

there is no need to deal closely with the financial proposals now, as probably in a couple of weeks the Premier will make his financial statement. I recognise that this question requires the attention both of Ministerialists and Oppositionists, for we must try to do something to stop the present drift from continuing. Apparently the change of Ministers has not done that, for month by month, with monotonous regularity, a further deficit is reported. I hope during the next few weeks some proposals will be forthcoming to improve the position, and that the united wisdom of members will be concentrated on the question of bringing forward some proposals which will improve the financial position of the State. The member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) made some suggestions in his speech to his constituents.

Mr. Taylor: A few civil servants.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The meeting was advertised as one of his electors. He suggested that the salaries of members of the Upper House should be reduced by £100 a year. I am not in sympathy with that. I contend that there is no justification for the other House at all, but if it does exist it is only right that we should pay members the salaries they receive to-day. After all, that is a very small matter, and there is nothing statesmanlike about the suggestion. It savours of the reform proposals introduced last session for the taxation of amusements, land agents, tobaccoists, etcetera. Another suggestion was to abolish the refreshment bar at Parliament House during recess. If the member for Claremont were to take his own expenditure in that respect as any criterion—I am not referring to him in an uncomplimentary way—but if he were to take the expenditure of the average member during recess, he would find there would be very little saving, even if his reform were brought about. That proposal also is unworthy of serious consideration, or, at all events, to be placed before his constituents at a special meeting. Very few members take advantage of the refreshment rooms during recess, and I suppose one could count them on the fingers of one's hand. I hope other

members will bring forward proposals of a more statesmanlike character as to the reforms in financial matters than the ones I have mentioned. I will say no more. I will have an opportunity when the Estimates come on of dealing with the several matters requiring attention, and I trust that the position of affairs in regard to the working of legislation in this country will be more satisfactory this session than during the last. I hope for a good deal in the way of industrial legislation, and would like to see the amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act carried. Also an amendment should be made to the Arbitration Act, and a little more attention should be paid to the factory workers in the City. So far as the franchise reform is concerned, I hope the Government will reconsider their decision, and if not prepared to give us adult suffrage for the Upper House, go at all events so far as to grant household suffrage, and so allow the large body of electors in Western Australia an opportunity of saying who is to make the legislation or who is to control the affairs of the people.

Mr. SWAN (North Perth): The hon. member for Forrest said that the discussion on the Address-in-Reply appears to be getting unpopular. I quite agree with him. Possibly if the discussion were abandoned altogether, it might be to the advantage of the country. There are just two or three small matters I want to speak upon before the motion is put. I was anxious to hear some of the Ministers in reply to some of the things that were stated by this side before I got up to speak, but they do not seem to show any disposition in that way. Therefore I will get rid of my few remarks and allow the thing to go. In the first place, the most important matter we have to consider is the question of finance. The Premier told us in his pre-session speech that he had no misgivings in regard to the finances of the State. I am pleased he has not; he is about the only man in this country who has not very considerable misgivings about them. What appears to me as a new member, a member of about twelve months standing, to be one of the most necessary things to

be done in connection with Parliament is to modernise the machinery of Government. If some attention were devoted to that, there would be more likelihood of getting the wishes of the people given expression to than is the case at the present time. As far as the Address-in-Reply is concerned, it seems to me to consist of throwing bouquets by supporters of the Ministers and the heaving of bricks by members of the Opposition, and judging by the effect upon the Ministers, I think we might save ourselves the trouble on both sides. In my opinion, as I said, there is every necessity for modernising the machinery of Government, but there seems to be no disposition on the part of the present occupants of the Ministerial benches to take any step in that direction. The Labour party have a provision in their platform whereby the wishes of the people can be given effect to better than anything we have had from the other side, that is by the adoption of the principle of referendum. If this principle were adopted it would get over the difficulty in connection with the Upper House, and we would at least have the wishes of the people given effect to there. I think too there are many other matters of importance that might be dealt with in the same way. The member for Forrest referred to the question of the redistribution of seats. I quite agree with him that redistribution of seats is very necessary to give the people of the State a fair deal. As far as I am concerned I have no anxiety to be called upon to represent the wishes of 8,000 electors in this House, while the Minister for Works has only to represent the wishes of some 1,200 I do not think this is a fair thing at all. A good deal has been said about the fact that I represent a minority of the electors of North Perth. Possibly I do, but I have no desire to be in that position. My only wish is that as far as possible the electors should be given fair representation: it does not matter whether they are supporters of the Government or supporters of the Labour party. As far as I am concerned it is no particular desire of mine that the Labour party should occupy the Ministerial benches. My chief

