

the proposals of a Government that was admittedly kept in power by the Labour party. In view of that fact, they may speculate as to what this Labour Government may propose for Western Australia. I am prepared now to leave in their hands the destiny of the finances believing that a fair deal will be given to Western Australia; and if it comes to Unification or Federal rule I consider we shall be better governed by that same party than by the present State Government.

On motion by *Mr. Ware* debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 17th November, 1908.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, "Electoral Act, 1907."—Rules of the Court of Disputed Returns. 2, Report of the Chief Harbour Master for year ended 30th June, 1908. 3, "Roads Act, 1902."—By-laws of the following Road Boards: (a) Toodyay; (b) Melville; (c) Ashburton; (d) Upper Gascoyne. 4, Goldfields Water Supply.—Balance Sheet for year ended 30th June, 1908. 5, Government Savings Bank.—Report for 1908. 6, "Audit Act, 1904."—(a) Orders in Council under Section 35: (b)

Amendments to Regulations. 7, Lands Department.—Report for 1907-8. 8, Government Savings Bank.—Annual Balance Sheet, etc., for 1908. 9, Report of the Superintendent of Public Charities and Inspector of Industrial and Reformatory Schools for 1907. 10, Land Titles Department.—Report for 1907-8.

CORONATION PICTURE, A GIFT.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. H. Briggs): On the opening day of the session Sir Edward Stone, the Lieutenant Governor, expressed a desire to present an historical engraving to the Council, and I ventured to promise on your behalf a thankful acceptance of such a generous gift. Your pleasure will be increased when you hear from Sir Edward's letter the interesting and kindly feelings which prompted his graceful act.

Perth, 16th November, 1908.

My dear Mr. President,—I have much pleasure in presenting to the Legislative Council a subscription print etching of the Coronation of H.M. King Edward VII., after the State picture painted by Edwin A. Abbey, R.A. It is particularly gratifying to me to be able to do this, in view of my association with the old Council as Clerk, and afterwards as a nominee member. Believe me, sincerely yours, (signed) E. A. STONE.

The Hon. H. Briggs, President Legislative Council.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): I may be permitted on behalf of this House to express our thanks to the Lieutenant Governor for the handsome gift of the historical picture, and I have much pleasure in moving that the President be requested to write to the Lieutenant Governor expressing the thanks of this House for the gift of the picture representing the Coronation of His Majesty, King Edward VII.

Hon. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. It comes with peculiar pleasure for me to be able to do this, in view of my old associations with His Excel-

lency, and I am very pleased he has thought it desirable to present this beautiful engraving to be placed among the archives, if I may use the expression, of this honourable House. I am quite sure members will appreciate the handsome gift. It will remain in this House for a great number of years, for hundreds of years I hope, on exhibition for those who care to see it. I join heartily with the expression of thanks to the Lieutenant Governor for the handsome present he has made to this House.

Motion put and passed.

QUESTION — TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY, PROSPECTING ALONG ROUTE.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Are the Government aware that with the object of obtaining information regarding the mineralised country in the area affected by the proposed Transcontinental railway between Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie, the South Australian Government have sent a party of prospectors, equipped for a twelve months' absence, and under the leadership of Mr. R. W. Hutton, to thoroughly search the country for gold and other metals on both sides along the route which is being surveyed from Tarcoola to the Western Australian border. 2, What action, if any, is being taken by the Western Australian Government to prospect the country in the neighbourhood of the route that is being surveyed within the Western Australian border?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, A member of the Geological staff has been sent to thoroughly examine the country on both sides of the proposed railway route. On receipt of his report consideration will be given to the question of assisting prospecting parties or of taking other steps to prospect the country in question. Mr. F. Hann, who was also sent out to follow a course parallel and to the North of the proposed route of the railway, has returned, and his report will be made available.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

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

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

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

Library Committee.—The President, Hon. W. Kingsmill, and Hon. Dr. Hackett.

House Committee.—The President, Hon. R. F. Sholl, Hon. R. D. McKenzie, Hon. C. Summers, and Hon. A. G. Jenkins.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the opening day, 10th November.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD (Metropolitan-Suburban): I desire to follow the excellent lead of the mover and seconder of the motion before the House, and to be brief in any remarks I have to make. In the first place I should like to congratulate the Government on having filled up the usual two pages in regard to the Governor's Address. There seems to be a good deal of matter that is very important in it, but nevertheless I think some strenuous efforts must have been used in order to fill up these customary two pages, more especially in view of the fact that it is proposed that Parliament shall rise before the Christmas holidays. I think some criticism should be passed on the manner in which the Government called Parliament together within four or five weeks of the closing year, and with such a programme as we have here. Considering these things some time should have been given to Parliament to discuss the measures, that is, if it is intended to bring before this Chamber the Bills indicated in the Speech. There are Bills here which need very serious consideration, and probably some of them will be held over and numbered among the "slaughtered innocents" at the close of the session. The Hon. Mr. Moss has re-

ferred to the breakdown in the Electoral Act at the last election in connection with one or two very important details. I do not wish to refer to that at any length, or to say more than this ; that the criticisms which are being passed elsewhere upon the administration of justice and the wrong motives attributed to the Judges who sit on our benches are scandalous in the extreme. There is, I presume, a proper mode of showing our want of confidence, if there is such, in our bench of Judges, but to bring charges and to make insinuations which cannot be replied to, is, I think a most cowardly action, especially coming from those who should set a better example, and who have pledged themselves to maintain the peace of the community. I, too, think there is a weakness in the Electoral Act, because most people are under the impression that when their names are on the electoral lists and have passed the revision court, they are entitled to vote. If we have no finality in regard to the decision concerning the eligibility of a man to vote, the result is most disappointing. The boom which is taking place in land settlement is very gratifying. We may fairly term it settlement of an abnormal character. We do not know how long it is going to continue, and probably when some of those settled on the land have had longer experience, the number of applicants for land will ease off somewhat.

