

deal of confidence. He will presently find that a great deal of confidence is not so valuable as a little knowledge.

The Premier: A man is worse off with neither knowledge or confidence.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier's chief joy is to spend money. The Premier has stated that I had charged the settlers too high a price for their land. If he desired to help the people, let him reduce the price of land straight away.

The Premier: What did you raise it for?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Why do not you reduce it now?

The Premier: Why did you raise it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier has been all-powerful for these three years, but the Government are still selling the land at the old rate. I will prove it in hundreds of cases if you like. The Premier, if he is sincere in his desire to help the people, will act now and not put the matter off until the day before the elections. It has rested with him for three years to afford the people that relief which he says they ought to have. I protest that the Premier is not capable of administering the finances of the country.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He has become hardened.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Nothing at all seems to bother the Premier. The Premier's reply to the criticism of the leader of the Opposition ought to bring discredit upon him in every centre in Western Australia. The people should be asked whether they can afford to continue to have my friend Mr. Seaddan as Premier and Treasurer. If the Premier will be warned by me he will see that the expenditure of borrowed money is in the direction of reproductive works. If he does not do that he will find at no distant date that employment will be scarcer than it is to-day. Throughout the country the Minister for Lands can find the opportunity to spend money on reproductive works. The Premier has spoken about the farmers having in the past been compelled to pay additional prices, but has he himself not exploited them at every opportunity? Everything possible has been done to damn the agricultural industry.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

*Supply Bill introduced, etcetera.*

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means having been passed, the Supply Bill was brought in providing for the expenditure of £676,545 from Consolidated Revenue Fund, £603,105 from General Loan Fund, and £100,000 from Loan Suspense Account.

Bill passed through all its stages and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*First Day.*

Mr. McLEOD (Kalgoorlie): I rise to move the adoption of the Address-in-reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech, and in doing so I take the opportunity of saying a few words in commendation of many of the items which I find are outlined in that Speech. I shall also take the opportunity of making a few remarks on other matters which are not therein included. First of all, let me say that I think we all appreciate the fact that the Agent General saw fit to revisit the State after entering on his second term of office. It must be apparent to everyone that it is necessary for a gentleman occupying such a high position to keep as closely as possible in touch with the progress of affairs in this State. If it is necessary for that purpose, I think, that should the term be a lengthened one, from time to time the gentleman holding the position should revisit the State, so as to personally acquaint himself with what is being done. We can therefore appreciate the fact that the Agent General saw fit to do that, and I suppose we may at least be permitted to express the hope that he will profit materially from the recent visit which he paid to Western Australia. I desire to congratulate the Government on the excellence of the appointments to the judicial bench. It is apparent to all that it would be difficult in this State, or even outside for that matter, to improve on the gentleman whom

the Government saw fit to appoint to the position of Chief Justice. The occupant of the position has a record behind him as a judge of the Supreme Court which is second to none, and in Mr. Justice Northmore we have a man who has proved himself in the legal profession in this State, and who has the additional qualification, which has not always been taken into consideration in making these appointments, of having been a citizen of the State. The Government are to be complimented on the fact that they saw fit to appoint a citizen of this country to a high office of that description. I desire also to say that I appreciate very highly the remarks that are in His Excellency's Speech with reference to the transference of the State banking accounts to the Commonwealth Bank. In my opinion these profitable accounts have been in the hands of private banking institutions for too long a period. They certainly have been a profitable affair so far as the private banks are concerned. If these profits continue, and I suppose they will, the people of Australia will receive the benefit of them, instead of a few shareholders interested in the private banks who controlled the accounts previously. The conditions under which the transfer has been effected will be at least as good as those which existed previously, and if the profits accruing are as great, they will go into the public revenue of Australia. If, as we assume, the conditions are considerably better than previously, then this State, in addition to the whole of Australia, will benefit materially. Another important matter which has been mentioned, and one which concerns me, as a representative of a gold mining constituency, rather closely, is the increase which has taken place during the last year or two in the gold production of the State. As one who has had some considerable personal experience of the administration of the Department of Mines, I think that the present Minister for Mines, or his administration, is very largely responsible for the increases which have been recorded. Material improvements were effected in the public battery system shortly after he assumed office.