concern is to see the wishes of the people given effect to, and the question with me is measures and not individuals. I do not care who gives us the legislation, as long as we get it. As far as I am concerned if the present Ministry are prepared to give us the legislation asked for by a large majority of people in the country, then I am quite prepared to accept it from them. I think a lot of time is wasted by the bitterness shown between parties. I feel that when we have fought our battles at the elections far more good will be done for the people if we drop a lot of the party bitterness and devote our attention to the legislation before us and do the best for the interests of the State we govern. I hope my remarks are not giving an impression that all the bitterness comes from this side. I recognise there is bitterness shown on both sides, and as far as I am concerned I am a bitter opponent of the policy of the present Government. I will fight them when a general election comes along, and I will fight their policy all the time. But I think once a general election is over, more energy might be devoted to the consideration of the welfare of the State rather than the welfare of any particular party. The Premier in his pre-sessional speech promised Upper House reform. As far as I am concerned I do not take the thing very seriously. Before I became a member of Parliament I was not quite satisfied about the earnestness of the present Ministerial party in connection with that particular proposition. We found candidates for the Legislative Assembly fighting elections pledging themselves to the reform of the Upper House by way of reduced qualification, etcetera: at the same time we found members of the same party going round and supporting candidates for the Upper House who were absolutely pledged to vote against a proposition of that description. That is sufficient for me about the earnestness with which the Government were approaching this question. In that connection I agree to a large extent with the contention of the hon. member for Forrest. The Ministerial party who are standing in the way of this reform will have to suffer eventually as a

result of their failure to recognise what the bulk of the people are asking for and as a result of their indifference to the cry of the people for more democratic measures. It is an absolute impossibility, in my opinion, to get any measures on the statute-book as far as industrial legislation is concerned that will give fair play to the workers while we have the Legislative Council existing as it is at present constituted.

Mr. Jacoby: I do not think they have thrown out anything.

Mr. SWAN: They never throw out anything at all. We have a sufficiently strong reactionary party or a conservative party in this Chamber to efficiently prevent anything of that kind, but it is almost inconceivable that the Government, practically the same Government which is occupying the Treasury bench to-day, sent along to that Chamber during the life of the last Parliament a land tax, and had it thrown back in their teeth, after which they accepted it practically without a murmur.

The Minister for Works: It is on the statute-book now.

Mr. SWAN: That Act is not upon the statute-book; what is on the statute-book is a hybrid imitation of that particular measure, and as far as I am concerned it is of very little effect.

The Minister for Works: It does not affect you.

Mr. SWAN: No, certainly not, and it does not affect a great many more people that it should affect, who are more in agreement with the hon. gentleman's political opinions than I am. If it did we would not have so much trouble about the extension of the railway system for the purpose of opening up our agricultural lands. During the debate on the last Address-in-Reply I said that there was a large area of land lying close to our existing railways, the owners of which land were not attempting to use it in the interests of the State. That statement was made not only by myself, but by other members of the Opposition, and it was denied by Ministers. Notwithstanding that fact, in the pre-sessional speech at Bunbury we find the Premier saying that

he sounded a note of warning to those people holding unused lands along the railways. Why then this necessity for the warning? Nothing has materialised; the warning simply stopped there. Whilst we have the present Legislative methods it is only natural that the democratic portion of the people of the State should look not to the State but to the Federal Parliament for the legislation that they desire to see placed on the statute-book. It is only natural that they should go to the Federal Parliament for reasonable and fair industrial laws. Even in the case of the shop assistants we find them preparing for an appeal to the Federal Arbitration Court in connection with rates of wages, etcetera. It is no wonder to me that this class of people, although up to recently they have not been looked upon as strong supporters of the party I belong to, are thoroughly disappointed with the present Government to whom they looked for a fair deal. We found last session that there was a lot of talk about the Saturday half-holiday. That is a proposal which has my strongest support, and it is of sufficient importance to have claimed some attention from the present Ministry. It has not received any attention, and it is only natural that the people concerned should be looking somewhere else for assistance. Another matter I want to have a word or two to say upon before I sit down is that double-barrelled atrocity, the Minister for Lands' proposed retrenchment, or what he considers necessary retrenchment in the public service combined with land settlement. This is a thing which is beautiful in theory, but I am afraid it will work out to the disadvantage of the State in practice. Taking a commonsense view of the thing it appears to me that the result of appealing to these people will be that the very men most required to do the work in these departments will be those who will apply to go on the land. I do not want to be misunderstood. I thoroughly believe that in the ranks of our civil servants we have some of the best and most efficient employees of any State in Australia. I am just as well satisfied that we have a pretty fair percentage of wasters there;

and in my opinion whether or not the proposed retrenchment is necessary the Ministers in charge of the several departments should have sufficient pluck to throw the wasters out. If they are suitable for the purpose they could then be placed upon the land. But the trouble with the present scheme will be found to be that as it encourages the efficient officers to leave the service and go upon the land it is not doing the best in the interests of the State. If this system is good, why not apply it to the wages men on the railways? Generally speaking these men would be far more likely to make successful farmers than would be the officers of the clerical division. Yet it is never attempted in connection with any retrenchment in the Railway Department or any other department from the employees of which we might reasonably expect good results as settlers on the land.