Hon. C. A. Piesse : No.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD : I hope there will not be very many disappointments. We must expect a few, but the fewer the better. It is gratifying however, to find that the numbers are now keeping up and that the Government are alive to the situation. We perhaps hardly appreciate the find of phosphates made the other day. I do not know whether the discovery is of very great commercial value, for it has yet to be tested by the Government Analyst. If it is of value, then we have added another goldfield to our resources in this State. The find is greeted, I am sure, with very great pleasure by those members representing the agricultural dis-

tricts. The mining industry gives every promise of becoming permanent. Such is the feeling at Kalgoorlie, where all the merchants are making huge fortunes, and generally, there is a feeling of great confidence. There is a large number of men employed at high wages, being paid every fortnight, and this contributes to the stability of the town and the confidence in our goldfields and mines. It is now clear that the gold is going down to greater depths than was hitherto expected. Another good feature is that local investors in our mines are becoming more numerous. Those who live and work here are now taking up, working and developing properties. Reference is made in the Speech to the harmonious relations between employers and workers. This seems to be a matter which is always coming up for consideration, and I suppose that while human nature is what it is, it will always be cropping up. We find a difficulty in dealing with economic conditions by Statute law. We may modify the conditions to some extent. We may modify their harshness, but until there is a greater feeling of conscientiousness among all classes of the community, we shall not have that settlement which most of us desire. While speaking of the arbitration I should like to refer to the attempt made by some members of the Federal Parliament to control the Arbitration Acts of the States, or rather to bring the industries of the State under the control of the Federal Parliament. I think that is a matter which each State should oppose to the fullest extent. The conditions of any industry in Western Australia, or in any of the States far distant from the Commonwealth capital, cannot be known to an Arbitration Court which may sit in Melbourne or Sydney. We know our own conditions very much better than they could do, and we should oppose any effort made by the Federal authorities to get control of our Arbitration Court, and to regulate our industries in regard to the hours of work and wages paid. The Speech refers to the endeavour which has been made to keep expenditure within just and rea-

sonable bounds. There are one or two works upon which I think there has been a waste of money and of these two occur to me now : more may be thought of by other members. The first is in connection with the reclamation works in Perth water. There has been a great waste of money there. One week the shell was taken up and dumped into a certain place and a wall was made; the next week that same shell was taken up again and dumped somewhere else. Surely those who control these matters, our professional men, should avoid extravagance, waste and wrong expenditure of that kind. Then we have an instance referred to in the report of the Harbour Trust at Fremantle in relation to a vast sum of money—I think some £20,000—which has been absolutely wasted on capstans and electric cranes. Wherever the responsibility lies, it should be sheeted home to the individual, and the Government should have no place on their professional staff for the man who makes mistakes of that kind. Especially in these days when we are endeavouring to study economy we cannot afford practically to throw £20,000 into the river.

Hon. G. Randall: Where did you get your information from ?

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: From the report of the Harbour Trust published some little time ago. I hope the information is correct, for I do not like to make any wrong charges. These two are instances that occur to me on the spur of the moment. The resolutions passed at the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne are to be submitted to us for our confirmation. I do not know what they are, but I think that the wrong term has been used in the Speech in referring to them, for it would have been better to say that these resolutions would be submitted for our consideration. Parliament does not assemble merely for the purpose of passing what a Premiers' meeting decides upon. If the decisions commend themselves to our judgment then we could confirm them, but the decisions are here in the first place for our consideration. The Federal outlook is perhaps the most import-

ant question, as far as this State is concerned, at the present moment, and it will be so for the next few years. We know that the ambitions of Federal legislators are growing. Most of the members have been members of State Parliaments and accustomed to control the expenditure of large sums of loan money, and large sums of revenue money as well. Now they are finding they are restricted in their expenditure owing to the operation of the Braddon Clause. At the end of 1910 that clause will cease to operate, that is if the Federal Parliament so decide. We know very well that a big attempt will be made by the Federal Parliament to obtain, not only the one-fourth which they control already, but also the three-fourths which up to the present has been coming back to the State. Up to now they have not adopted any loan policy. I do not know whether they intend to do so in the future, but perhaps with the advent of the Labour Government they will do so. We know of the huge expenditure which the Federal Parliament will have to face during the next few years. I think there is to be the sum of £1,750,000 for Old Age Pensions, and a huge sum for defence purposes. Experts say it will take two million pounds to bring the Telegraph and Telephone Departments right up to date, and how the Federal Government are going to raise this money if they do not go in for borrowing, without making considerable inroads upon the three-fourths. I am unable to say. Maybe the idea of some is to have a Federal land tax. Up to the present we have quite enough taxes without that being added. I regret that no understanding has been arrived at between the Federal Parliament and the States in regard to immigrants. It is difficult to see where the respective spheres of the Commonwealth and the States begin and end, the lands of the States all being under the control of the State Parliaments. The only way I can see in which the Federal Government can help is by a general system of advertising and by assisted passages to immigrants; and I think the population flowing into the Commonwealth from outside will be the best advertisement

we need seek for many years to come. To have our huge unoccupied territories filled with enterprising people is the best advertisement we can look forward to for many years to come. There is only one other matter I wish to refer to, and that is the blundering of the Government—I think it has blundered—over the Early Closing Act, the Saturday half-holiday, and for the information of country members who may not have quite followed the procedure in Perth I would just like to say what the situation is, and if I say what is wrong Mr. Connolly will correct me. It seems that 15 months ago a petition was presented to the Government, signed, in the first place, by a majority of the Perth shopkeepers, asking that the Saturday half-holiday might be made compulsory. In answer to a deputation which waited upon the Premier, he stated that he could not agree to it, but that any alteration which should take place must embrace the whole of the metropolitan districts, that is from Midland Junction to Fremantle. The majority of the shopkeepers signed a petition in favour of the Saturday half-holiday and a proclamation was issued by the Governor.

