have no right to so describe it-as an old men's home-I beg pardon, Mr. Speaker, I shall say that when an election was held for another place we found two Labour men, up against powerful opponents, on a roll anything but satisfactory, returned by large majorities. It is an indication that the people require a change in our institutions, and that some radical reform is necessary in that Chamber, which is described as a check on hasty legislation, but it could be better described as the death chamber of democratic hope, and of all progressive legislation. Now a few words in regard to a letter I have just come across. I claim that there is no cause for alarm at the advent of the Labour Government, although some people, it would seem, are trembling at the threatened results. This letter was written to a lady who had a couple of patches of sand to sell. No tax that could be imagined was likely to affect that land; yet when this lady placed her two blocks in the hands of a candidate unsuccessfully running in the liberal interests at the recent election, a Mr. Mitchell-not the member for Northam, but a Mr. Wilford Mitchell-he wrote to this effect-

Dear Madam, I am in receipt of yours of 17th instant and must express regret for my apparent negligence in not replying sooner, the delay having been occasioned by the illness of my typist and congestion of work. It would be impossible for me to put a fixed price on your two lots, the position being that if a person requires a block he generally ascertains what is on the market and picks the cheapest. The advent of the Labour Government into power will not facilitate the sale, as the land tax is going to be reimposed without any exemption and, consequently, the anearned increment is all eaten up by the taxation, therefore speculators are chary of buying except for purposes of utility.

No land tax would be likely to affect those two blocks located at Welshpool.

The land market is decidedly quieter and I can hold out no immediate hope of finding a buyer. Had you expressed a wish to sell a few months ago I could easily have disposed of the lot. However, please let me know what you are prepared to take, and rest assured I will do by best to carry out your wishes.

Mr. Heitmann: You are not surprised at his being beaten.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN : No, but I am surprised that anyone should try to mislead and scare the people like that. gentleman in the land agency business replies to the effect that he is unable to place the blocks, that speculators will not buy them owing to the advent of this Labour Government, and that it is imposible to get rid of a holding. Yet I have been informed by Mr. McCallum, secretary of the Trades Hall, who owns a block of land at Subiaco and has never yet tried to sell it, that since the change of Government he has received three written applications from would-be buyers. I think if Mr. Wilford Mitchell perseveres in the strain in which he wrote that letter some of the congestion in his office will be relieved, and he will have a little more time to inquire into the state of the market than he then had. I desire to conclude by expressing the hope that the Government will show an earnest desire in the near future to carry into effect the policy they have brought down to the House. It might have been a more comprehensive policy if we had contemplated sitting a few weeks in the summer, but on past experience I do not think we would be likely to get good results if we kept members here until February or March. Next session, however, it is to be hoped the Government will come down with a far-reaching policy which will be duly carried into effect, and as a result of which the party will be spurred into greater efforts in the cause of humanity, efforts which will lead to the lasting good of every taxpayer in the community.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): Although opposed to members on the Government side of the House I have to congratulate you, Sir, on the very high and honourable position in which you have been placed, and I hope you

will fill that position in a manner deserving of it. I have not much doubt in that respect. I congratulate the Premier on the great majority he obtained at the last election. I do not see very much difference in opinion at the present time between members on the Government side and those on this side of the House. I have heard a good deal about the platform of the Labour party, and I have heard from members of the Legislative Council that they are a non-party House. I am inclined to think also that this is a non-party House at the present time. Everyone hopes for the future prosperity of Western Australia. I for one will congratulate the Premier and his party if the prosperity of Western Australia is maintained and continued, as I sincerely hope it will be. I do not care whether a Government be branded Labour or Liberal as long as the ship of State is kept merrily moving along. This is of far more importance to me than anything like party politics. The Government have been returned with a large majority, but the same thing applied to the Liberal Government about six years ago, when the state of parties was something like 36 to 14. Still they did not maintain that position, and I would like to point out to members of the Government that this is a very difficult State to administer, and that if Ministers do only one-half of what their supporters are expecting of them, they will have done well. I am rather afraid they have very hard task masters. If the Minister for Mines can do all that is expected of him he is nothing less than a wonder. As I have said, this is a very difficult State to administer, owing to its vast area and its great distances from centres. We are one-third of the continent of Australia, with only about one-fifteenth of population. So it means long distances, and great areas of undeveloped country. For that reason we have a very difficult task to penform, and I for one did think, honestly and sincerely, that the Wilson Government did marvellously good work for Western Australia. I appreciated their efforts and will continue to do so, until I see that I have made a mistake, and I think that day will be a long while coming. Western Australia

has never been so prosperous, as far as employment is concerned. There are no unemployed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There are, I am sorry to say.