Mr. George: Are there any wasters in the Railway Department?

Mr. SWAN: Yes. Possibly the member for Murray thinks they are fewer now than formerly.

Mr. George: There are not many in the Railway Department.

Mr. SWAN: The Railway Department, like every other department, has lost valuable officers through retrenchment, and I as well as the member for Murray could lay my hands on a good many wasters in the Railway Department and other departments to-day. However, they will not be found among the 7s. and 8s. a day men, who are generally worked out when any pet scheme of retrenchment comes along. There is another matter I am glad to see mentioned in the Premier's pre-sessional speech, namely, the question of the development of the North-West. Notwithstanding the attention the Premier has devoted to that matter and the fact that he believes he realises the great possibilities of the North-West, I do not think the Premier or any other member of the House who has not made a lengthy visit to that part of the country thoroughly appreciates the potentialities of that portion of the State.

The Honorary Minister: In the way of storms?

Mr. SWAN: Well yes, I know its possibilities in that regard and also in respect to the land. The district least known to the average man in Western Australia is the Ashburton district. It is suffering at the present time from lack of facilities. Its shipping facilities are almost an impossibility, and in that connection I think the Harbour and Light Department might pay some attention to its material wants. In connection with the port of Ashburton, which is merely a roadstead, the steamers have to lie about one mile and a half from the jetty; and whilst we have the Harbour and Light Department controlling the jetty and the tramway from the ocean to the township, we have a private firm controlling the lighters conveying produce and goods brought up by the business people and the pastoralists of the district. This particular firm of lighter owners have a monopoly, and seeing that the same firm own one of the stores in the town it gives them a very unfair pull over their competitors. And whilst the people in Onslow are not getting a very fair deal in that regard the people who have stock to export to the metropolis or to any other portion of Australia have no practicable chance of sending it out through Onslow. For if you wish to ship a horse at Onslow you will find the lighterage costs from 30s. to £2. In view of the value of the land in the district it would be well if better facilities could be provided. I recognise that the Government have a very difficult question to face in connection with the development of the North-West. They have very little in the way of natural harbours to assist them, and it will be a gigantic task to provide the shipping facilities necessary to open up that particular country. I also recognise that while the land is held as at present it is practically impossible for the State to derive a fair return for the money required to provide these facilities to which I have referred. I think it would be well if the people of this State generally understood the condition of affairs in the North-West better than they do. Perhaps it will be news to most hon. members to know that from Onslow inland along the

river, comprising some of the finest land in Western Australia, one man holds under pastoral lease both sides of the river for 60 miles.

Mr. George: What does he do with it?

Mr. SWAN: He runs sheep, cattle and horses, but he spends very little money on the place. This man holds about one million acres of the finest land in the State—perhaps the finest land in Australia—and he is paying, certainly not more than 10s. a thousand acres per annum. It would be interesting to peruse a return showing the actual revenue derived from that holding. Whilst he holds all this land I do not suppose £5,000 has been spent on it in the way of improvements during the whole time it has been in his hands. I want to know if that is giving the State a fair deal for the great asset it has in that particular property? The river is not always running, certainly, but if that land were still within the control of the State, it would afford great scope for water conservation, and practically unlimited possibilities for tropical culture. I recognise the position many members of this House are in in respect to this question, because I know the position I was in myself before I visited that part of the country. One must see the country to realise its possibilities. But what are we to do while one man holds a million acres at a rental of 10s. a thousand acres? I am quite satisfied that even if a system of water conservation were adopted and the best use made of the land 10,000 acres of that country would carry as many head of stock and give just as good a result as is being derived from the whole million acres to-day. I do not want to appear personal, but I fancy the holder of this particular property does not enjoy a reputation for large-heartedness. I do not want to say that he is notorious for his meanness, but hon. members can judge for themselves when I tell them that this is the property on which some time ago a claim was made for medical attendance to diseased blacks, and the gentleman who holds this vast area of wonderfully fertile land absolutely refused to pay for their

