

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: I am quoting what the Premier said. The hon. member can rise in his place and say that I am wrong or that the Premier is wrong if he likes. That statement does not coincide with the remark of Mr. Baxter that nothing had been done for the farmer.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It certainly does. There will be interest on most of the money.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: I contend that the Labour Government have done more to assist the farmers than any previous Administration. It is not my intention to say anything further on the Address-in-reply. Quite a number of Bills are to come down this session, and when they come along I shall have an opportunity of voicing my opinions on them.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN (West): It is with a certain amount of diffidence that I rise on this occasion to speak when I think of the hon. gentlemen whose footsteps I followed into this Chamber. When I remember the record which the Hon. M. L. Moss left on the pages of history in this State, I feel that the people of the West province have given me a duty to perform which will be a very onerous one indeed. I have listened to the eulogies that have been uttered by other members of this Chamber in regard to the late representative of the West province, and we who knew Mr. Moss so well as a member of our community realise too well the truth of those utterances. It is therefore, as I said before, a difficult position which the people of the West province have asked me to fill in this Chamber. While Mr. Cornell was speaking on the Address-in-reply he said it was a matter of regret that the West province had returned to this Chamber no representative of the Labour party, and this was a sentiment which was uttered by my late opponent (Mr. Somerville) at the close of his campaign in Fremantle. I am one of those who are of opinion that those utterances were entirely wrong. It is very well for gentlemen to come to this Chamber or to other places and claim that they are the sole representatives of Labour, but there are some of us who do not agree with members in that direction. I claim

that my own business experience, in the everyday affairs of life, give me, in common with other members, the right to call myself a representative of the workers of Western Australia, for in the course of my own business I have to deal with the humblest workers of the State. I have to look after their interests with just as much care as I would after the millions of a Rockefeller, when he places them at my disposal. Therefore, I claim that we who represent the business community of the State are in a better position to look after the interests of the humblest as well as the greatest in our midst. Therefore I resent the attempt on the part of any member to claim that he or his party are the sole representatives of Labour in Western Australia. In regard to the Speech which His Excellency delivered to us, there are two facts that are to be commented on. The first, and it is in common with the utterances of the party to which His Excellency's Advisers form the leaders, that it is full of a great deal of praise for the work which they have done, and of the good which has accrued to the community at large and which they claim is through their efforts. One thing one misses from the Speech, it fails to keep up to the standard, the multitude of promises which we are used to receiving from that party. We are so used to receiving promises from them as to what we are to get in the future, that when we do not see these promises or hear them expressed we are filled with vague suspicions, and we feel that there is something wanting in the Speech which we have been so used to in the past. I would like to suggest to the Government after the eulogy which they have expended on themselves on the benefits derived from their Herculean labours in the past, the creation of a new department. I should think it is only necessary for them to create a new department to control the decrees of the Almighty and we should have the millenium in Western Australia straight away. The Premier has been explaining in another place that the finances of this State are not in such a bad condition as some people think. We have also had Mr. Kirwan in this Chamber giving expression to the same opinion, that although we are over

half a million in arrears this is a mere bagatelle, seeing that we have placed to the credit of the sinking fund a somewhat similar amount. I cannot for the moment imagine that any business man would be satisfied by paying his debts out of his right hand pocket by putting money into his left. Although we have been on a wave of prosperity, which the Premier claims has been greater than any in Western Australia before, we have been drifting backward month by month and year by year, until we have now reached what should be the limit, and if something is not done to stem this disastrous slip-way which is taking place, we shall be landed in a very parlous condition indeed. Although I may be critical on this question or on other questions later on it is not because I do not have sympathy with those who occupy the Treasury bench, or that my opinions differ on some occasions or do not coincide with them on other occasions. I should like members to remember the story of a knight in the days of old. A knight who passing through a forest saw hanging from the branches of a tree a shield, and while he was gazing wondering why it was placed there, he saw approaching in the opposite direction another knight. This knight also paused to observe the shield, and a discussion arose between them as to the meaning of that shield. The first knight asked the second what was the meaning of the silver shield in the tree, and the second knight replied that he did not know, but that the shield was of gold and not silver. They had an argument and ultimately settled the question by force of arms. After belabouring one another and after each had suffered many blows and injuries, they were disturbed by the approach of a hermit from the woods and they asked him whether it was a gold or a silver shield, and the hermit replied that it had a silver face on one side and a golden one on the other. This is a story with a moral which all might take to heart. It shows that on all question there are two sides, and when we discuss or criticise any question, it might be viewed from different standpoints, thus arriving at different results. The Government during the last two years or more