and very material assistance has been rendered in the shape of water supplies. I might specially mention those of Ora Banda and Randalls, but Ora Banda more particularly, a centre of great promise, which was hung up for many years because previous Administrations could not see fit, or had not sufficient confidence to expend the necessary money to give it a water supply. Such assistance and the Minister's enterprise in other directions have led to this gratifying increase in the gold production. We have also the pleasing knowledge that the dividends paid during last year showed a considerable improvement, and this and the fact that the dividends are increasing over what they have been in recent years go a long way to discount the opinions of those pessimists, and I believe some of them have been prominent in this Chamber, regarding the future of the mining industry. Some of them are prone continually to decry the possibilities of our goldfields, and to say that they are worn out and that they have been worked until there is nothing but a few odds and ends to be gathered up. It must be apparent that increases such as have taken place both in production and in the profits discount any criticism of this sort. I hope that the Minister will go further with his policy so far as assisting the industry, or those who are endeavouring to expand it, is concerned, and I hope that before long, in addition to State batteries he will realise the wisdom of undertaking the erection of a sulphide plant in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder belt. From my personal knowledge I am satisfied that it will not be difficult for a mill of this description to be kept amply and continuously employed in this centre, and it would be of great advantage to the district and would add to the production of the industry in that belt. Before I leave the question of gold mining, I desire to refer to another side, which, as those who are acquainted with the lives of the miners know, is nothing like so pleasing as that to which I have just referred. We have to face the position that, despite the fact that this industry is much the largest in the State, despite the fact

that it produces a vast amount of revenue, and pays very large dividends bordering on a million pounds for the year, the men employed in it, in many instances, and particularly in the big mines, are working under conditions which are absolutely inhuman, to say the least of them. The Minister for Mines and his staff—I speak with personal knowledge in this regard—have done all they possibly could do under the defective Mines Regulation Act to remedy this state of affairs. Unfortunately, the Act which the Minister has been forced to administer seems to have been drafted solely with the object of allowing it to be broken easily and preventing punishment from being brought home to those who refuse to comply with its conditions. It is to be regretted that the session will not last sufficiently long to permit of the consideration of an amending measure, but it will be necessary, in the very near future, to effect some improvements in this direction. I have had a good deal of experience of the industry, and during the last two or three years have been in a better position than any other citizen of the State to appreciate its effect on the lives of the miners. As secretary of the largest union of miners in Western Australia, this matter has been brought home to me very clearly and distinctly. We are faced with the position that, although this industry is prospering in every direction, the men employed are working under conditions which mean that a very short term of employment in the mines, at the outside 10 years continuous employment, means that for ever afterwards they will not be of any use. If they are not mercifully hurried out of the world, as a result of a fall of ground, they will be left to die on the industrial scrap heap, while their lungs are slowly eaten away by the dust they have inhaled during their occupation in the mines. I view with considerable favour the Government's proposal to deal with the question of providing for the miners and the dependants of miners who are incapacitated through following this industry. This is a matter which should have been taken in hand many years ago. The miners in this State dur-

