

attract other men, to go on the land and reap the reward of their exertions.

MR. MORAN: That is advanced socialism.

MR. H. BROWN: It may be socialism, but it is a work that will well repay the State. It would be far better to keep these men in occupation than waste their time in doing nothing while under sentence. In conclusion, I have to thank hon. members for the hearing they have given me.

MR. HENSHAW: You have not referred to the back slums of the city.

MR. H. BROWN: With regard to the remark of the member for Collie, I have given as much time if not more time to the work of the city in municipal matters as any mayor during the last few years; and I may say I was surprised to find the back parts of the city in the state they are. I hope that, with the assistance of the Central Board of Health, the City Council will be able to make Perth a city fit to live in. I am going through with the work now, and although I know it is a nauseous job and one that will bring me bad feeling from a number of land owners in this State and particularly in Perth, yet during the short period I have to serve as mayor of Perth I am going, without fear or favour, to carry out that action in its entirety, and I intend to back up my officers every time, and will not be approached by any land owner. In every case where owners of property have approached me since this matter came up I have told them that I will not go behind my officers. Those officers have full instructions to carry out the demolition of buildings that are not fit for habitation. I hope that in the Health Bill which is to come before the House this session, Parliament will give the health boards greater powers; not only in regard to health matters in the city of Perth, but in reference to all municipalities in the State. A building is condemned as unfit for human occupation, and while it remains standing is a menace to the public health. An amendment in regard to that will be found in the new Bill, and I regret that the workers living in Perth have had to live and sleep in the dens that they have had in the middle of the city, and I hope this will soon become a thing of the past. With regard to health matters my friend

the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Daglish) knows the opposition and the difficulties with which local boards of health and the Central Board have to deal. It would be almost better if the supervision of health was taken out of the hands of the municipal bodies; but it will be for this House to say during the present session what provisions shall be made for improving the present condition, particularly to provide that a district medical officer who is disconnected with any locality should be given entire charge of the inspection, and so do away with the present dual control.

MR. ANGWIN: All local boards do not clash with the Central Board of Health.

MR. H. BROWN: The Central Board of Health have supreme control over the local boards, and can come in whenever they like and supersede a local board. Every member of the Central Board is an old employee; every one of the officials, the inspectors at all events, have been old servants; and it is their fault that Perth is in the present condition in regard to health. Whilst I am mayor of Perth, I have neither the time nor have I the inclination to go behind my officials. I am sure the hon. member would not have me or any councillor to go round acting the part of inspectors in Perth. If you have inspectors, trust them; and when you find them not doing their work, get rid of them. (General applause.)

MR. P. J. LYNCH (Mt. Leonora): I rise to take part in the discussion, although if I were allowed to express the opinion of an individual neophyte, I should not offer any excuse for the prolongation of this debate. Still, noticing the unwillingness of members of the Government to force a conclusion, the time must be spent, uselessly perhaps, in going over ground that has already been touched on more or less by other members. I fear I can add but little evidence to that given already by members on this (Labour cross-bench) side of the House, in support of the stand they have taken; but representing a constituency which is far removed from here, and which on that account may have special reasons for looking upon the proposal now before the House, I feel that I may endeavour to offer some reasons that have hitherto not been touched on. It has been contended to-day by one of the morning



newspapers that the proper course to be taken was for the Opposition in this House to cite their case and let the leader of the Government reply. To my mind, if that course were adopted it would destroy all chance of cross-examination; for in the course of defence the leader of the Government might use some arguments that were assailable, and that is the reason to my mind why the fairest course is that which is being followed in the present case, for each member on each side to state his view of the question. In the reply made by the Premier on Tuesday, we find that not only did he strive to reply to what is called the indictment made by the Labour party, but he also indicted the Labour party in turn. On his part, we were referred to as the "trades hall party," and he also referred to the caucus in terms that were not complimentary. It is necessary on our part to reply to those charges in brief. For my part I am not at all ashamed of belonging to a political party in the House that is associated with trade unions, and I am at a loss to know why any member on the Government side should taunt members on this side with trade unionism, or with any taint that may be associated with it. I would direct their attention to that period in the progress of this country when, were it not for trade unionism, the country would have been at a low ebb, not only socially but industrially. I direct attention to the time when trade unionism was utterly smashed up, and I may say that I was one of the band who suffered a reduction of wages equal to 11s. per week as the result of the annihilation of trade unionism. I want members on that side of the House to justify their stand in saying that we on this side should not be associated with trade unionism, which has been the means of rescuing the workers from the bad condition of that previous period. We also hear reference made to a pledge, as though men on this side of the House were bereft of every sense of honour by being pinned to the assurances they gave their electors on the hustings. Ours is a business pledge, and we feel that whatever we utter on the hustings we should not be ashamed to bind our signatures to afterwards. We recognise that in doing this we are