Mr. HARPER: Then I am equally sorry to hear it; at all events there are none in the agricultural districts. I for one have been waiting for labour for a long time, and for want of it I have had to make arrangements with my neighbours.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Send to the Labour Bureau.

Mr. HARPER: I have tried the Labour Bureau and could not get suitable men.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: What are you prepared to pay them?

Mr. HARPER: I am paying the usual rate of wages. I am paying one man £3 per week and I am paying another man with his harvester £1 per day. That, in my opinion, shows the prosperity of Western Australia. I hope that prosperity will be maintained, and if it is maintained I do not think that anyone will have any reason to grumble. Government were returned by a very large majority, and I wonder for what reason the late Government were thrust out in such a fashion. I think it was more than the vote of the Labour party; many liberals must have voted for the Labour Government on that occasion. But I want to say that the Government have a desperate position to fill, and all the Ministers will have my cordial support if they continue the prosperity of the State. With regard to the votes recorded in the last election, no one can gainsay that it was a well-contested election; about 75 per cent. of the people recorded their votes throughout the State, and 72 per cent, of the electors voted in the Pingelly electorate, which was a record. But a large number of people in that district were disfranchised, particularly the people out in the far eastern portion of the constituency, and there were a number of people on the boundaries of the Beverley and Pingelly electorates who could not record their votes. Something ought to be done to correct that state of affairs, because the people should not be disfranchised through no fault of their own.

Mr. Price: It was the fault of your Government.

Mr. HARPER: I do not know about that, but it is a rather difficult thing to get the votes in the right place. It is difficult to deal with voters who are living just on the boundary of two electorates, and I do not blame the past Government. . I am very glad indeed that the Government have decided to reduce the Ministerial salaries. I was against the increased payment to members, and I am sorry that the Government are not going a bit further and proposing to reduce the salaries of members of the Legislative Council. I say that a reduction and retrenchment in that direction would meet with the approval of the people of Western Australia. I noticed in the paper this morning that the Government are accused of not carrying out a plank of the fighting platform.

The Minister for Mines: Who accused them?

Mr. HARPER: A writer in the West Australian. I am glad that the Government are not going in for carrying out the fighting platform, and that they are dealing with the matter with deliberation.

Mr. Heitmann: What part of it do you object to?

Mr. HARPER: The plank referring to eight hours per day. It is impossible to carry out farming and harvest work by working eight hours a day.

The Minister for Mines: That is on no platform.

Mr. HARPER: That is part of the general platform of the party.

Mr. Heitmann: Did you not tell the farmers that they could not possibly vote for labour because in the midst of harvesting the workers would be going out on strike?

Mr. HARPER: No, I did not. Everyone knows that it is impossible to farm on the eight hours system. Farming already has to bear all the load that it can carry.

The Minister for Mines: The eight hours system is possible in New Zealand.

Mr. HARPER: New Zealand is different from Western Australia. The land and climate there are much better than they are on the average in Western Australia. At any rate, the present conditions are quite severe enough for the farmer.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: There are successful farms in this State worked on the eight hours principle.

Mr. HARPER: I have not come in contact with them or heard of them.

Mr. Green: Your objection has been offered to eight hours in the case of every industry.

Mr. HARPER: No, it is a very different thing to adopt an eight hours day on a mine, or in other laborious occupations. I recognise that eight hours per day is quite sufficient; in fact, seven hours is enough if one works well in a mine.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: It is only 61/2 hours in the north of England.