ing the last seven or eight years, or longer, have pointed out time after time that the vast majority of them were condemned to an early death, that the average age of death among miners, as a result of all kind of complaints and diseases, was not more than 40 years, and as time went on and the mines became deeper, the conditions of employment became worse and a greater number of men were being laid aside. Despite all these protests, it was not until the present Government took the matter in hand that anything was done to try to alleviate their condition. I am sorry that when the Royal Commission in connection with the ventilation and sanitation of mines reported some 10 years ago, the Government of the day did not see fit to give effect to their recommendations. Had they done so, the burden which the present Government now have to carry, and will have to face in the future, would have been lighter. Unfortunately for the miners, the Government who were saddled with the responsibility of giving effect to the recommendations did not see fit to do so, and the result has been that we have the Mines Regulation Act on the statute-book, presumably for the prevention of unnecessary danger, and for the protection of miners, but really a measure which is practically useless. Another Commission subsequently sat to investigate the question of miners' phthisis, and to suggest means for providing for those workers who were incapacitated, or for their dependants in the event of death. Had that Commission adopted the proposal made by the workers' representatives, and recommended the Government of the day to make provision in the Workers' Compensation Act for those who were incapacitated as a result of these diseases, there is little doubt that Parliament would have agreed to it. The fact that the proposal passed this Chamber and was defeated in another place by, I believe, only one vote, is sufficient to support my statement, especially as the whole of the argument against it was that the Royal Commission had failed to endorse it. The miners' proposal was to saddle this prosperous industry, which was pay-

ing huge dividends, with the burden of paying for the disease which it created, but Parliament rejected the proposal for the reason I have mentioned and now the present Government have to face the position. While assertions are being made regarding an accumulating deficit, the Government are confronted with the responsibility of providing for these unfortunate individuals who have been incapacitated in this calling, while those who should have borne the responsibility have been allowed to escape the payment of two-thirds of that amount. I understand that the proposal is that the miners, the mine owners and the Government will contribute to this fund. In my opinion the mining industry should have borne this burden without making any demand on either the State or the miners. Unfortunately this cannot be done, and the Government have taken the next best step by proposing to inaugurate a fund to which the mine owners will contribute at least something, and in view of the benefits derived from the industry by the people of the State in other directions, there might be some justification for asking them to contribute their quota to the fund. It is unfortunate that, where men are following a calling which inevitably leads to incapacitation, they should be called upon to provide against the day when they cannot continue their work, whilst the mines in which they are working are paying huge and handsome dividends. However, we are compelled to face this position and I can only commend the Government for having realised what lies in the future and for having had the courage to take in hand a problem which should have been grappled with 10 years ago, and which, if tackled then, would not have been so appalling as it is to-day. I desire to refer to some of the State enterprises upon which the Government have embarked. I cordially support the establishment of all these enterprises and I venture to predict that it will not be many years before the most prominent of the Government's critics of to-day will consider that the State was fortunate in having had a Government

who were prepared to engage in these enterprises.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They will say that they started them.

Mr. McLEOD: Possibly so, and possibly the various enterprises which to-day are so much criticised will be returning huge profits to the exchequer of the State and proving beneficial to the community, and those who are suffering from exploitation by trusts and combines will be pleased to get out of the wet and seek the protection of the enterprises under the supervision of the Government. Let me say that so far as saw mills are concerned, it has been suggested that they will not be successful, or that they are not going to be of advantage to the State. I desire to express my opinion that had this State not been grossly betrayed in another sphere by those who were in a position to see that the interests of Western Australia were properly looked after, by those, I might say, who were responsible for keeping the Federal Government in office during the last 12 months, if the members from this State who were responsible for that action had been seized with the importance of this calling so far as the State is concerned, and had been prepared to place the interests of the State before those of their own party, as we had a right to expect of them when a matter of this magnitude was at stake, there is not the slightest doubt that even to-day the saw mills instituted by the Government of this State would be proving a handsome success. Despite the betrayal, despite the fact that the success of the enterprise may have been delayed a little by reason of that betrayal, it is my opinion that at no distant date we are going to see the State saw mills returning a handsome profit to the people who have invested in them, and prove a material advantage to the community.

Mr. George: You will have to alter the management.