treating with average humanity. It is true that if we were dealing with ideal humanity we could trust their word to the full, and a pledge would not be necessary; but we have not George Washingtons and Cincinnatuses, we are dealing with average humanity, and we have come to the conclusion, after sampling it not only in Australia but in the old world, that we have to bind men in black and white to make them adhere to the pledges given by them on the hustings. That is the origin of the pledge, and it appears to be nothing more than what a business man in every-day life would insist on. Is it not more necessary to have a pledge when works are being done in the interests of a nation, or in the interests of a community, than it is for a mere business transaction in buying and selling? We take a receipt and we give a receipt, and we need the signature of the vendor in return. We need a pledge, and that is the reason why the Labour party have adopted it, to consolidate our forces, so that we can confront the man with bold type and his own assurance. We are also charged that we meet in caucus; as if that were something unusual in the history of the political arena! We find that no later than last week or so the Ministerial party have had occasion to resort to caucus, in order to farther their own ends. But they went still farther, and actually had a sentinel outside the precincts of the building to ensure secrecy. There is a legend in the Cannibal Islands—I think it is Fiji—where it is held sacred that no white man should be allowed within a certain radius when a secret conclave is being held. I am at a loss to know why the Ministerial party should have shown such signs of reverting to the old cave-dwellers' ideas as this. The Labour party have adopted the caucus, which has been in existence ever since parliamentary government was instituted, ever since the great Reform Bill of 1832: we are only copying the example which has been set for us. There is this farther justification as to the adoption of the pledge on the part of the Labour party. With other political parties the caucus has been adhered to to obtain the allegiance of smaller politicians to the greater personalities. There were times when the two



parties were so much alike in their platform that the difference was as slight as that between tweedledum and tweedledee. At that time the caucus was resorted to to farther the ends of those who wished to control the rival factions. What is the difference in relation to the Labour party? We adopt the caucus for the purpose of securing the adhesion, the allegiance, and the loyalty of those who believe in every plank of our platform. The caucus is used to ensure the allegiance of each member of the party to the carrying out and the advocacy of that platform. It should be unnecessary to indulge at any length in this discussion; at the same time there are a few salient matters that I cannot help referring to. The first is that the present Ministry take serious objection to being deposed, in consequence of the loyal services they have given, and the progressive character of their legislation.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Our legislation is on the statute book, and speaks for itself.

MR. LYNCH: Is it not true that you have had to depend upon the votes of the Labour party for your existence?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; we repudiate that statement.

MR. LYNCH: Turning to the objection of the present Ministry to be turned out of office, is it not true that some of the members of the Ministry were for years seeking to oust another Ministry from office? And as far as services went, they do not equal the records of that Ministry whom they sought to turn out. There is the Coolgardie Water Scheme; the Premier continually opposed that scheme, which I may say is nothing but the life-blood of the great industry of this country. Then there was the progressive railway policy, which is also attributable to Sir John Forrest. There are the inland water schemes, which give drink to those in the interior. The extension of the railways and the telegraphs owes its origin to the administration of Sir John Forrest. We have also the Arbitration Act, and notwithstanding that we have heard many things said of Sir John Forrest and the difficulties he sometimes experienced in getting that recognition which was due, I say that the introduction and passage of such a measure as the Arbitration Act

stands as a monument to his statesmanship. When the time comes to write the names of the statesmen of this State, that of Sir John Forrest will be entitled to the worthiest place. The present Government attempted to depose that gentleman from office. The Premier is anxious to know the real root of the trouble why he is being turned out of office. The country wants to know why Mr. James and his associates are continuing in office, and the thinking elector wants to know why that composite Ministry should remain in power. I say composite, because the dangling of a portfolio has made some of the members of that Ministry come together and effect a reconciliation. The electors have expressed themselves so unmistakably on the point. The electors have good memories, and they remember that some of the members on the Ministerial bench, before a portfolio was dangled in front of them, searched the English vocabulary to find the most bitter things to say against one another. The electors now want to know why there has been so happy a reconciliation. When the average elector reflects on the statements made by Ministers before they accepted portfolios, and when they reflect that certain members actually shifted their seats in order to escape the odium of certain other persons, they are forced to ask themselves, do the present Ministerialists wish us to look like a parcel of fools? Do the Ministry want the people of the country to appear as so many fools, incapable of reasoning? Do the Ministry think that the electors forgot the very next day the actions of the past? I think the electors have come to the conclusion that the opinions expressed by certain members of the Government of one another were hollow in the extreme. As far as the statement of the Premier is concerned, that the Labour party attempted to best him, if the Premier was acquainted with the evolution of political events he must speedily have come to the conclusion that it was the only natural thing to be expected. The Labour party in their numbers are only what was to be expected with the gradual extension of the franchise, and the removal of the disabilities from those who had, in the past, been robbed of their political rights. The Labour members



