the magistrate?] Dr. Burton. The whole thing smells a little stronger than the ordinary camel train. There is just one other matter of administration in the North-West to which I would like to call attention—as it is a paltry matter I must apologise for introducing here—it is in

reference to a commonage applied for at Old Shaw. At Old Shaw there are many prospectors, and they want a commonage to run their horses on. I made application in the matter on the 4th of October of last year. It was put through the offices here, the Mines Department and the Lands Department, at a fairly rapid rate, and was referred on to the Warden of the Pilbarra Goldfield for a report. I have been to the department on dozens of occasions since then, and the only information I can get in regard to the matter is that they are still waiting for that report. This is a matter that should certainly have been attended to in a very few days. If the Warden at Marble Bar were in any way competent or desirous to do his duty he would have had a report within a week. [*Mr. Taylor*: How long has he been there?] About ten years. A doctor acting as Warden for a large goldfield like Pilbarra is altogether out of place. Quite apart from his capacity he cannot perform his duties owing to his medical work. The Minister for Mines deliberately promised Mr. J. K. Weir that he would remedy this matter and would appoint a mining engineer to act as Warden for that place. That promise was made in November last, yet when the Minister visited Marble Bar he endorsed farther the appointment of an officer for 12 months under the present unsatisfactory system.

The Minister for Mines: What authority have you for saying that I promised Mr. Weir that an engineer would be appointed Warden?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: My own ears. Just a word or two as to a medical man acting as a magistrate, and I will say at the outset that I think he is the most unsuitable man it is possible to appoint. A medical man gives a life's study to the science of medicine, and if he does well in that surely he does well indeed. No man has yet been able to master that science fully, and one who gives his whole life to the study of it cannot devote his time to other matters. Again his very occupation renders him hardened and callous to a great extent to human nature. He must lose a great deal of

the milk of human kindness owing to his position and his work, and the possession of this quality is absolutely necessary in a good judge. My experience tells me that medical men are absolutely the worst men to appoint to the positions of magistrates. In regard to a speech made by the Minister for Mines in the Mechanics' Institute, Perth, recently, I have a word or two to say. I do not mind his joke as to the "rattiness" of my constituents and myself, but I do protest against that portion of his speech in which he refers to an application for a well at Bernes flat. In referring to this matter he said that the application was to put the well alongside the hotel. That is a good joke but it is absolutely incorrect. The well was applied for before the hotel was built, and the Minister will find that the first objection to the well was that it was alongside Macdonald's store. I do not come to Parliament to advocate the sinking of a shallow well, but I hold that the proposition to sink this one was just and fair. I protest against the Minister making the false statement he did.

The Minister for Mines: I think that the hon. member should withdraw that statement.

Mr. Taylor: The statement was made at a public meeting.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must withdraw that remark. Exception has been taken to the words "false statement" which are considered to be offensive, and the hon. member must, according to parliamentary procedure, withdraw the remark.

Mr. Taylor: If a member of Parliament or a Minister makes a statement on the public platform and an hon. member in this House says that was a false statement, can objection be taken to the remark, and is it right to call upon him to withdraw?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member knows full well that any word which is considered by any member to be offensive must be withdrawn.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I apologise to you, sir, for having gone out of bounds, and plead ignorance. I would say that it is absolutely incorrect for the Min-

ister to make the statement he did. I resent the Minister's remarks as to that well, and I take them as a reflection on me as also on my constituents. As to the general policy of the Government, the first item that attracts me is the proposition of the Minister for Mines that we should practically do away with the labour conditions on the mines. I do not feel at all worried regarding this, as I am sure from what I saw of the present Administration last session, that they will back down when they find opposition arising to their proposal. I am confident that the whole of the mining districts of this State are totally opposed to the Minister on this point. I contend that, if the present fairly liberal laws relating to mining are not carried out and the work is not done on the properties, the owners should stand aside and let someone else work the mines. A Minister for Mines who attempts to introduce legislation which will give a man power to occupy land for years without doing any work on it, will not retain his position very long. We are told that, under the present system, there is no security of tenure, that the mining companies have to work the ground and fulfil stringent labour conditions, and that exemption is hard to get. Now there are a number of mines in the North-West which have been lying idle for a very long time. There is for instance the Lalla Rookh which has been idle for three years; another mine has not been worked for four years and a third has been practically always idle. At Bamboo Creek one mine has been on tribute for about eight or nine years, and when the owner is unable to fix up favourable tribute he gets exemption. The proposed new law practically means that any big company will be able to get exemption for ever. I contend that in the past the mines have had too much exemption and that there has not been sufficient stringency shown even in the administration of the existing laws. My idea is that the only reason for the Cabinet bringing in the new Bill is because they reckon they will be going out of office soon and will get this measure through before the