The Colonial Secretary: When did the Premier say that ?

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: To a deputation ; it was reported in the *West Australian* of the 6th July, 1907. The deputation was from all the districts, and that was the answer which the Premier gave. I anticipated that question being asked so I had the date ready.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: This looks like collusion.

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: Subsequently to that the half-holiday was instituted, and the depression which is existing in Perth to-day in some departments, some people say, is attributable to the Saturday half-holiday, but I do not know that the evidence can be produced that will support that statement. If it is so the people are still here, or a majority of them. A great many have gone on the land. Many gentlemen who live in our suburbs have taken up land and are not spending so much in the City and suburbs as they did previously.

The Saturday half-holiday has done that. I know of three gentlemen who have left the suburb in which I live who generally spent £30 a week in the City and suburbs in the up-keep of their houses. The people must shop as much to-day as ever they did. I do not know that the general comfort and general welfare of the people have diminished in any degree. That Perth people should be disinclined to give up any of their business if they know that the suburbs were prospering I think is a most selfish policy to pursue, but no one wants to injure the business of Perth at all. This Saturday half-holiday continued for a space of about—well, it is continuing to-day. A subsequent petition was presented to the Governor signed by a majority of the Perth shopkeepers, and a proclamation, or a by-law, has been issued stating that from the 1st December the holiday will be optional with the shopkeepers. In the first instance the proclamation was made to apply to the whole of the metropolitan area, but this last petition is confined to Perth. In self-defence the other suburbs and Fremantle will have to petition for a similar privilege. I understand at Fremantle a petition is being prepared for presentation to the Government. I think, in the circumstances it would have been much better, seeing that Parliament is to be asked to deal with the question—it is mentioned in the Governor's Speech—it would have been better if the present arrangements had been allowed to continue until Parliament had decided the course to be followed. Just at present nobody seems to know what is the correct thing; the shopkeepers do not know, the public do not know, and the employees do not know. In the interests of Perth it would have been better had no subsequent proclamation been issued, and as it has been decided that Parliament shall deal with the question Parliament should deal with it as it stood.

The Colonial Secretary: (Interjected.)

Hon. J. W. LANGSFORD: Why was not the Act administered in the first instance when the Government asked for a petition from the whole metropolitan

area, and now the shopkeepers of Perth—I will not say are right in their attitude, for they can petition—but the shopowners of the Perth district to my mind are quite justified in petitioning. We were given to understand that any subsequent petition that was to be presented would cover the same area as the previous petition covered. The legal advisers seem to differ on the constitutional aspect of this subsequent proclamation by the Government. No doubt they have very earnestly considered the question, and my friend, Mr. Connolly, has my deep sympathy, and had my deep sympathy, in the very awkward positions which he has had to deal with right through the year. I think it would have been much better if the matter had been left over so that Parliament could have dealt with the question. The outlook of the State, I think, needs very grave caution. Some people tell us we have not yet reached the fullest degree of depression we are likely to have, but I prefer to look at the matter from the cheery and optimistic side, and to hope, at any rate, that we shall be judicious in all our legislation and wise in our administration, and then I think we shall be able to pull through, and make the State a real good one to live in.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I did not intend to speak at this early stage, and I should not have done so were it not for the fact that two notes of alarm have been struck by two members who have spoken, and it is these two notes of alarm that I desire to check, at this early stage. One remark was made by Mr. Moss, who stated in his speech in reference to the Agricultural Bank—his words which appeared in print were—

“The figures of the Agricultural Bank were in the neighbourhood of a million pounds, and he was sure that unless the greatest care and supervision were exercised the country would be landed with a great number of unprofitable securities.”

I take it the hon. gentleman did not mean to cast any reflection on the present manager of the Agricultural Bank, but he has done so, and there is no justi-

fication in the member saying what he did, and any reflections were entirely unwarranted. The securities that have been obtained by that bank against the money they have lent are second to none in the State. I only regret that more money has not been loaned out on the country lands of the State. I have no hesitation in saying that Perth would not have reached the stage it now has if it had not been for two things; one is the mining of the State, and the other, the more important of the two, the development in the agricultural districts. We find instead of encouraging the spending of money, members who ought to know better, refer to this paltry—I repeat the word, paltry—three-quarters of a million of money which has been lent to people in the country, as compared to the millions which are necessary to develop this country, and the large amount of money already spent by the people on the land themselves. On the 14 million acres already alienated, or in process of alienation, the owners will have to spend at least 14 millions of money. Those who are trying to develop the land will, at least, we can say, spend £1 per acre on the land within a given period, otherwise the land will remain unprofitable to the owner. I think, instead of Mr. Moss throwing cold water on the actions of the Agricultural Bank he should have made some inquiries before speaking on a subject that he cannot possibly know much about. It would have been just as well for the hon. member to look into the matter before making any observations and trying to influence our lending institutions not to loan money more fully on country properties. Only to-day an instance came to my knowledge, where a man with a splendid holding desired the advance of a few pounds. He was quite without the bounds of the Agricultural Bank, and he did not wish to go to one of the money-lending institutions, one of the banks. He had heard and read in many ways of firms in this City, and of lawyers and others who had money to lend. He called upon one of these firms and gave the details of his security, and then he was coolly informed that they never lent money outside the City of Perth. This is not the first time