had certainly not much to thank the influential Press of the State for. The Labour party as they appear here to-day are not only entitled to accept the responsibility thrust upon them, but they are entitled to far more credit than they get. If we reflect we will find that before the entry of the Labour party into the arena of politics their exertions were not recognised. The Labour party came into existence in New South Wales in 1892. A convention had been held the year previously for the purpose of bringing into existence a constitution for the Commonwealth of Australia, Sir Henry Parkes being chairman of that convention. Throughout the discussions which occupied the attention of that convention not a word was said about one man one vote. A convention was held some years afterwards in Adelaide, and a draft constitution was agreed upon. During the short interval of seven or eight years this great reform had passed from the stage when it was not recognised until it finds a lasting place in the Constitution of the Commonwealth. Has that not been attributable to the Labour party in New South Wales? The people of the country are somewhat slow in recognising the obligations which they owe to the Labour party in this connection. Coming nearer home, I may mention, as a farther justification of the Labour party, that they have been responsible for a great many laws which find a place in our statute book, and which, had the Labour party not been in existence, would not have been passed. Amongst these are the Arbitration Act, old age pensions, the liberal franchise, unimproved land value taxation: all these measures are now within the arena of practical politics, and they have been brought about, in a great measure, owing to the exertions of the Labour party. That is a justification of the present position of affairs, and in no sense do I offer an apology for the Labour party, and certainly not for the responsibility of criticism or even of power thrown upon them. With regard to the shortcomings of the last Ministry I want to assert that in many Acts, brand-new pieces of legislation, there are so many shortcomings, flaws and defects that it means a wide divergence by the Ministerial side from the policy of the Opposition. Before

proceeding with that I may mention that last year the Estimates included extravagant expenditure; and an unwillingness to develop the industries of this State has been a chief feature of the administration of the present Ministry. When we find the lavish expenditure on roads and bridges, especially on the roads round the Caves down south and on park improvements at the Zoological Gardens, and at the same time the parsimony shown in providing ample school accommodation on the goldfields, that forms a special count in the indictment of the Ministry. I know centres in that country with 200 and 300 inhabitants which are without a school, and this lavish expenditure to which I refer has been the chief characteristic of the Ministry now seeking for a fresh lease of office. We come to the Mining Act, which no doubt is in many respects all right.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Tell us how the Mining Estimates were treated, and the large increases in the Mines Department this year.

MR. LYNCH: I am prepared to give the Minister for Mines all credit for many administrative acts. As far as the Mining Act is concerned it still contains flaws of a sufficiently grave character for it to be absolutely useless as a piece of legislation to serve the hewers on the fields. Perhaps after all there could be no more condemnatory reference, from the workers' point of view, in regard to the measure than the opinions expressed by the Chamber of Mines; and in this connection I should like to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that he regarded as one proof of impartiality the fact that the Chamber of Mines, after having gone carefully through the Bill, took exception to only one solitary clause, and that clause was taken exception to on highly justifiable and at the same time specific grounds. The clause to which they took exception was a simple one that mining companies should be saddled with a provision that a labourer's wages equal to a month's pay should take priority of all other claims. They wanted to know why the mining industry, and rightly so, should be singled out for such an imposition. They were quite right. On all other clauses of the Bill they were silent; and I put it to the Minister whether that silence does not point to