new Government—who will administer the existing Act properly—take office. Another statement has been made that good mines will always be worked whether there are labour conditions or not. At Whim Creek there is the finest copper mine in Western Australia. It is a freehold and for the last five years and until a few months ago it has been idle. We all knew that copper was there but we could do nothing. This instance fully answers the statement that where there is good value in a property it does not require labour conditions. The ground to which I referred should have been worked for at least five years instead of only for a few months. The member for Subiaco reckons that there is very little difference between the policy of this side of the House and that of the Government. In the case of the mining industry alone there is a great difference, for while they want no labour conditions we require them to be even more stringent than they are. This position reminds me of a story of a man who made application for a job and who would have got it only for one word; the man to whom he applied for the job said "No" instead of "Yes." The Government desire to give more exemption and this side of the House desires to give less. As a prospector and a man who has been through this country and has owned a small mine, I consider that it would be the worst thing that could be done in the interests of Western Australia to lessen the labour conditions. It has not been the security of tenure that has prevented me from working ground, but the fact that someone else has held it and has failed to work it. [*The Minister for Mines* : You did not show much for the lease while you held it.] When I finished with the claim I went to the Registrar and handed in the forfeiture so that I would not appear to hold ground after having finished working it. The cry that this exemption will assist the prospector is most incorrect. I am sure that the whole of the prospectors', the poor man, the leaseholders and the miners working claims are entirely opposed

to the proposals of the Government in this direction. With regard to the Arbitration Act it has been forced upon me, ever since the late award in the timber industry, that this Act has practically failed. Of course the member for Perth finds great jubilation in that, but I do not, for it is a matter of great seriousness to Western Australia. Bloated capitalists like the member for Perth of course will say that the workers are now completely beaten owing to the failure of this Act, but I can assure him he is entirely wrong. [*Mr. Brown* : I said no such thing.] I was only supposing that you thought it. The causes of the failure of this Act are many. In fact, it was only experimental legislation and its most sanguine supporters always had some doubt as to its practicability. I am sure it could have done better had it received what is absolutely essential for its success—sympathetic administration; and that is what it did not get. I can only say that the pin-prick policy pursued by the registrar, I suppose under the instruction of the Law Department, had much to do with making a number of workers dissatisfied with the Act. Again, to be successful it is necessary to have as President of the Court a Judge who can take his mind out of the rut of legal technicalities, and get down occasionally to sound common sense. This is of course a big contract, because a Judge has been trained to law all his life as a doctor has been trained to physic, and it is undoubtedly hard for a Judge to get away from the rules of evidence and legal formalities. If the Judge could realize that he was to settle the dispute and not to depend so much upon the law of evidence, if he could recognise that he has to work in the interest of the State, he might possibly succeed. But so far in Western Australia we have not had that sort of Judge. However, the Speech contains a proposal for the amendment of the Arbitration Act. If the Government are in earnest, I will certainly give them my heartiest support. I do not agree with the member for Perth (*Mr. H. Brown*) that the best method of settling disputes is by strikes and lockouts. In fact I hold the

opinion that our friends the enemy professed to hold some considerable time ago, that such industrial wars are not in the interests of the State; and holding that opinion, I deem it my duty to devise some means of settling such disputes without resorting to force, and force will certainly be resorted to if the Act is not amended. Those who are complaining so loudly of the failure of the Act twit the Labour party with the fact that it was our Act. So it was; and admitting that it has failed, they must not forget that we can go back to strikes and lockouts as well as they; and if they are looking for fight, we will give it them. In other words, fighting is now forced upon us, and if we cannot avoid it, well "lay on Macduff." As to the timber industry I do not wish to speak at great length, but it is apparent to everybody that we have in Western Australia the only jarrah forest in the world, and as fine a belt of timber as there is anywhere. It is also patent to all who consider the position that Australia, and Western Australia particularly, will in the near future be short of timber; and yet we are now denuding that splendid forest for what? The State is receiving practically nothing in the shape of rent; the railway charges have been cut down again and again to suit the Combine; the men employed in the industry have immense difficulty in securing a living wage for doing the work; and then we have the representative of the Combine informing us that the Combine is losing money, and we have a Judge of the Arbitration Court who believes him. In my opinion it is absolutely necessary that the timber Combine should be wiped out of the affairs of this State. The leader of the Opposition has pointed out the great difficulties which the United States are having with combines, and it behoves this State to stamp them out before they get so strong a hold as they have acquired in that country. We know what combines can do. I have just said that a Judge believed a representative of the Timber Combine. Well, from what I have seen of combines, I must say that I do not put falsehood past them. We have seen what combines have done in