Mr. McLEOD: We will not necessarily have to alter the management, either. So

far as I can see, and am in a position to judge—I may say that I have no personal knowledge of the matter, not having yet been able to make a personal investigation—the management of the State saw mills will compare favourably with the management of those conducted by private enterprises in any part of Western Australia. There is another matter that has been the subject of a considerable amount of criticism, and that is the fact that the Government saw fit to embark in State brick works. Here again, I think we shall not go far before we shall find that those who criticise will be very glad indeed to appreciate. We know that the price that has been charged to the Government for bricks is something like £3 per thousand, and it is estimated that the works will turn out bricks at a cost of 25s. per thousand; and not only that, but that their output will be at least 180,000 bricks a week. Therefore it does not require a very fertile imagination to see that there is a material benefit, so far as the State is concerned, from Government enterprise in that direction. We have there at least a clear gain—if the Government themselves use the bricks, and I suppose they intend to use a considerable proportion, if not the whole, of them—a clear gain of a quarter of a million pounds per week in the output of these brick works, if this estimate of 25s. per thousand can be maintained. From our experience in this respect I venture to say that the estimate of what the bricks are going to cost per thousand will prove considerably higher than the actual result, because time and again we have it on record that the output of these various classes of undertakings is produced at considerably less cost than was originally estimated by those responsible. The reason of this is that the estimator is cautious of his own reputation, and does not like afterwards to be faced with an estimate that so much work could be done for a pound while it cost 25s. He is, therefore, likely to estimate rather that so much work could be done for 25s. in the hope that it will be done for a pound; and with the State enterprises it

usually has been the case that 25s. has been estimated and the actual cost has been 20s.

Mr. George: How much a week did you say we were going to make out of the brick works?

Mr. McLEOD: We will make at least a quarter of a million a week on an output of 180,000 bricks.

Mr. George: At that rate we will soon wipe out the deficit.

Mr. McLEOD: I have hopes, and pretty confident hopes, that before the present Government leave the Treasury benches the deficit will be wiped out, and a very handsome surplus be found in its place.

Opposition Member: You are looking a long way ahead.

Mr. McLEOD: It is not necessarily a long way ahead. True, it may be looking a long way ahead to look for the time when the present Government leave the Treasury benches, but not a long way ahead to the time when the present deficit will be turned into something else.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How do you calculate that quarter of a million?

Mr. McLEOD: I wish also to say just a word or two in connection with the State implement works, and I venture to predict here also that when these works are properly under way they will be such a standing credit to the Government responsible for their initiation that they will probably go a great deal further than any possible argument could go, to prove not only that the Government is to be credited with an achievement in instituting them, but also that the farmers of this State have been unnecessarily and unduly exploited by machinery agents and machinery merchants for many years past. I may refer to some events that transpired just recently, when the manager of the State implement works was prepared to back his opinion with an offer to donate £50 to a charity if that opinion proved to be wrong. I think the leader of the Opposition was one who had the temerity to criticise the manager's estimate. I think we are at least justified in standing by that estimate when the

manager himself is prepared to risk £50 on its correctness. His estimate of this year's working is that he will make a profit of £5,400; and, in addition to that, the farmers of this State will have received implements at from 20 per cent. to 40 per cent. less than they have hitherto been charged. It will not require a very large distribution of implements among the farming industry of this State to convince the farmers that their true friends are on the Treasury benches at the present time, and that if the farmers desire not to continue to be at the behest of any exploiter coming along they must see that those friends who did them a good turn with machinery will remain in power to do them many another good turn. Still another point on which a good deal of criticism has been levelled at the Government is one which, when we come to analyse it, will perhaps show a great deal more clearly than any other the justice of what the Government have been doing. Most of the enterprises which the Government undertook necessitated working up. They were new enterprises, new businesses. The Government had to find their feet in connection with these, and had to work the business up. However, there was one enterprise which the Government saw fit to buy which was already worked up. I refer to the Perth tramways. The Government saw fit to purchase these tramways at a cost of £475,000. Since then they have purchased other tramways, such as the Victoria Park and Nedlands, and the cost up to date for the purchase of tramways amounts to £489,056. Now just let us for a moment make an analysis of what has transpired since those trams were taken over. I will make the comparison for the eleven months ended 31st May of this year, and the eleven months ended 31st May of last year. For the term ended on the 31st May, 1913, the earnings of the trams were £98,054. For the term ended 31st May, 1914, the earnings of the trams were £107,495, being an increase of £9,441. The mileages for the same period are: 1,324,068 miles in 1913, and 1,441,168 miles in 1914, being