the fact that the Mining Act was framed on lines that suited the Chamber of Mines whilst it was unsuited to workers. In regard to rent for mining leases we find that a provision remains whereby struggling men are charged one pound an acre for land which probably does not do more than provide them with a living. The Act is in the same position as it was when the present Ministry came into office; and notwithstanding that the goldfields in the persons of 13 mining representatives have come here with the express intention of repealing that particular clause, the James Ministry, which now asks for a renewed lease of confidence, says the measure is perfect in every detail. Take the expression of opinion of 13 as against three. The measure is not, a progressive one, and does not commend itself to the people mainly interested, namely the workers and dwellers on the goldfields. We come now to another much-debated subject, and I confess that from present appearances it does not command that special attention which perhaps it needed some time ago; that is a provision in the Bill to so regulate the supply of labour that those who come from other parts of Europe shall not be anything like an unreasonable proportion of those toiling on the fields. The Minister for Mines was very impressive on this point when touring the goldfields, and he did not disguise his willingness to include in the Bill, or rather in the mining regulations in the future, a clause specially regulating the proportion of workers there. This, of course, would only be following the example of Germany and other States who have had to deal with this problem. We find that the Governor's Speech contains not a clause on the subject, notwithstanding the expression of opinion of the Minister for Mines when on the fields. I admit that this is not so serious as it has been, but it is statesmanship to not only recognise the present difficulty, but to legislate for the future needs of the people, when we find that this may occur in the future. I should like to have seen some reference in the Speech to the allusions of the Minister when on the fields.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: There is a reference to the Commission in the Speech.

MR. LYNCH: I am talking of the Governor's Speech, and I presume it is on that the Minister for Mines is proceeding.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The Commission will take evidence in regard to these matters.

MR. LYNCH: I contend I am justified in drawing attention to this, as a vital question so far as some fields are concerned. I have found Britishers there who have been thrown on the road, and at the same time some 50 or 60 per cent. of foreigners have been employed on the place. So, while there is a possibility of a recurrence of a position of this kind, it is only right that we should expect faithfulness to the professions made by the Minister for Mines.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: You forget they have to publish their rules in Italian.

MR. LYNCH: We come to the land policy, and that does not so keenly affect the welfare of the people of the fields. Great advantage must ensue from a land policy of a vigorous and progressive character. Amongst the undesirable features of the Governor's Speech is the absence of reference to any intention to provide against the accumulation of large estates in the future. I find that the policy of the Government in order to encourage closer settlement is to repurchase estates, yet that a railway contractor was actually successful in securing 20,000 acres of first-class land on 20 years' purchase. It is showing a short-sighted policy or worse when an area of that description can be obtained. Such procedure will form in the very early future a stumbling block to settlement. I contend that the granting of these estates on the one hand and the subdivision of land on the other, seems a stultifying of the Ministry of the day. No man can deny that it is the province of the statesman to look to the future, and yet we find the present Ministry buying up estates and at the same time creating a condition of affairs under which large estates will be built up. Does not that mean a positive contradiction of policy? They have the power to restrict these large estates. Wilkie Brothers got 20,000 acres of land on the 20 years' purchase system; and if that is a sample of what can be done, the Ministers must have their eyes shut to



future possibilities, and the necessity of guarding against evils which are now growing by the accumulation of these large estates. There is also the question of railway freights, which is rather a time-honoured grievance I will briefly refer to. I do not seriously impugn the figures of the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis) that the Eastern Goldfields line yielded three million pounds in excess of working expenses, or in other words has actually paid for itself. If that be so, it shows this is the best paying portion of the railway system. The inhabitants who come within the range of the supply which the Eastern Railway caters to are, on that assumption, saddled with the finding of wages for the huge army of workers who are working the system, that is the non-paying lines as well as the paying ones. As members see in the Governor's Speech they are also saddled with the 4 per cent. for interest on the capital cost of the railways; that is to say that dwellers who come within the range or the special zone of the goldfields line are paying the interest and working expenses of the other portions of the system. Now, whilst that is being done we also notice a difference in the freight on household goods delivered; a difference so striking that it really means nothing short of a gross injustice to those people who have to find a livelihood within that area. The rate for produce raised locally is £5 0s. 10d. per ton, as against a rate in the other States of £2 5s. 7d., and thus we consider we have a grievance of the first order. If it is so necessary to encourage the butter industry, the manufacturing industry, in this portion of the State, would it not be fair and reasonable to encourage it at the expense of all the inhabitants of the State, rather than at the expense of those residing in the mineral area? The more scientific way of dealing with this matter would be to have the local produce used in the coastal regions in the neighbourhood where it is manufactured and grown passed through a custom-house, and thus have it, shortly, on the same basis as the produce carried by the railways at increased rates. And in advocating this, I yield to none on that side of the House in my desire that those who hold gold-mining properties, as well as those who hold other properties in the State, shall receive