that such an instance has come to my knowledge. Hundreds of times this has happened, and it is a source of regret that people will continue to lock up their money in the City whereas without the country the City would not be worth much. On this occasion I wish to draw the attention of the banks and to members who are advisers of money institutions—I know there are some in the House—to the need that exists for giving settlers who go to institutions for money longer terms, and if possible easier conditions in the way of interest, but if that is not possible give them, at least, a longer time. Many of the institutions in this City have lent agriculturists money, and at the end of 12 months the institutions have insisted on some of the principal being paid off. Sufficient time is not given to the agriculturist, he should not be asked to pay back some of the principal. If the security is good enough for one year, and a man pays the interest, why is it not good enough for five years, or six years, or even seven or eight years. Why should not the man on the land be made to feel he is a little comfortable so long as he is improving his property and paying the interest, so that he need not fear. Everyone knows that the farmer is making headway every year; his property is so much better on the 31st day of December as compared with the previous first of January. In each year it continues to improve; it improves by occupation alone, as everyone knows; and it seems to me utterly ridiculous to think that the banking institutions in this State will insist on the hard-and-fast rule of having portion of the principal paid back in the first year while they are content to give advances on the same security. Some provision should be made by these institutions, or at any rate an institution should be started that will lay itself out specially for this purpose; and it would be the better way, because the security is good enough for anything. If it is not good enough, then there are no securities in this State. As long as the money is lent wisely and on similar lines to those adopted by the Agricultural Bank, namely, that the improvements are to be performed, the institutions cannot go wrong; and as long as the people pay the

interest it is all that should be required of them in the first four or five years. The settlers are improving their land of course, though I am not too satisfied with the development that has taken place, great as it is, because I know that the people could do twice as much, that is, if they go about it with wisdom. Nine out of ten have to earn the capital before they can go in for any expenditure on their land; but we find that these institutions prefer to lend their money in the town as against the country. It would be better for Perth to-day if half the money put into it had been spent in the development of the country. I do not say that it should all be put into the country, but I say the country should be treated fairly, and these institutions should lend their money to those who are developing the country, provided the security is good, as freely as they do in the town. I referred to this matter at a public gathering in the Palace Hotel on one occasion, and I was told by a banker I was altogether wrong. He said these people did get good terms and that they were not asked to pay back within the 12 months, but I have proved that he is wrong; from the day the money is lent to them these people are worried to pay off portion of the principal. I am repeating myself, but I want to say again that if it is good enough to lend the money for 12 months, provided the development goes on, it is good enough to lend it for three, four or five years. Make the borrower feel that he has not to repay the principal and so give him a chance to develop the country. Mr. Langsford struck the other note of alarm. I do not know whether he has been into the country lately, or whether he has conversed with any of the settlers, or whether he knows instances where settlers are discontented. I do not know of any. The hon. member has cast a doubt as to whether these men will continue to reside on the land after a given period or whether the settlement will continue, but I have no hesitation in saying that the settlement will continue as long as we have land available, and those who know the huge area we have available will agree with me that it will be a long time before we have no land available. From Esperance to Northampton there

is land suitable for agriculture, and particularly for mixed farming, so that we need have no fear that there will be any falling off in the way of land settlement for many years to come, and it is a nice problem when we will reach that state of affairs at the rate of progress we have made. No one disputes the fact that there are fifty million acres available: there are probably sixty million or more to dispose of in the South-West of the State, the best part of the State so far as the climate is concerned, and yet only 14 million acres have been disposed of during nearly eighty years. It is a sum to work out as to how long we will take to dispose of the balance if we do not go on any faster than we have done. There need be no fear as to the land not being forthcoming, and as one who has lived among settlers and whose experience extends far and wide both East and West, I have no hesitation in saying that the settlers when they use their opportunities in a wise manner are satisfied with their prospects, and have no idea of throwing up the sponge. I trust that all references to land settlement will be of a hopeful nature. Certainly we have our setbacks. Only a short time ago we were told that our crops were going to be a failure, but those who knew the country knew differently. As a matter of fact the crops are very promising, but because they were not so good there were some who were prepared to paint a dismal picture and blazon it forth. Unfortunately, the man who tells a dismal tale has most credence given to him. If the Government contemplate altering the Land Regulations in any way I trust they will make arrangements to give longer terms to settlers who go beyond a reasonable distance from the railway, say beyond 16 to 18 miles from a railway line. I know settlers who have gone out 95 miles east of Wagin. Men like this are deserving of every consideration, and provided they pay their first instalments and survey fees they should be exempt from paying any further instalments for four or five years. We would not let them off altogether, we would make them pay

in the end, but we would give them time to utilise and develop what is at present practically useless country to us. I suggest that the gift of homestead farms of 160 acres should be done away with, and that we should in preference give these people an exemption for three years provided they pay the first instalments and survey fees by way of good faith. Something should be done for those settlers who go so far inland. Plucky fellows they are. There is one man who has left his wife and children and gone out 95 miles east of the Great Southern Railway in order to make a home for them. We should do something for this man. We collect his wheel tax and his dog tax and his confounded land tax if he exceeds a certain area, and all those other taxes; then let him be free for the first few years. We should rather pat him on the back and say "Go ahead, old fellow. In time we shall collect from you, but for two or three years we will give you a chance to make progress." I may be accused of speaking for myself on this matter, but it is necessary to do it. How many long years would we have waited had we not spoken for ourselves? I speak on behalf of those who give up their social ties and go right out into the country. It is a shame that we should make the conditions as severe on these men as on those who live five miles from a railway. We should give them special concessions to enable them to go to the outlying localities. That is my view of the question. Now I want to touch very briefly on the difficulty of getting the product of the land to the consumer. Particularly do I refer to fruit, and I am going to mention a personal matter in order to emphasise what I have to say. I have several children at school in Perth, and if I desire to send them fruit, as I have done year after year, season after season, so that they may distribute it among their schoolmates or friends, the cost is enormous. It is a downright shame that it should cost so much to send small lots of fruit to the consumer in the City. It is far better for me to send a cheque to my boys and tell them to buy the fruit in