Mr. HARPER: That is because they work continuously and have no lunch time I suppose. I have worked six hours in a mine, but that was because we never stopped owing to the great quantity of water. I repeat that the present hours on the farms are short enough. I am glad that the Government are going on with the construction of railways in the agricultural area and I am pleased to see in the Speech a reference to the Transcontinental railway. In this regard I would like the Government to consider the advisability of taking that line through Armadale and Norseman and connecting it with the present surveyed route about 250 miles east of Kalgoorlie.

The Minister for Mines: And incidentally through Pingelly.

Mr. HARPER: Well, if the Government approved of that it would meet with the approval of the people of Western Australia. The reason for the suggested alteration of route is that the present line to Kalgoorlie is doing very good work. It will cost at the very least 1½ million pounds to construct a line such as we have from Perth to Kalgoorlie, and to take that up and put down another in its place would be a waste of money. I am informed that there is a very good route through the goldfields water catchment.

area, whereby a grade of one in 80 could be obtained instead of the one in 50 grade which exists on the present railway to the goldfields. By this proposed new route we would be opening up good country from 80 to 100 miles south of the eastern line, and this land would be a valuable asset to the State. I hope this line will commend itself to the Government and people of Western Australia and to the Commonwealth authorities.

Mr. Price: Where is that good country?

Mr. HARPER: It is claimed that there is good agricultural land at Norseman. and I am sure if it is good there it ought to continue good westward to the Great Southern railway. At any rate, the land must improve as we go south and the rainfall increases. By running the line further south we would have a better chance of getting more rain than by keeping to the present route. This State has passed an enabling Bill, and we should have two lines by this proposed alteration instead of one if the Transcontinental railway were to replace the present goldfields line. I hope the Government will see their way clear to continue the railway up the Hotham Valley and give railway facilities to other parts of the State. There have been pioneers in the Wandering district, who have lived there for 50 years and who have been very badly served in the matter of railways.

Mr. Heitmann: Some of them said that they did not want a railway to burn down their crops.

Mr. HARPER: That may be so, but if they did that the hon, member must excuse them for not knowing better. If I had heard them express that opinion I would have given them my deepest sympathy.

The Minister for Mines: Did not the late Government promise 12 months ago to send the advisory board to Wandering to report, and they have not done so?

Mr. HARPER: I think they have done so, and I think that the board have recommended a railway in that direction.

The Minister for Mines: No, not to Wandering.

Mr. HARPER: But very near to it. I should be pleased to see that railway built, well as the Yilliminning-Kulin line and also other lines in those areas. A great deal has ben said about the cost of living, and I would be glad to see something done to reduce it. However, I very much doubt if we will have any chance of reducing the cost of living very much in this State. We imported last year from the Eastern States £3,500,000 worth of produce, and our exports are infinitesimally small. It is true that we are exporting a large quantity of gold, but that is a different matter from importing products such as butter, cheese, eggs, and manufactured implements of all descriptions. I want to point out also that the difference in wages between Victoria and Western Australia is exactly £50 per annum per employee; that is, the average amount of salaries and wages paid to employes during 1908 shows a difference of £50 per annum per employee.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That has ben altered a good deal since then. There is very little difference now.

Mr. HARPER: Then all the better for Western Australia. I would like to see the wages in Victoria as high as in Western Australia, and then this State would have a chance of competing in these various industries.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Not unless we wiped out some of the rings in Western Australia.

Mr. HARPER: I do not know that there are any more rings in Western Australia than there are in the Eastern States. But I want to make it clear that we are paying in wages per annum £50 per head more than they are in Victoria. Not long ago tenders were invited for certain printing work, and the tender in Victoria was £50 and in Western Australia £90. with the result that the printing went to the Eastern States. That is why we are so harshly treated in Western Australia. According to the imports this State must employ some 50,000 people in the Eastern States. That is where we suffered so much by joining Federation and by the wages in the Eastern States being so much lower than those we pay here. It is that which makes it so difficult for the Government of Western Australia to control the affairs of State successfully, and 1 only hope that the Government can do half as much as the members on that side expect of them. If they do all that I do not think they will have done very wrong. I do not think a reduction can take place in the cost of living. There is not likely to be any reduction in the cost of meat for a year or two owing to the drought existing in the North and North-West, and I do not think, owing to the scarcity of products and necessaries of life, the cost of living can be brought down in any way.