have been experimenting, as we have heard, until we are tired of it, with a great number of business ventures, and money has been expended in Western Australia in directions which might very well have been left alone for the time being. We have had money, which has been very difficult to procure, expended in many directions at a time when it is necessary to spend money in other directions for the benefit of the State. We have millions of acres of land awaiting settlement, which all require the agencies of the human hand and mind to develop, and it is only necessary to settle people on the soil and give facilities to cultivate the soil to wring from Nature the riches which it possesses to make the State a great one. If we fritter away the moneys with which we are entrusted and make use of the borrowing powers for purposes of building up industries which might be left to those engaged in them, we are not true to the trust which has been placed in our keeping, and not doing our best for the State which we might. Therefore when the Government undertake the construction of railways in agricultural districts and other places where they are not necessary for the time being the Government are doing something which is not in the interests of the State of Western Australia, and they should be called on to stop at the earliest possible moment. While speaking on land settlement, I would like to suggest to the Government a method which might have been adopted in connection with the land settlement schemes which are carried out by every land syndicate in every part of the world. When land is subdivided the same provisions should be adopted as in municipal and town sub-divisions; the land cut up and classified, and not only the roads surveyed through the districts, but the railways surveyed and made a part and parcel of the survey by the officers, and once these lines are fixed, they should not be altered or amended by any authority, because they have induced people to go on the land by the promise of those railways and roads. I would go further and say that as soon as the lands are settled these railways ought to be constructed for the benefit

of the settlers who have been induced to go on the soil, so that their products might be brought to market immediately they begin to produce them. This is a work in which the moneys raised by the Government and expended in other directions might well have been employed, because it would redound to the benefit of the State. A good deal has been said regarding the Esperance northwards railway. I, like a number of other hon. members, am not pledged one way or another in regard to this question, but I say that unless I am shown that this railway is required in preference to any railway in any other agricultural district equally settled and having equal or superior land, I will not vote for its construction until those already promised are put in hand and built. Notwithstanding what has been said regarding the Esperance railway by a great number of its advocates, it is more or less a goldfields railway. Although we have been told that it is an agricultural line we have heard very conflicting reports from those who know the country which it will traverse. Although some say that the land is equal to any in the State, there are others who tell us that it is not worth the value of the line which it is proposed should be constructed. Therefore, at present, I regard this as a railway more or less in the interests of the goldfields and not in the interests of the agricultural districts which it will traverse. While referring to the goldfields I would like to say in reply to the hon. Mr. Millington, that, with all due respect to the goldfields and to the mining industry, I consider that the greatest industries of this State are the pastoral and agricultural industries, because every ounce of gold taken out of the mines and every ton of coal which is brought to the surface represents so much drained from the capital account and does not represent interest on the moneys invested, whereas every furrow put into the soil in the farming districts is increasing and enriching us for all time. The time will come when the mining industry will fail; when there will be no gold to draw from the earth and no coal will be left to mine, and although hon. members might

say that this will not occur in our time, I would point out that we are here as the custodians of the interests not only of the people of to-day but of the people of the future, and the lines we lay down for the benefit of the State now should not be for our immediate benefit only but should be considered in the light of the future, so that our children shall recognise that we have done our duty to them as well as to ourselves and have not acted in the selfish spirit which is advocated by some. The question of workers homes is another matter upon which I desire to say a few words. I would not have touched upon it if the hon. Mr. Cornell had not associated my name with it. During my election campaign I said, and I say again, that if an opportunity is given to me to vote for any measure which will enable those who have taken up leasehold propositions under this Act to convert them into freehold I shall support it, providing, of course, that the conditions are the same as those under the leasehold provisions of to-day. I took this attitude not because I was looking for votes, as the hon. Mr. Cornell suggested, but because I believed in the principle of every man having the right to own his own home. It is such settlement which has led to the greatness of the nation from which we have sprung; it is the love of home which has taken the Englishman across trackless oceans seeking his fortune in foreign lands, and the lodestone which has brought him back from many a wandering, to the spot from which he sprung, and we who come from the old country and know something of what this feeling is, desire to see it cultivated in the Australian people amongst whom the love of home, I regret to say, is not so great as we desire it should be. I trust that this principle of giving every individual the right to his own home and an interest in the acquiring of it and the holding of it will be fostered in the Australian people, and it is a matter for deep regret to me therefore that this principle of leasehold has been introduced into the workers homes proposition by the Government. I am very sorry

that one hon. member has no more regard for his home and for the future home of his children than to be satisfied to be a tenant all his life in a home which he can never possess or hand to his children as a result of his thrift and industry and the labour of his own hands.