South Africa; we have seen what was done there by the owners of the Transvaal mines with their bought Press which lied for years to bring about the war; and the people who owned those mines own the Timber Combine. They are the same shareholders, or practically the same; therefore we know what we have to expect when dealing with a combine of that sort. We have seen that they will go to any imaginable length, so that in South Africa they could even mullock up their stopes with dead Chinamen. We have seen how they treated women and children in the concentration camps, the number of men killed in the war, the money it has cost in England; we have seen their lying to bring about the war, we have seen their army contracts afterwards, and we find that all this was undertaken simply for the sake of an extra sixpenny dividend; and from the experience we have had of Teesdale Smith we see that he would do the same in Western Australia if the men of this country would allow him. And the Government would assist him. We have had his historic evidence that the Combine did not employ women and children. Exactly so. Those men who ran the country in South Africa did not employ women and children. They slowly killed them with starvation and pestilence, in the concentration camps, and Teesdale Smith would do the same with the women and children of Australia if we would allow him. His statement that he did not employ women and children proves that clearly. A man who could make such a cowardly, cold-blooded statement as that would do it. I contend that it is the duty of Western Australia to wipe that Combine out of the affairs of this State. Speaking some time ago on this matter, the Premier said he would like to close the thing down, but he did not know how to do it. He would really like to keep the timber. I have said before and will say again that when the timber industry is in so serious a condition a man who is too tired to try is too tired to be Premier of this State. It is quite possible to cut sufficient timber at a reasonable price to supply the wants of Western Australia, and to leave the

rest to stand there till this State requires it, or till other parts of the world are prepared to pay us an adequate price for such splendid material ; and this can be done by getting rid of the present Combine and introducing State mills into that timber country.

The Treasurer : And sacking three thousand men.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : The three thousand men would pull through. We will look after them. Another feature of the timber industry is the area of good agricultural land locked up by this Combine. Those who go through that country will find that, where it is cut out, some of the best land in the State is gripped by the Combine, who defy the people of the State to go on it. It is right down near the railway and port ; but the Government are building spur lines away back across sand patches while the Combine lock up good land near the railways and port.

Mr. Gordon : Name one spot.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : Jarrahdale.

Mr. Gordon : You are talking absolute rot.

Mr. UNDERWOOD : The member for Canning is a judge of rot—dry rot. I have just a few remarks to make about the great Premiers' Conference. I have thought this matter out and have come to the conclusion that the conference was the aggregation of nonentities who arrogated to themselves the powers delegated to the Federal authorities. We have it in the Speech, after saying what the conference consisted of, without turning a hair—

“ My Ministers regret that no settlement which can be deemed satisfactory to this State was arrived at.”

How could they expect it? Who had the right to give any power to settle anything? Had the Premier of New South Wales, that great handyman, the man of no ability except “handy,” who was anti-social until the electors knocked the stuffing out of his hay-bag? The Premier comes back and tells us that no settlement was arrived at, and never turned a hair. The more we consider that conference of Premiers the more we should

be convinced of its utter uselessness. What power had these Premiers to do anything in connection with Federal matters? The Premier has told us that they were trying to agree as to the taking over of the loans. What have they to do with the matter? The Federal electors decided that long ago. The West Australian electors by electing Pearce and others decided that we were going to hand over debts to the Commonwealth. I would like to ask who gave the Premiers power to settle these matters? We appointed men to the Federal Parliament to settle these matters, and I am glad to say I have every trust in the Federal members settling the matters to the advantage of Western Australia. I would just like to mention the member for Perth's request that the Government at an early date would introduce a Bill for a referendum to enable this State to secede from Federation. If the Government have no business ready they might bring such a Bill down to fill in time. I would like to mention to the members for York and Perth that a referendum has no possible chance of being carried in the affirmative, and if carried in the affirmative it would have no possible effect. I was going to say a word or two about finances, but really it is not worth while seeing that the Government fairly admit they have made a serious mess of the finances. The Speech hopes that the finances will be placed on a satisfactory basis during this session, which implies that they are on a very unsatisfactory basis at the present time. I am pleased that the Government have the honesty to recognise the mess they have got the finances into, and I trust the Government will get out of the mess. There are other things I should like to mention, and one is that we have been informed by the *West Australian*—this was after the Treasurer had made a speech—that the Treasurer being imbued with sound business principles his words were to be considered and taken as very weighty remarks. I like this platitude about business principles and I would like to consider it for a moment or two. What are business principles? Is it the successful business man, the man who