Mr. Green: The member for Kimberley has told us there are more cattle in Kimberley than can be used.

Mr. HARPER: There is a great sacrifice in weight in bringing down cattle, and they are reduced something like lewt. on the trip; and as it costs about £3 a head to bring them down, it does not give much for growing the cattle. I have heard many optimistic remarks from members on both sides of the House with reference to the mining industry. I only hope they will be realised in the future. I agree with the member for Murchison that mining is not so flourishing as some would like. I would like to know how this resuscitation of the mining industry or increased prosperity is to be brought about.

The Minister for Mines: Who promised it?

Mr. HARPER: I am not saying the Minister for Mines had promised it, but there were certainly a great many on both sides of the House optimistic in regard to the mining industry, and I would like to know how they can bring this prosperity about. No doubt there have been mines mismanaged as members have said, but who is to know whether they have been mismanaged or not? I have heard a great deal about mines being closed down, but I do not know of any mine that has been closed down that is a payable proposition. It would be the last thing a company or anyone concerned in mining would do to close down a mine making a profit. Even if it is not making a profit, if it only makes ends meet, the mine is

kept going in the hope that some day there will be a new development. It is difficult to say whether the public batteries have been all that was desired. I thought they were going to play a very important part in mining in Western Australia, and they have to some extent, but there is this about it, that it has nearly always followed that the owners have not done much development ahead and that, when the ore was taken out and there was nothing but dead ends to look forward to, there was little for anyone to start on. There must be some inducement for people to take up mining. It is a very risky game and I do not know how this great question is to be remedied.

Mr. Heitmann: Booms like the Bullfinch will not do any good.

Mr. HARPER: I agree with the hon. member. We all regret the Bullfinch boom. I voted for the Bullfinch railway. I could not understand that so many large flotations of companies could take place and the result be so different. I hope the mine will turn out well so as to warrant the railway. Again the people were so anxious to buy blocks of town land at such high prices it made others think that . people who were buying the land knew what they were doing and that they were not putting money into a wild scheme. I do not know what amendments are to be made to the Arbitration Act, but I am still in favour of the wages boards system as in existence in Victoria, because the people connected with a wages board would be more practical, would understand local requirements better than a Supreme Court Judge or any one advocate in a large country like Western Australia.

Mr. Heitmann: It sometimes takes twelve months in Victoria to apply for a board.

Mr. HARPER: If the hon, member had a local board in Cue, surely it would be sufficient. It could be easily arranged for five or six practical men to sit on each side. That would be a far better way to settle disputes than to have the decision of a Supreme Court Judge who lives five or six hundred miles away from the spot.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Under the wagesboard system there is an independent chairman who knows nothing about the industry.

Mr. HARPER: I understand the two sides select a chairman and he can be got in the district. I should think that would be a more practical way of dealing with a difficult problem.

Mr. Heitmann: What is wrong with the Arbitration Act?

Mr. HARPER: Very often awards are given and little notice is taken of them.

Mr. Heitmann; When?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. HARPER: There are plenty of cases where they do not comply with the conditions of the award.

Mr. Underwood: Would you state one case?

Mr. HARPER: I know of several, but I do not remember them at the present time. I am pleased that the powers of the Agricultural Bank are to be enlarged. The bank has done great work in the development of the land in Western Australia, but it has not done all the development. I gather from information I have had from the Associated Banks, insurance companies and private concerns, that there is something like four or five millions of money in the agricultural areas from these institutions.

Mr. Underwood: Do they get any interest on it?

Mr. HARPER: Of course; and the Agricultural Bank gets interest. I know several cases where people have left the Agricultural Bank and gone to the associated banks rather than stick to the former.

Mr. Heitmann: Rather than put up with the humbug of the past administration.