Hon. J. Cornell: That statement is incorrect; I can do so.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN. The hon. Mr. Cornell also mentioned that some people were of opinion that some of the homes being erected under the Act were too good for the workers, and the hon. member went on to say that nothing was too good for the workers. I agree with the hon. member. I agree with the framers of this proposition that if we are to provide workers with homes, we should give them good homes, we should give them plenty of room and we should not sacrifice comfort and convenience to appearance but should give them the best we can for the money we are investing, and something of which they will be proud and in which they will take an interest. I am speaking of the leasehold propositions. The freehold propositions are the outcome of the desire of the people themselves and an outcome of their own opinions. They can build on acre blocks or they can build on one-eighth of an acre providing that the money is advanced and the rooms can be large or small as the occupants think fit, provided the money is advanced by the board; but with regard to leasehold propositions, the tenants are bound to the conditions which the board have laid down, and I am sorry that a number of these homes are erected on pocket handkerchief blocks of land scarcely large enough to swing a cat in. Some time ago the municipal council to which I belong received a communication from one of the bodies connected with the Labour movement of this State advising us to see in future that all sub-divisions in our municipality provided for blocks of land of not less than one chain frontage and a quarter of an acre in area. If this proposition was a good one for the members of the party to advocate for the landhold-

ers in the case of sub-division, surely the Government themselves when they have undertaken to settle the workers in homes might have taken care to see that the conditions they thought fit to impose on other people should be inculcated into the workers by those so solicitous for their interests. In building these houses on such small blocks, the Government have made a serious mistake which they will regret in years to come. Another thing which I have noticed is that very often no consideration is given to the levels of the streets to which the houses front. In one place a row of houses were erected under the Act on the leasehold conditions and the floors were something like 4 feet below the street level. When we know the size of the blocks on which they are erected and the small distance which intervenes between the footpaths of the future and the houses, we can realise that the workers will be put to considerable expense when the municipalities desire to construct footpaths in order to build retaining walls to prevent the footpaths from falling into their front gardens or on to their front verandahs. Another matter which has been laboured to a certain extent is the question of the cost of living and cheap meat. The Government claim that they have brought down the cost of living during the last two or three years and that the cost of meat also has been reduced. We have heard about the State butcher shops which have been established by the Government and about the good which the shops have done in the metropolitan area. All they have done, as far as I know is to enter into competition with the small man who is earning his living by the sweat of his brow and the labour of his hands. They have forced him to sell out at a loss in a great number of cases and have done no good for the great mass of the people among whom they have been established, and have not in any shape or form hurt those who are in a wholesale way of business. But above all there is one conclusive proof that the Government are not sincere in their contention that the price of meat has been reduced as a result of their efforts and that is to be found in the price which they are paying for the supply of meat to the

institutions which they control. Even the State steamers up to the beginning of this year were purchasing their meat from contractors who supplied the retail shops in the metropolitan area, and they were paying a higher price last year than at the end of the preceding year, and I believe that the price they are to-day paying for the meat they require is greater than they were paying the contractors last year. I admit that this is a very difficult statement to prove because it will be a difficult matter for hon. members to ascertain what amount is being charged to State steamers and what credit is being given to the State butcheries, but outside of the State steamers I have a thermometer which indicates the differences in the price of meat and that is the public hospital. For a number of years I have been associated with the Fremantle Public Hospital, and year by year during the last three or four years the cost of meat has been slowly rising. On one occasion the hospital board wrote to the representative of the Government who controls this department asking if something could not be done, seeing that the Government were entering into the arena as purveyors of meat, to supply State institutions at a cheaper rate than that charged by contractors in the past. In reply we were advised to call for tenders in the old way and to place our contracts with the lowest tenderers. That was done and this year we are paying more for the meat for the hospital than under the previous contract, and we were paying more under that contract than under the one which preceded it. If the Government have reduced the price of meat to any material degree, the institutions which are maintained out of the public purse should first feel the benefit of the reduced price. Another question I would like to touch upon is that of the powellising contract. Much has been said about this contract and it is very difficult for the layman to understand the actual position. I am not a layman in this connection; I know something of the seasoning of timbers, and of the various materials used for this purpose. I do not intend on this occasion to criticise the system, the right to use which the Government have purchased, but there are