medical treatment. I understand that for some time afterwards he was refused permission to employ native labour, and rightly so too. On the whole of that great estate I suppose there are not more than 20 persons employed, black and white, the majority being blacks. That brings me to the question of aborigines. I cannot say that I saw anything in the way of brutal treatment of natives while up there. Indeed they are fairly well treated. They are utilised to do work about the station, and fill positions as shearers, teamsters, and the like. I am given to understand that one pastoralist in that part of the State has as his leading teamster a black gin. She is the teamster in charge, and there are several white teamsters employed by the same man. This is the way the natives are treated up there. We find that in his report the Chief Protector suggests how we are to deal with the aborigines question. I do not think there is any harm in these people being employed, for they are better employed than being allowed to remain idle; but I think the more sensible and economical way of dealing with the question would be for the Government to insist on the employers of these natives paying a certain amount to the State for their labour. It would be useless to pay the blacks themselves for their labour, but if the pastoralist were compelled to pay to the State a reasonable amount for the labour of the aborigines it would provide some of the thousands of pounds which the Chief Protector tells us will be required by his department in the near future. So far as the treatment of diseased natives and their removal to the hospitals are concerned, it would be all very well if the work were being properly carried out, but it is not. It is quite a by-word on some of the stations up there that diseased natives are still about the country. Where is the utility of this isolation scheme if diseased natives are still allowed to remain on the mainland? If the Government undertake the responsibility of dealing with the question at all they should deal with it thoroughly. The member for Pilbara last night mentioned the Asiatic question, which is

becoming a very serious question indeed. I recognise it is largely a matter for the Federal Parliament; still I think the State Government might show a great deal more sympathy with the administration of the White Australia policy than they have done up to date. It is quite a common thing in the North-West to find what are, strictly speaking, prohibited immigrants wandering about. When I was at Onslow there was a smart young Chinaman employed as waiter, and no one dreamed that he had less right to be there than white people, until at race-time another Chinaman, whose money he had won at gambling, put him away to the authorities as a prohibited immigrant. It is practically impossible to shut them out under the existing conditions, while the steamers trading along that coast are allowed to call at intermediate ports, particularly at an isolated port such as Onslow.

Mr. Jacoby: It would be a bad thing for the ports if the steamers were not allowed to call.

Mr. SWAN: I take a great deal of credit to myself that I disagree with the hon. member on that particular point. There is nothing to prevent the white-labour boats carrying the things now carried by the black-labour boats. I would not be surprised if the member for Swan (Mr. Jacoby) opposes the White Australia policy. Of course he would not dare to do it openly, else he would not save his skin. At present there is a line of steamers carrying goods to those ports with white crews.

Mr. Jacoby: Once a month only.

Mr. SWAN: But there is no reason why that system could not be extended if the black-labour boats were thrown out of competition. We can quite understand that a white-labour boat has not much chance of competing with a black-labour boat so far as cheapness is concerned. But where the White Australia policy is at stake I consider that it is up to the Government to take some action to prevent this kind of thing going on, because while the present condition of things continues it is impossible to exclude these aliens, particularly, as I said, at a port like Onslow. It

is common knowledge that after dark boats go into the Ashburton from no one knows whence, and leave before dawn for no one knows where. It cannot be for trading purposes in the circumstances. But I do not want it to be thought that the authorities up there are neglectful, because many of the officials there are as ardent advocates of a White Australia as I am. The fact is it is absolutely impossible to enforce the laws at Onslow at the present time. I do not know that this matter much concerns our Government, but it does no harm for members to hear of this condition of affairs, and I can prove my remarks. I do not intend to worry members any further in regard to new legislation because when the Bills come along we will have an opportunity of discussing them; and I do not want to set a bad example by talking at length on the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, when, as a matter of fact, I believe that the whole discussion might be dropped altogether; but there were one or two points I wished to touch on that I would not otherwise have the opportunity of speaking on. For that reason I hope I will be forgiven for taking up so much of the time of hon. members.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson): The air of calm during the discussion of the Address-in-Reply seems to have had the effect of making everyone very weary and loth to rise to address themselves to the subject under discussion. I have that feeling, more especially because the criticisms levelled at the Governor's Speech, framed of course by the Government in order to set forth therein the policy of the Government, have not called for any special defence at the hands of Ministers. I may perhaps deal, first of all, briefly with one or two matters that are not connected with the questions dealt with in that Speech. It seems that the remarks that fell from the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) with regard to our great timber industry are rather contradictory. First of all the hon. member advocated the conservation and reservation for the Government use of the existing forests. I agree with him