justice as far as my vigour will command. We are entering on an era of prosperity, I hope, in this State. We have gold to the extent of one-eighth of the world's output; we also have coal, and notwithstanding what has been said by the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis), I believe the case against Collie coal is not so bad as he has stated, for we have to take into account the fact that the country benefits by the royalty paid for Collie coal. In referring to coal, I do not wish to seriously impugn the figures of the member for Coolgardie, but I do wish to see justice done to a local industry. The timber industry and the pastoral industry of the Far North have great future possibilities which cannot well be gauged; and now that we are entering on an era of prosperity, and having the Labour party in a menacing attitude for assuming power, I want for the future to see, as a member of the State and a shareholder in the community, that its welfare shall be just as jealously guarded by the Labour party as it can be by any other political party. While we recognise that we will keep a steady eye on the material prosperity of the State as a whole, we will not lose sight of, but rather make it of equal importance to look after, the material welfare of the units that compose the community; and in doing this we will not mar the progress of the State as a whole, but rather assure the people that the legislation contemplated by us as a party will, in the future not less than in the past, conduce to the material welfare and prosperity of the community as a whole. As to what Labour legislation may do for a country, we see that New Zealand has been rescued from the brink of national insolvency, and raised to such a condition of prosperity that it now occupies the premier position among these dependencies. I have only to say, in conclusion, that the reason why the front Opposition bench is now occupied by the Labour party is in a great measure due to the intention that they will in future carry out the legislation which they desire, and will no longer do it by proxy. Whatever beneficial acts can be set down to the Ministry of the past, theirs is only a reflected light; and the sun on this (Opposition) side of the House intends to do its own shining



in future, and not rely on the light of a burnt-out planet. The Labour party intend not only to legislate for improving the condition of the workers, but also to keep a careful eye on the material prosperity of the country; believing that this will ensure greater prosperity to the State as a whole than it has enjoyed hitherto. I have no doubt this is the intention of every member of the Labour party, but I will not go so far as to say it is the intention of every other member in this House, because other members who have spoken in the debate have evidenced an almost worm-eaten, slavish inclination to fear that the credit of the country is at stake, and that all our prosperity has been dependent on the goodwill and good graces of the money-lender in the distance. I want to see the time come when this State, as far as possible, will be self-contained and self-supporting, and will be independent of the money-lender outside. In conclusion, this country need have no fear that with the increased responsibility which is thrown on the Labour party, there will be any injury done to the material interests of the country; for I believe that as the party goes on increasing in number, it will also increase in respect; and that the party on this side, in being ready to accept responsibility, will preserve its name for cleanness of administration, even in the humbler walks of life with which its members have been connected.

[A pause ensued.]

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont) : I regret to see a reluctance on the part of some members on the Opposition cross-benches to express their views. The whole of the people are more anxious to hear the views of some members than of other members, particularly the member for Kimberley (Mr. F. Connor) and the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran). It is not extraordinary that there should be some criticism with regard to the actions of a Ministry after it has been some time in office. We have had a Ministry that has been in office for practically three years, and during that time has had various subjects to deal with; and as it is impossible for a Government any more than for a private individual to give satisfaction to all classes of the community, it is only to be expected that

certain criticisms should attach to decisions they have arrived at, and to works they have carried out. First we had the Leake Government, then the James Government. I listened carefully to the indictment made by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Daglish), and there were two facts that struck me; firstly that the charges brought against the leader of the Administration (the Premier) were so few in number, secondly that the leader of the Opposition dealt only with matters of minor importance. Another feature of his indictment was that all these complaints were connected with subjects not of first-class importance. To illustrate, I may mention that at least ten minutes of his important speech were devoted to the domestic side of Subiaco. I have said the matters of complaint brought forward by the leader of the Opposition were small in number. I can only deal now with the various charges brought forward by the various speakers. It seems to me extraordinary that the leader of the Opposition should have so few charges to bring against a Government that has been in existence three years. I soon realised the real reason why so few charges were brought forward by him. Of course the reason is that during the last three years there have been no more loyal supporters of the Government policy than the members who now sit on the front Opposition bench. Every decision arrived at and every public work carried out by the Government have practically received the support of the Labour party in the last Parliament. Naturally it cannot be expected that the member for Subiaco, the leader of the Opposition, who has always been fairly consistent, should bring a long list of charges against the James Government, because there have been no more loyal supporters of that party than the member for Subiaco and the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie). Whenever there was the slightest doubt regarding the existence of the James Government there were no more panic-stricken members than those two. Of course we are deeply grateful for their efforts, and the Minister for Lands is also deeply grateful. I recognise some members in the Labour party were not in sympathy with the rest. I remember that there were two members who did not support the others in their