other specifics in the market which I claim are equal to the system which the Government have purchased and specifics which are definite in their action, and which we know will do certain things or will not do certain things. The process on which the Government have spent so much money and in connection with which they have entered into such a disastrous agreement is one which I claim is unproved, and I say it is unproved because at the present time the Government are experimenting with this specific to show what it will do and what it will not do. During a recent visit to the saw-mills some of us were informed by the Minister for Works that a chemist was employed continuously by the Government to experiment with the material in order to ascertain what it would accomplish and that the chemist had not made up his mind as to the length of time required to submit the sleepers to the powellising process or what the result would be. I claim that any body of men, who purchase the rights of any system when the system is not defined and is not absolutely proved, and pledge the public funds in this direction, are guilty of gross irregularity and are not conserving the interests of the people who have entrusted them with the control of the finances.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I should like to add something to what has already been said by the Hon. R. J. Lynn on the question of the Fremantle harbour extension. We hear from the Governor's Speech that progress is being made with work in connection with the Fremantle harbour extension, and we know from the remarks of the Premier in another place that something like £200,000 has already been spent on that work. This we know is out of a sum of something like £640,000, which was voted for the work some two and a-half years ago. We were assured at the time this vote was granted that it would enable the Government to place Fremantle harbour in such a condition that it would cope with all requirements for the next five years to come; that was, for five years from that time.

Some two and a-half years have already elapsed, and something like a third of the money has been spent. Now, we claim that this is not getting on with the work as expeditiously as the port of Fremantle requires. We are not of opinion that Fremantle harbour is the only harbour in Western Australia. I do not think that any of us in Fremantle are of opinion that the other ports should be starved for the benefit of our own; but we do claim that this is the port of Western Australia, and that in the future, when the trans-Australian line is completed and we are connected by the iron road with the Eastern States, the importance of Fremantle will be very much enhanced, and a great deal more business will be done at that port than is being done at present, or has been done in the past. When we take into consideration the immense strides which have occurred in shipping, when we read in the papers that vessels of 50,000 tons burthen are being constructed for the Atlantic trade, and when we remember that ten or fifteen years ago the vessels which were coming over-sea to Fremantle were not as large as the inter-State steamers of to-day, we can realise that there is only a short time before us when we shall be seeing large ships like those trading to the West Australian coast. We are also of the opinion that the port of Fremantle at that time is destined, if the Government of to-day seize the opportunity, to become the greatest port in the Commonwealth. When the Navigation Bill, which has passed through the Federal Houses and has received the Royal assent, is gazetted, and placed in operation, then there will have to be one port in Australia as a distributing centre for the rest of the Commonwealth; and it is for us to-day to say whether Fremantle shall have the opportunity, or whether that opportunity shall pass to our Eastern competitors. If the Government only realise this, and fix their eyes on the future in such a way that they will see that adequate provision can be made from time to time as the requirements arise, then we shall feel that something like justice is being done to this port, which is destined to have so great a

future. We know that the port of Sydney has gained its prestige because of the immense coal fields which surround it; no other port in the Commonwealth has the same favourable conditions. But those of us who know something of the movements in the engineering world, know that the time has come when coal as a fuel for ships will probably take second place to oil. We know that the new period of internal combustion engines has set in, and we realise from this that there is no limit to the size to which ships can be constructed, other than the limits which the ports and harbours and canals of the world impose. We know also that as cargo carriers the larger vessels are the most economical that can be used; large vessels are much more economical than smaller craft, especially when the fact is taken into consideration that these huge vessels, which will ultimately come to our shores, will make one terminal port a depôt from which the Australian Commonwealth will be supplied. Another thing we know is that for years to come the Cape route will be the route to Australia. We know that the canal dues through Panama and through Suez will prevent any of the big liners trading in this concern, for the purpose of carrying cargo, from using those canals; the rates would be prohibitive. These liners will still come round the Cape, and we shall be the first port in the Commonwealth for large vessels coming here. If the Government only realise this, they will see the necessity of making up their minds now to a progressive policy in connection with this port of Fremantle, and lay down the foundation of a future scheme, which can be added to from time to time as necessity arises so as to make it a completed whole when the plans are carried to consummation. As one who some years ago was associated with the engineering department of Western Australia, and was on the engineering staff of the Fremantle harbour works—although I do not profess to be an expert in harbour extension and harbour work—I know something of the subject on which I am now expressing an opinion. One thing which struck me in connection with the