Perth. It is just about time we had some easy condition whereby the consumer of fruit can be brought into touch with the grower. The Honorary Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department referred to this matter recently, and I trust he will not allow it to rest. It is nonsense that a case of fruit worth 4s. should cost about three times that amount by the time it reaches Perth. Our railways are there to give facilities to the people and to give easy transit, but in the country districts if we want anything urgently we have to pay special rates to get it by passenger train, otherwise we are never sure that we will get an article within five, six, or seven days of its despatch, because the goods are stuck up somewhere on the road or something else happens. Under the old system we got things into the country better, that is unless we pay the extra rate to get goods despatched by passenger train. Certainly such a state of affairs is not conducive to the development of the country. I do not wish to hamper those who are working the railways, but they should consider the convenience of the people. No doubt the enormous profit the railways show has come about from our moneyed friends in the first place, and in the second place from our agriculturists—in fact it is almost a dead tie. The producers should be considered, and when the producers are being considered the consumers are also being considered. We must have a different state of affairs for the transport of these goods from the producer and from the ports inland. I know from my experience that it is not much good referring to these matters on such an occasion as this : it seems a flash in the pan and it dies ; but I trust that something will be done in this matter and that the producers will have some relief. Mr. Langsford, if he had followed the papers, would know that there have been proper tests made in regard to the discovery of phosphates, and there is not the slightest doubt these discoveries are of commercial value. The hon. member shakes his head, but I have no reason to disbelieve the statement made by the Government officer respon-

sible for the tests, and I have sufficient faith in Western Australia to believe that what can be produced in any country can be produced here. It is only reasonable to suppose this, particularly in view of the statement of the responsible officer, a man whose knowledge is such that we should believe him. For my part I am prepared to believe that these deposits are as good as they are said to be.

Hon. J. W. Langsford: There is nothing in the Speech about them.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: The hon. gentleman is complaining about the Speech. He wants too much detail put in. I congratulate the Government upon these discoveries, which are due to the energy and the manner in which the officers who represented the department went about their work. These discoveries are going to be of immense importance to the State and probably greater even than the goldfields. I do not wish for one moment to detract from the value of the goldfields and the importance of recent developments and discoveries, but we know this important fact, that the discovery of phosphates will be of great value to the agricultural industry. I should like to say a word or two about the sinking fund. I do not want members to suppose that I want to see it done away with altogether. The only thing that concerns me at the present time is that we are taking away a quarter of a million of the people's money and placing it at interest in foreign countries at 3½ per cent. I am subject of course to correction there. Do you mean to tell me that that money would not be better in the pockets of our people developing our country? Our railways will be of much greater value later on than they are to-day and yet we are breaking our necks and breaking the hearts of our people to put away this money for such ultimate purposes. It is not done anywhere else. There is absolutely no need at all for this huge sinking fund. It is a mill-stone around our necks. Why not cut it down to say half what it is; that would be enough.

The Colonial Secretary: We cannot break existing contracts.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: I do not think there is any need to continue to provide such a huge amount. The assets as I have already stated will be of greater value when we have to repay our loans than they are to-day. I have kept the House much longer than I intended, but I trust I have made myself understood a little. I have endeavoured to explain myself and put my views before members as clearly as possible.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): I have to say in my first remarks on the Address-in-Reply that we usually say that the document is somewhat colourless. Such however is not the case in this instance. On the contrary, there are any amount of subjects touched upon. Dealing with the first question, agriculture, I do not think anyone will say for a moment that while they may have doubts about the permanence of the goldfields, which were the first to give the State a start and have since kept it going, that they are of opinion that the agricultural industry is not or will not be of considerable importance to the State. I am pleased to find that agriculture has gone ahead with such leaps and bounds, and I am also absolutely satisfied that that condition of affairs is going to continue. As far as agriculture is concerned, I think we can congratulate ourselves on the way it has progressed. The amount of land that has been taken up and the amount of cultivation that has taken place proves what the future of the industry will be. While this is a very good thing in its way, at the same time we have to remember that it is not everybody that is fitted to go on the land. We have cases in point where men who have been brought up to a certain sphere in life are not fitted for any other. I think Mr. Piesse will admit it is not every individual who is capable of going on the land, even allowing that you made him a present of the land. But at the same time I say that the way in which agriculture in Western Australia is progressing is eminently satisfactory. Agriculture is going to be one of our mainstays. It is with us now and it is here

to stay, and it will remain after many of us have been removed. With regard to the mining industry I rejoice to hear that the goldfields are far from being worked out, and that there are important developments at depth. The answer to the question that was given to-day as to what measures the Government intend to take in regard to prospecting along either side of the Transcontinental railway is, I think it will be admitted, a step in the right direction. We cannot spend too much money, consistent with our revenue, in the development of the mining industry, for it has and will continue to provide a market for nearly the whole of the produce that we can supply to the people engaged in it. I am pleased to find in the Governor's Speech the reference that the mining and agricultural industries have advanced apace. We now come to another of our primary industries; I refer to timber. In speaking of that we have only to remember that it was only a few years ago when there were very few timber mills in the State. At the present time, however, it is unfortunate in connection with this timber industry, as it is in connection with mining, that it suffers to some extent because of the unsatisfactory relations that appear to exist between the employers and the employees. Strikes to a great extent militate against the prosperity of a country, and it is generally because of the unsettled state of the labour market that we are unable to get the capital invested in the country that we would like to see. With regard to the Arbitration Act, a canny Scotchman would have said when it was passed, "I hae ma doots" about its ultimate success. This has been borne out by facts. The Act has been absolutely barren of good results. It has amounted to this, that in instances where an award has been given against an employer that award has been carried out to the letter, but in cases where the award has been given against the employee such has not been the case. Then if the award is given against an employee and he does not carry it out you cannot punish him. If you do attempt to punish him you make