does most for himself? If that is the standard we judge sound business principles by in Perth, the *West Australian* is right. Another matter that is rather more serious, and it was a matter that was brought up in the House last session, is with regard to the goldfields water supply. From information received I am positive that supply is being polluted. I am no alarmist and I say that up to the present no harm has been done; but unless measures are adopted in the future that scheme which is one of the finest in the world, with about the purest supply of water in Australia, will be silted up by the filth carried from the immediate surrounding country. This is absolute fact. Although the matter was discussed in the House last session, on a motion by the member for the Swan, nothing has been done in the matter. During the summer stock and pigs are running across the gullies close to the reservoir, and if the by-laws were enforced, which they are not, they would not prevent it. The refuse from the stock, as everyone knows who has been anywhere in the back country, would be quickly washed into the reservoir with the first rains. That is a position any member can grasp. At the present time the reservoir is being silted up by the filth from the stock depastured immediately on the banks of the reservoir. For a year or two it will show no effect on analysis, but unless this trouble is prevented it will pollute the water, so that one of the finest water schemes in the world will be polluted through the lack of energy on the part of the Government of the State. There are Mr. Jacoby's vineyards close to the reservoir, and Mr. Jacoby uses some thousands of gallons of water to wash out his wine casks, and he also uses plenty of caustic soda, all of which goes into the dam. The Government thought to get over the difficulty by introducing by-laws, but these by-laws are not enforced. When the matter was brought before the House last year by the member for Swan, the Minister for Works said the Government could not take action in the matter because of a few land owners attempting to force a

sale on the Government at an extortionate price. On that I supported the Government; but I find that the Government are not enforcing the by-laws. They are afraid to do so. The residents say they are quite prepared to go to the Supreme Court to test their right to be there or not. If the Government do not test this matter by enforcing the by-laws they will allow the reservoir to silt up. This is a serious matter and deserves the earnest consideration of the Government. There is another matter worthy of a few remarks; I refer to the Agent General's office. I am satisfied it is time to abolish this refuge of derelict politicians. I have long been considering whether Western Australia received its value for the money spent in connection with the Agent General, and I have recently come to the conclusion that the office is a total waste of money. In fact it is worse than that. We have men in England supposed to be representing Australia, and they are by no means representative Australians. As I have said it is a refuge for derelict politicians, and instead of advertising the State I think they are doing considerably otherwise. The supporters of the system say that the Agent Generals advertise the State. I have seen some of their methods. There was a great banquet given the other day, with a splendid menu which was sent out to Australia, and there were many guests there, probably showing what fine politicians they were. [*Mr. Collier:* And an expensive cablegram was sent.] When we talk of advertising, it is advertising we want; but judging by their self-advertising, the present Government are the most competent I have struck. I never came across more Bill Adamsons in my life. We have the Premier posing as the man who settles timber disputes, the Minister for Works as the man who built the dock, and the Minister for Mines as the man who found Pilbarra. [*Mr. Taylor:* And the Attorney General found Queensland, and the Treasurer Japan.] If the Government devoted some of their undoubted ability to advertising the State they might perhaps do sufficient to enable us to abolish the

Agent General's office. There are one or two advertisements, however, I desire to mention; one is the fact that the timber industry in the State offers 7s. 3d. a day; another is the statement allowed to go forward that the timber industry cannot employ women and children. Another advertisement I protest against is one the Premier gave us when he, as Premier, sent a begging letter to Carnegie. [*Member*: How did it get on?] As it deserved; there was no reply. It is very rarely I am ashamed of our country, but I did feel ashamed when I saw our Premier's name under a begging letter to Carnegie. I trust the Premier will refrain from doing that in the future. It was a request for a donation for the Goldfields' Fresh Air Fund. It was not merely an application to a foreign country for assistance to give our children fresh air, but it was an admission that our country had a lot of foul air in it. Australia has the finest, healthiest, and most rarified air in the world; and I would advise, with all due respect to that society on the fields, that they should alter the name; because if there is any place where fresh air can be got it is inland on this continent. In regard to advertising, as a rule it is only the spiffs and shoddies that require advertising; the all-wool advertises itself. In my opinion Western Australia is all-wool, and if we were half-efficiently governed it would speak for itself in no uncertain language.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.25 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th July, 1907.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the *Colonial Secretary*: Report of Education Department for 1906.

COMMITTEES OF THE SESSION.

On motions by the *Colonial Secretary* sessional committees were appointed as follow:—

Printing Committee: The President, Hon. G. Randell, and the mover.

Library Committee: The President, Hon. W. Kingsmill, and Hon. J. W. Hackett.

Standing Orders Committee: The President, Hon. M. L. Moss, the Chairman of Committees, the Hon. G. Randell, and the mover.

House Committee: The President, Hon. R. F. Sholl, Hon. R. D. McKenzie, Hon. C. Sommers, and the mover.

MOTION—DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE OF PERTH.

On motion by the *Hon. M. L. Moss*, ordered that a return be laid on the table of the House, showing—1, The amount actually expended in Perth for works in connection with deep drainage and sewerage since the present Government took office. 2, What contracts have been let in connection with the same works, showing the amounts thereof during the same period. 3, Similar information with reference to expenditure and contracts as mentioned in (1) and (2) in connection with the same works at Fremantle. 4, What works are intended to be undertaken at Perth and Fremantle respectively, during the year ending 30th June, 1908.