Government work in those days, and which has also struck me in connection with Government work now, is that the policy of past Governments and the policy of the present Government show a tendency to tinker with great questions, and to deal with things just from day to day as the requirements press, rather than lay down comprehensive schemes for future development, so that each item as it is constructed may become a portion of the final whole. I claim that in connection with the Fremantle harbour works the time has come, and indeed has passed, when the scheme should be considered from this point of view, and a comprehensive scheme evolved. Although I do not wish to disparage any of the engineering advisers whom the Government have in this State, my knowledge of the profession teaches me that if you require anything out of the common, anything out of the ordinary routine of business, you must get someone with experience beyond the ordinary routine work to advise you. I contend that the engineering staff of the Western Australian Government is purely an executive staff, a staff which carries out the work placed in its hands from time to time, and which has neither the time nor the experience to study these larger questions and to advise the Government on the future developments of a port like Fremantle. Therefore I claim that the Government should years ago have got the opinion of someone of world-wide repute, with a knowledge of these questions gained at the different ports of the world, to advise them as to what should be done at Fremantle. There are many questions in connection with the extension of a harbour, and the development of a harbour, like Fremantle, which the layman never realises or dreams of. Even under present circumstances the Government are expending a large sum of money in connection with the extension of the Fremantle harbour on lines which I believe are not sound, and which have not been thoroughly thought out. We know that they are developing the depth of water in the port to something like 40 feet, from 36 to 40 feet below low-water mark:

and this will necessitate the extension of the present channel far out to sea beyond the end of the present north mole. We know that a former Engineer-in-Chief, the late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, when constructing that harbour, found it necessary to increase the length of the North Mole so that it should project seawards sufficiently far to protect that channel. Therefore, if it is necessary for the Government of the present day to extend the channel out to the ocean something like another three-quarters of a mile or a mile it will be just as necessary for them today to extend that mole to the same distance as was considered necessary in the days when Mr. O'Connor laid down his scheme. I do not know whether or not provision has been made in the estimate for that, but if such a provision has been made for the future development of the port of Fremantle, I contend that, before the expense is incurred of extending this mole seawards for that distance the question of an external extension of the harbour should be taken into consideration in connection with it, so that before incurring this enormous expenditure in connection with breakwaters, which I am of opinion are necessary for the protection of that channel, the Government should obtain the opinion of experts as to whether the breakwaters could not be utilised in connection with the extension seawards of the harbour itself. This is necessary because of the fact, as I said before, that large vessels are going to trade to our ports. We cannot forget that fact; we cannot overlook that fact, or shut our eyes to the fact that these vessels are coming into the Australian trade. When the Premier told a deputation a few weeks ago that he thought it possible that from 18,000 to 20,000 tons burthen was the maximum size steamer we should see here for many years to come, he was making a statement in entire conflict with the opinion of the engineers and the ship masters of the world. If these vessels are coming to Fremantle in the immediate future, there is no place inside the entrance to the harbour in which those vessels could be handled. It is necessary that a port should be so easily entered and left that a vessel