a martyr of him at once. That is where the Arbitration Act has been a failure. We would like to know whether there is any possibility of amending the Act in such a direction that it will work more successfully than has hitherto been the case. I do not see any way out of the difficulty, but it seems to me up to the present time we have had no beneficial results from it. I am pleased to see in the Governor's Speech that reference is made to some amendment. I shall wait to see what that is, and if there is any possibility of it being beneficial to the community it shall have my hearty support. Dealing again with the timber industry, as I said before, within my recollection there were no mills anywhere in this State. I am speaking of when I was a young fellow. At the present time we see, where there once was nothing but silence, hundreds of men at work, but we shall also find that in the very near future most of the forests will have to a certain extent disappeared. Hon. members must bear in mind that jarrah and karri take a lifetime to grow. The question arises whether or not the Government are taking proper measures to conserve those forests, because I think it will be admitted these big timber areas are being cut out more and more every year. There are trees there which are matured and which can be cut, but there are also trees which are maturing and which also have been cut. It has been asked why should we strip these forests of marketable timber and get nothing for it? The answer comes that the timber is there, it is matured, it is fit for the market, and the people engaged in the industry will get full value for it. I think the only way of conserving the forest is by looking after the smaller trees and seeing that they are not cut. It is really up to the Government to see that precautionary measures are adopted to conserve the young forests. Reference has been made to the banking institutions in this State. All that I can say as a member of the Legislative Council is that I feel that is not my business at the present time. We do not control them in any way, but

we do control the Agricultural Bank. I am with anyone who is for assisting those who go on the land. My sympathies go out to the man who leaves everything behind him and goes pioneering on the land. I know what it means. They have my sympathy every time. But while I say the Government should assist them—and they do assist them, and have assisted them in all reasonable ways—at the same time they must use the same care that a private individual would if he were lending money on land like that. When we consider the matter we hear of certain men occasionally who have met with some difficulty in getting an advance; but that I might describe as an *ex parte* statement. We have heard the applicant complain that he could not get the money, but we have not heard the other side. We have not heard the bank's version and the reason why he could not get the advance. I wish it to be clearly understood that I am with the operations of the Agricultural Bank every time. They have worked wonders, and I think they are going to continue to do good work in the future. When this institution was first formed, the margin of profit on a ton of hay was about £4. How things have changed. At the present time that margin does not exceed £1. Now if caution were wanted when there was so large a margin, how much more caution is required to-day when the margin has been so reduced? It is all very well to say, lend the man the money and do not trouble about the repayment. We have to bear in mind there are immense areas of land granted to the settler at a price. What does it amount to after all? Simply 6d. per acre payable in 20 years, which, panned out, amounts to this much: he pays five per cent. for 20 years and the land is given him.

Hon. J. W. HACKETT: It is really six shillings an acre.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: Yes, that is so but the principal they never repay. Therefore I say, when we come to consider it the land laws are about as liberal as they can be made, and backed up as they are by the Agricultural Bank, I do think that agriculture is getting about as

much as reasonably can be expected. Not that I would curtail it in the least; but I would emphasise that caution is necessary. When Mr. Paterson had the sole control of the institution and visited every farm, and only on his recommendation advanced money, we were absolutely safe. But since those days we have vastly liberalised the conditions, and we want now to see that caution is exercised in every instance. Because one has to ask if a settler through want of knowledge makes a failure of his project, what has the bank? For the land, you must remember, really belongs to the Government all the time. I believe the officers of the bank have done their duty and are competent men; still I think the conditions are just about as liberal as in all conscience they can be expected to be.

Hon. F. Connor: What would you suggest? He must have his stock.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: I say, exercise caution. They don't lend money on stock to any extent. The question suggested to me is this, and I will answer it in this way—let every gentleman put the case to himself. If it were his own private money; if he were lending it, how would he act? Now in the Governor's Speech there is a reference to harbour works. I may be accused of parochialism when I mention this, but there is amongst other things, amongst other of our primary industries, the coaling industry. Now the Governor's Speech does not say anything about shipping coal, and in the province I represent there happens to be the only coal mines in Western Australia.

The Colonial Secretary: You had increased facilities provided there lately.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: We have had a lot done there. But I will say this much that the Government know just as well as I do that in the near future there must be facilities for shipping coal at Bunbury. I look upon that as one of the industries that is going to make the South-West. I hope the Government will bear in mind the necessity for providing facilities for shipping coal at Bunbury. I am interested in this coal industry in more ways than one, for I have been well acquainted with the mines from their infancy, and I can say

that, up to the advent of the present Government the object was to use as little Collie coal as possible. I say that was decidedly wrong, and I say that that coal has never had what it is justly entitled to. What is the price we should have been paying for coal from the other States had it not been for the assistance of Collie coal? I say the coal should be credited with that. If the coal were to be run out—of which thank goodness there is no prospect—up would go the price of the Eastern coal quick and lively. I say that Collie coal should get the credit of that. I am pleased to find that the Government are using a big proportion of Collie coal at the present time, and I hope that in the near future they will use nothing but Collie coal. Reference has been made to the fruit industry, and as a fruit grower I may say I am entirely in sympathy with the industry. As fruit-growers we have difficulties to contend with. One thing is that the cost of transit of fruit is very considerable in proportion to the value of the fruit. It has been suggested that we should bring the producer and consumer closer together. I have been somewhat diffident about mentioning that hitherto, because I made the remark after 60 or 70 individuals had had the run of my orchard, and they suggested to me that that was the way to bring the producer and consumer more in touch with one another. Fruit is like timber. The value of it when you get it to the market is not very great, and the cost of transit is very heavy in proportion. There is one direction in which the Government might give us some little easement on the carriage of fruit. Under the existing system the charge is made on the gross weight of the whole package. By this means, for every 36 lbs. of fruit one sends one is paying on from 8 to 10 lbs. of dead weight; that is the fruit case which is absolutely of no value. It costs the grower 9d. to 10d. for each and every case, and when it gets to the market that is the last of it. The only indulgence the Government could give us is to charge on the net weight of the fruit and not on the case. If for every 36 lbs. of fruit we have