an increase of 117,100 miles. I desire to emphasise that increase because it goes to show that even in the short time the Government have had this concern under control they have effected very material improvement so far as the service to the public is concerned. They have given a better service, and I may say incidentally also that the returns are just a trifle, if only a trifle, better per car mile under the Government than they were previously. The passenger traffic also will help us to gauge just how much better the present arrangements are than those existing previously. In 1913 to the time I mentioned before, namely, 31st May, there were 8,964,368 passengers carried on the trams in Perth. For the same period ended this year there were 9,761,809 people patronised those trams, being an increase of 797,441.

Member: Increase of population.

Mr. McLEOD: As my friend interjects, that will go on as population increases; but there has not been any very material increase in the city population between one term and the other, and the increase is mainly attributable to the Government giving a better service than was given previously. We come now to another aspect of this matter, and of course I realise that perhaps the figures I am now about to quote may excite the same resentment as did some of the figures published by the Minister for Mines recently. Various critics will be found to suggest that there is something further behind the figures, and that the figures do not contain the whole story. However, I think that the more the critics investigate the figures in connection with the business of the Perth tramways, the more convinced they will be that what I am now about to say is correct. The operating costs for 1913 were £48,413. The operating costs for 1914 were £57,313. In addition to that there was an expenditure on belated repairs, on repairs that had been neglected by the previous owners, that should have been carried out in previous years, of £9,166, making a total expenditure to the 31st May, 1914, of £66,479; considerably more, of course, than was spent in the previous year, but

we have to take into account the 117,000 odd extra miles that were run and also the fact that the employees were working under slightly better conditions during the latter period. There is more than justification for that increased expenditure when allowance is made for the amount, not properly chargeable to the year, for belated repairs. Now we have this position, that with an income of £107,495 and an expenditure of £66,479, we have a credit balance of £41,016. Let us make the allowance—and I think it is a liberal allowance—of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the amount invested for interest and sinking fund, and we then have a balance of £20,516 which is clear profit to the State as a result of the Government having embarked on the enterprise of working the Perth tramways. This alone will go to show that where the business is there, where it is not a new business requiring to be built up, the Government is capable of conducting it with greater advantage to the general public than previously was the case. It goes also to show that whilst the profit previously was going out of Western Australia into the pockets of shareholders in other countries, it is now going into Consolidated Revenue, and will be used to relieve the burdens that have been existing in the past in other directions, and will probably, I hope, be available for the purpose of enabling the Government to embark in further enterprises of this description with equal benefit to the people of the State.

Mr. Elliott: What about the interest on the loan?

Mr. McLEOD: I have allowed  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The loan expenditure in this connection amounts to £489,000.

Mr. Elliott: What about depreciation?

Mr. McLEOD: The depreciation will be more than covered by the balance left. As a matter of fact, there is a considerable charge for the ordinary depreciation included in repairs which have been carried out during the year; and the increased facilities will more than compensate for any other contingency that is likely to arise. Now, I want also to express my appreciation of the fact that