Mr. HARPER: I hope if there is any humbug it can be remedied. No doubt people gain by experience. I hope to see improvements in this direction. A great deal has been said about immigration. No doubt a large number of immigrants who come out here are not suited to the conditions, but people have to be patient with them, and they themselves will have to be somewhat patient, but in time they will become good citizens. It is useless for the people of Australia and more par-

ticularly Western Australia to go in for a great scheme of defence if we have not the population.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What good is population unless we can feed them?

Mr. HARPER: I think we have plenty of resources in Western Australia to feed a large population.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): There are hundreds of men in Perth out of work.

Mr. HARPER: It all depends upon how they apply themselves and tackle what is to be done. There is plenty to do and with remuneration and prospects for the future. I have travelled a great deal, and I think the prospects for the immigrants here are certainly equal to those in any other part of the world. It is impossible to go in for a great scheme of defence without population. Chamberlain has said, "Get population and all other things will be added to you." I quite agree with Mr. Chamberlain; we want more population in Western Australia. I will not detain the House much longer, but I would like to reply to the wild vituperations of the member for Forrest who was disappointed because he was not successful in getting his man returned. Everyone is not so fortunate as the hon, member in being unopposed. He was at liberty to roam the country and vilify anyone far and wide.

Mr. O'Loghlen: You never heard me vilify anyone,

Mr. HARPER: No; I did not, but I heard it said-

Mr. O'Loghlen: I did not go about the country vilifying people. The hon. member should prove it or withdraw.

Mr. HARPER: I will withdraw. But certainly the hon. member did so to-night under the privileges of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: No member can vilify anyone under the privileges of this House. The hon, member must withdraw that as it is a reflection on the Chair.

Mr. HARPER: I do not wish to cast a reflection on the Chair so I withdraw. I do not want to be drawn into saying anything about my opponents. The hon, member, of course, stands in a more

favoured position because he has a pocket borough in Forrest; everyone is not privileged to the same extent. I will not say anything further in that direction, I will treat the matter with the contempt it deserves. I have again to congratulate the Government on their great victory, I believe they are sincere and I hope they will keep a firm check on the finances of the State, and that they will not tax those who have anything out of existence. The Government will not have a great deal of revenue to handle and for that reason I would suggest that they should be very economical with what will be at their disposal, and, being sincere in their work, as I believe they are, I trust they will be able to carry this country through to a successful issue.

Question put and passed; the Address adopted.

House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 15th November, 1911.

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Questions: Timber lands	1441			
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Bills: Divorce Amendment			***	***
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Local Courts Act Amer				

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

#### QUESTION-TIMBER LANDS.

Mr. A. A. WILSON (for Mr. O'Loghlen) asked the Minister for Lands:—1, What is the approximate area of timber lands still in the possession of the Crown, apart from concessions and permits? 2, What is the approximate area of Crown lands now being operated on by different companies?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:—1. The area of jarrah and karri country within the State was estimated by the late Ednie Brown at approximately 9,200,000 acres; the area held under concessions, timber leases, and sawmilling permits on the 30th June last was 1,304,-282 acres, leaving an approximate area of 7,896,718 acres still in the possession of the Crown. 2, The information is not at present available, but will be obtained.

# QUESTION — LIQUOR TRADE, HAWKING AMONGST CAMPS.

Mr. A. A. WILSON (for Mr. O'Loghlen) asked the Premier:—1, Is he aware that large quantities of liquor are being hawked amongst the timber camps of the South-West? 2, Will he take steps to get a better control of such trade?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied:—1, No, except by publicans who send liquor to the mills under orders from the mill hands. 2, Under above conditions there is no law to prevent such action.

## QUESTION-POLICE FORCE RETIREMENTS.

Mr. DWYER asked the Premier:—1, Is there any age fixed for the retirement of members and officers of the Police Force? 2. If not, is it the intention of the Government to fix same by regulation in accordance with the request of the recent deputation to the Colonial Secretary.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied:—1, No. 2, The question is now receiving the consideration of the Government.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands: 1, By-laws of the Leederville Municipality. 2, By-laws of the Victoria Park Local Board of Health.