to pay for 10lbs. of wood, that is a very big percentage. Speaking of the fruit industry, I venture to say that it is only in its infancy. As a fruit-grower I do not fear one scrap. Fruit at the present time is at a rather high price to the consumer. Fifteen shillings a case is very nice for the producer, but is rather rough on the man who has to consume it. That difficulty has to be overcome in this way. When the price of fruit comes down the consumption will increase ten-fold. That being so it will not be so much what we can get on a case, but what we get on our total contribution to the market. I have every confidence in this industry, and I am certain the Government will do all that they can to assist us in the matter. The question of peopling this State crops up frequently. Men say, if we could get the population here it would be all right. But we must realise also that if we had a big population we could not get the lot of them on to the land or into the mining industry; we must have other industries. How is it we have so few industries in this State? The answer is, the unfortunate step we made when we joined the Federal compact. Many of our industries—where are they? Take the tobacco factory that was in Fremantle. Where is it now? It is in the Eastern States. That sort of thing coupled with the conditions of labour in this State has retarded the starting of other industries in Western Australia. There is another question, in regard to the Kimberley district. I do not see much in the Governor's Speech about the North. Still, we have been hearing a good deal about the growing of meat and the prospects of freezing works. What is going to be the outcome of all this? What, I might ask, is the best thing to do with these great areas in Kimberley? I feel sure that that place is eminently suited for many purposes other than the depasturing of stock. That being so, would it not be possible to start other industries up there? What is being done in respect to the rubber industry? The place is well suited for that and for other industries, and I think the question ought to be faced, and let us see

what can be done in that direction. There are only one or two other little things I want to speak about. For some years I have spoken in this House on the financial position of the State, and I cannot be blamed if I express the opinion that things are not looking too bright. I am pleased to see that the Government have realised the facts of the case now. I say it is no use living in a fool's paradise. The best thing we can do is to face the situation. Many financial people in the other States know more about our financial position than do a great many in Western Australia. I am pleased to find that the Government realise that they will have to handle the finances of the State in a very cautious manner. Only a few years ago we used to boast of our surplus. Where is that surplus now? It is a long long way on the other side of the ledger. We are not going ahead. We are drifting to a certain extent. I think I am right in saying that last month we went to the bad some £80,000. I am sorry to hear that, and can only assure the Government that they have my sympathy. I rejoice to find they have spoken out, and have said definitely that things are not what they should be. There is a state of depression existing, and it is for us as men and citizens to see if we cannot do something in this matter. It is no use for us to look to the Government for everything. It is said that those who help themselves are helped from above, and that principle we should take to ourselves. The Government are to be congratulated upon the candid way in which they have mentioned the financial position. We have to bear in mind that the Braddon Clause will at the end of 1910 cease to exist, and we shall no longer receive back our percentage from the Commonwealth. We have allowed the Federal Government to take away most of our sources of revenue, and we shall have to look around now and ask ourselves what sources are left to us other than those now in existence, such as the mines, lands, etcetera. In the future we shall not get one penny from the Customs; we have had a decision from the High Court against us. If those

who agreed to enter into the Federal compact had been told at the time we joined that within nine years the Federal Government would so construe the Constitution Act as to say that the Federal Government could take all the revenue from customs and excise, the idea would have been ridiculed. At the time we entered Federation the whole financial position was taken on trust. Personally, I always like to deal with people with whom I enter into an agreement on hard business lines, in black and white, and then one knows where one is. The understanding should have been put down more clearly, and if it had been we would not be in our present financial position. Mention is made in the Speech of the question of agricultural railways. Although it seems to be almost impossible to open up country unless we have those railways, the question to be decided now is whether or not, considering the existing state of affairs, it is wise to go very much further, and whether it would not be better to wait awhile and see how the agricultural industry develops. It will be said that the industry cannot progress without railways, but it seems to me we have to study the finances and see before we go any further how we shall come out. A business man always looks to see how his business will pan out in the end and where he is likely to be landed. Reference has been made to the sinking fund, and it has been suggested that we should not continue to pay that. I disagree with that absolutely. It is a matter for us to boast of that we in this State have a sinking fund in connection with our loans, whereas it does not exist in the other States.

Hon. C. A. Piessé: On a point of order. I was the only member who referred to the sinking fund, but I did not say that the fund should no longer be contributed to.

THE PRESIDENT: That is not a point of order, it is an explanation.

Hon. C. A. Piessé: The hon. member created the impression that I repudiated the sinking fund principle. I did not do that, but was only saying what a tax it was on the people, and making sug-

gestions as to what course the Government might see fit to adopt.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: I am sorry if I have in any way reflected on any member. I sometimes get warm on a question like this, and especially as I, a business man, feel that this sinking fund is one thing upon which we can really congratulate ourselves. It is a capital scheme that the sinking fund should be established, but at the same time if the Government think it advisable to pay only a portion of it, well and good. We must remember, however, that when the money was borrowed it was obtained under certain conditions, one being, so far as I understand, that there should be a sinking fund of so much, which in a given time would liquidate the debt. I do not desire to reflect on any member, and perhaps I was wrong in referring to the question. However, if there has been any misunderstanding I am sorry for it. I always like to transact business in such a way that there cannot be a dispute. I again say that the Government are to be congratulated for placing the financial position of the State so clearly before the House, and for giving us the keynote that things are not so good as they would like them to be.

Hon. T. H. WILDING (East): Being one of those settlers on the land, and having heard the remarks of members, I can inform them that this has not been a good year in connection with agriculture. Unfortunately our yield of hay will not perhaps be quite so good as it was last year, perhaps not more than two-thirds will be reaped, but I think the wheat yield will be equal to that of last season. All our crops last year were well grown, but owing to the frosts we found on going to reap that the results were not so good as we had hoped. This year, although the crops are not so well grown, they are well headed and full of wheat. When the machines go over the ground I am sure we will find we have much better crops than many anticipate. This year has been an exceptionally bad one for us in the Eastern districts for feed: there is no doubt that some of us will have to feed our stock this season.