the Government are continuing their vigorous policy of railway building, and, further, that they are embarking on a decentralisation policy so far as our harbours are concerned. It is a matter for regret, I think, from many points of view, that a policy of this description, giving proper harbour facilities to every section of our State, has not been in existence many years previously. Further than that, I want to say that I am very pleased indeed to see it is now intended to again introduce the Esperance railway proposal. I trust that that Bill on this occasion will be received in another place with a great deal more favour than has been its fate hitherto. If any railway in this State is worthy of being constructed, it is the Esperance railway. Settlers have been down there for many years existing on the promise of the construction of the line for a considerable time, and the work that they have been engaged on has certainly justified the building of it. I hope that when the line has been carried the short distance north of Esperance, it will not be long before it is continued to Norseman, and that the people of the goldfields will no longer be denied that access to the southern coast which should be theirs. Then it will be no longer necessary for them to travel the extra distance in order to reach the sea coast. They will have a port of their own within easy range, and a good climate to spend the summer months in. The action of the Government, so far as this railway is concerned, is to be commended, and I hope that the persistency which they have displayed over the matter will have its reward, and that before this Parliament closes the Bill for the construction of this line, which has failed to pass so often, will become law. There is another matter to which I desire to refer, and I think it is unique so far as any Parliament in the world is concerned, namely, the system of free education to which reference has been made in the Governor's Speech. So far as I am aware, there is not another Government in existence that can say that it has been responsible for a free education policy right from the kindergarten to the University. I am convinced it is an action

which will lead the way for many other Parliaments in this continent and in other parts to follow, and it will stand for all time as a monument of the statesmanship and foresight of the Scaddan Government that they saw fit, immediately they had the opportunity of doing so, to carry into effect proposals which they had espoused for many years previously, namely, to make education free in reality as well as in name, and free also in the sense that the sons of the poorest would be placed on an equality with the sons of the richest so far as higher education is concerned. It is pleasing to know that this alteration has been responsible for a material increase in the number of students attending the secondary and higher educational institutions, and the School of Mines as well. This matter, in itself, would be more than sufficient to justify the existence of any Government if it were necessary for that Government to pin their faith to a single proposal carried out by them. Before I conclude, I desire briefly to express my appreciation of the fact that the programme as outlined in His Excellency's Speech contains proposals to effectively deal with the biggest problems facing Western Australia. In the forefront, we have the proposal for Constitutional reform. In this matter, we have the experience of the past to guide us, and I think we are justified in assuming that the Government are sufficiently alive to the position to enable them to amend the Constitution so that the people of Western Australia may be the real rulers of the country. I trust that the Government will be prepared to face this proposal as it inevitably must be faced, fully determined to see it carried into effect. It would be impossible to continue the state of affairs which has existed during the past two or three years. The Government have a big majority behind them, and they enjoy the confidence of a vast majority of the people, and yet we see them unable to give effect to this policy by reason of the opposition of another Chamber, representing bricks and mortar and broad acres, preventing the programme from being carried into effect. I will also deal briefly with the proposal to introduce the meas-

ure to provide for the Initiative and Referendum. Anyone who claims to be democratic will agree that this proposal is probably one of the most advanced to be placed before Parliament.

Mr. George: What about the recall?

Mr. McLEOD: If the recall were in existence, the hon. member might find that his constituents would be a considerable nuisance to him. The members on this side of the House would have nothing to fear from it. I hope also that this measure will succeed in passing this and the other Chamber as well, and that the Government of this country will, as a result of these two measures passing, be placed in the hands of the people of the State, in the hands of those who are saddled with the burden of providing the revenue and carrying on the affairs of the State, the people who should be given an effective voice. I do not desire to go on at any further length. I think I have said sufficient to show that there is every justification for the matters to which I have referred, and which are mentioned in the Governor's Speech. The other matters to which I have not alluded, like many of those I have touched upon, more than justify themselves. I have much pleasure in moving the following Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech—

*May it please Your Excellency—We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.*

Mr. TURVEY (Swan): In seconding the motion which has been moved by the latest addition to the ranks of the Labour party, I desire to congratulate that hon. member on the lucid and eloquent manner in which he carried out the task entrusted to him. It was only fitting, representing as he does the important gold-mining constituency of Kalgoorlie, that he should devote a considerable portion of his remarks to the mining industry. When we speak of our primary industries, we must not forget that they have received an im-