It is satisfactory to know, however, that this very seldom happens. Lately I travelled through the South-Western districts as far as Pinjarra, and on looking at the land I was rejoiced to see that in that part of the State splendid feed can be produced, even when we in the Eastern districts have a bad year. The possibilities of the South-Western district are very great indeed, as anyone who visits the country must realise. When the timber is off the ground and grass which has either been planted or is natural comes up, magnificent feed is provided, and there is no doubt about the great future for the district. I desire to congratulate the Government for having endeavoured to find deposits of manure, and to congratulate the country upon the fact that those efforts have been successful. I understand that the deposits are very good indeed and that the fertiliser is equal to the guano. If that is so and the supply is in large quantities, the results will be magnificent. Those of us who are on the land fully realise what a cheap fertiliser means in the production of cereals and in connection with the pastoral industry. Being on the land and having used fertilisers in connection with the growth of grasses as well as of cereals, I know what the land will produce when so treated. If we can get a cheap fertiliser all our sand plains will be turned into wheat fields. With the assistance of fertilisers in the past we have obtained eight or ten bushels from the sand plains, and with a fertiliser at 30s. a ton equal in quality to guano, revolutions in cereal growing in the Eastern districts will follow. No doubt the Government will convey the fertilisers to the various centres as cheaply as possible, for they must realise that every ton of fertiliser they take into the cereal districts will mean that three, five, six, or eight tons of wheat will subsequently be returned over the railways. That being so, it would be a good policy on the part of the Government to carry the phosphates at a purely nominal charge. Reference has been made to the Agricultural Bank. We all know what the bank has done in the past in connection with the development of agricul-

ture, and I do not think there is anything in the world to fear so long as the money is loaned judiciously and proper inspection exists. All in our district thoroughly realise what the bank has done for us. I hope that in the future the Government will be able to advance even more than they are doing now. No man in a cereal district should have less than 640 acres of land, and I personally favour one thousand acres. If the Government continue to lend money, as I hope they will do, they should lend it under certain conditions, so that a man would be forced to expend the money properly and in such a way that the best possible results would be obtained. I have had some experience in connection with the manner in which bank funds are spent. It is clear that some selectors do not know much about farming, or how to spend their money in a way to produce the best results, as in many cases improvements have been put on the land which are really of no use whatever. In one instance where I was asked to go and pass work done by selectors, I found that they had made in a creek, dams of such a kind that they would be washed away at the first flood, and that they had erected fences in a most costly manner and in anything but the best way for the proper cutting up of the property. If we are going to continue to lend the money there should be proper inspection, and selectors should be informed how money should be laid out, and there should be lines put down on which they must work; the land should as it were be farmed out for them. If the selector has say 600 acres the inspector should see that it is properly fenced, that 200 acres are put under crop, 200 in fallow and 200 used for grazing purposes. I am sure that if the money is lent on such principles as these the results will be most satisfactory. If this is done, should the land at any time revert to the Government, then they will have a property well worth the money expended on it. I am pleased to see that the Government intend to continue the policy of building agricultural railways, because people were induced to go on the land believing that these railways would be constructed. If the lines are not ex-

tended to the localities where these settlers are working hard to establish their places the properties cannot possibly be made successful. The settlers must have means for getting their produce to market, and this cannot be done without the iron horse. I feel sure that the Government will continue this policy, and if there is a stoppage the result will be that settlers will be driven off the land. This would be most undesirable. I hope that in the future the subsidies to roads boards will not be withdrawn, and more especially to those boards in the new districts where it is so necessary to build roads as feeders to the railways. In the past, instead of taxing the land it would have been much better to withdraw the subsidies to roads boards and municipalities, and if such had been done the Government would have saved a sum equal to that which they are now raising by the tax. If the people in the various centres had been given an opportunity of taxing themselves the money raised in such localities would have been spent there, and I am sorry the Government did not withdraw the subsidies and give this opportunity to the people. Now, however, we have the tax, and I hope, seeing such is the case, the subsidies will not be withdrawn from the roads boards. We are likely to become a large exporting State within a few years, for we shall produce a tremendous quantity of wheat, and, I am sure, a great number of lambs. It is necessary, however, that proper shipping facilities at the ports should be provided. The Government are endeavouring to do what they can, and I hope they will receive the encouragement they deserve. We want to do all we possibly can to bring about a large export trade, for if we export the large quantities of wheat and lambs which I know we can and will produce in the agricultural districts, we shall get in return gold which will enable us to further develop the industry. Recently one of our Northam farmers paid a visit to Victoria. About 15 years ago he came here from the Wimmera district and had not been back since. On his return to this State after the visit he told me much about the altered condition of affairs there. When he left the land was worth

20s. or 25s. per acre, there were no decent homes, no decent fences, and no decent conditions generally, but when he returned he could hardly realise the altered conditions which met him; there were smiling homesteads, there was prosperity all round, and the fencing and everything else was all one could desire. He asked how the altered conditions had come about, and the reply was "freezing works and creameries." He added that the difference was due more especially to the former. He was told that lambs which had previously been worth from 3s. to 5s. were now, owing to the freezing works, worth from 12s. to 15s., and that the land which was previously worth 25s. per acre was now valued at £8, £10 or £12 per acre. If freezing works and creameries have brought about such splendid conditions in that country surely we should not be afraid to endeavour to establish them here. We should do all we can to bring this about, and I hope that in the near future we shall have freezing works established in the best centres. I do not suggest that we should go ahead too quickly, but let us establish one or two and allow the business to gradually work itself up.

On motion by *Hon. E. McLarty* debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.21 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 17th November, 1908.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1. Harbour and Light Department—Annual Report for 1907-