can come in and go out under her own powers of propulsion. If you introduce tugs into the question, you are loading up your expenses, and those vessels will go to other ports where they can enter under their own control. If that is the case with the present harbour, I venture to say it would not in any shape or form facilitate the berthing of such vessels. The present distance between the wharves of the harbour is 1,400 feet, and if a vessel 800 or 900 feet in length came inside the entrance to the harbour she could not turn round in it. Consequently it is necessary for us to have broader waters to manipulate these vessels than we have inside the harbour to-day. When we realise that twenty years ago the scheme which was introduced into Parliament for the construction of the Fremantle harbour by Mr. O'Connor only provided for a harbour 800 feet wide between the wharves, and that it was only at the last moment that Parliament decided to increase the width, we can see to what extent the shipping of the world has developed in the last twenty years, more especially when we find that a man like Mr. O'Connor failed to realise the extent to which this development would take place in the space of one generation. And if that has taken place during the last twenty years, we cannot be blind to the prospect that the next twenty years will bring equal or greater development. When we realise that in other parts of the world, where harbours are being constructed inside the entrance, the people are put to enormous expense at the present time to maintain those harbours, the question of opening up the inner river for traffic is seen to be one which requires very careful consideration indeed. In the Mersey, which is the entrance to the port of Liverpool, in the Old Country, members may be astonished to learn, last year the dredges removed from the entrance to the port 16½ millions of tons of sand which had silted up during the previous year in the channel which entered that harbour. Just imagine any such thing occurring in connection with the harbour at Fremantle. Just imagine the enormous expense. It would cost as much in one year to remove the sand as it would to construct the

ouler harbour straight away. When we have factors like this, and when we realise that at the present time our engineering staff, whether from lack of funds or lack of knowledge I do not know, have not been collecting the data which would have enabled them to grapple with the problems lying at our doors to-day, it shows that this is a question the carrying into effect of which they should not be entrusted with. Take the Swan river. What do we know of the changes in the nature of the bed, the erosion of the banks, or the silting which has taken place between here and Fremantle? When hon. members speak of having the shipping brought up to Perth, they are expressing an opinion on a question the solution of which will take the widest knowledge the world possesses. Another thing, we have been troubled with the teredo at Fremantle for years past. What study have the Government or their officers made of the habits of these creatures? Do they know how they breed, or when, or where; how they attack the piles, or when, or why? Have they kept records of the piles driven, when cut, and where, when driven, and why some were attacked by the teredo, and some not? These are questions which the engineers should have been keeping records of, and if they have not they have shown by this their inability to grapple with great questions like that of the Fremantle harbour works, and the necessity of getting advice from abroad. If the teredo had been studied 15 or 16 years ago, the insect might have been annihilated ere this, and we might have been saved the expenditure of many thousands of pounds. Another question I should like much to touch upon is that of constitutional reform. This, I take it, is an attack upon this Chamber. I consider that as long as legislation is for the purpose of promoting the health, happiness and prosperity of the people, it is necessary that this Chamber should exist. As long as statutes are enacted for the benefit and in the interest of all parties concerned, it is necessary that the interests of all parties should be considered. It is necessary that legislation when introduced should be open to amendment in the interests of



all concerned, and when any party attempts to thrust upon the people legislation which has not been so considered and thrown open to amendment in the interests of all parties, then they are attempting to do something not in the interests of the people, but in the interests of a particular section which they happen for the time being to represent. We have in Parliament a party claiming to be the representatives of the workers of the State. But they are not the representatives of those whom they call the workers; because when selection ballots are taken and nominations received we find candidates selected by a small number of members of the union who take the trouble to vote, and only a small percentage of the actual members of the unions in this State have voted for the selection of those candidates. Nevertheless, those candidates, with the hall-mark of the Trades Hall upon them, are held up as representatives of labour, and are elected to the Chambers on that basis. We can see, therefore, that those men do not represent the workers, not even in the limited sense which they themselves claim. I am of opinion that this Chamber, which stands for the homes and the home life and thrift and industry of the people, for those who have made their homes permanently in the State, and who would have to carry the burden in the event of hard times coming over the people—I claim that this Chamber has a right to consideration at the hands of the people, and that it would be a disaster if anything happened this Chamber, or if it neglected to act as it has done in the past. This brings me also to the question of trades unions. I am myself a member of a union; but my union says that every one of its members shall be an honest and an honourable man, and shall be a qualified artisan in the trade or calling of life in which he is engaged. Until a union establishes those two high principles, and throws its doors open for the reception of every person qualified for membership under those two heads, it cannot claim to have any preference whatever. That does not exist to-day.

We have to-day a union with its membership limited to a certain number. I admit its rules do not limit it, but it has the power to ballot, and this enables it at any time to close its door against any person, no matter how well qualified for membership. Only a few months ago one of the artisans of that calling came from Geraldton, having in his pocket a clearance from the local union, and he attempted to enter the branch of that union in Fremantle. He stayed here for months, but could not get into the union. He was allowed to work side by side with the members of the union when work was at high pressure, but at the end of a period he had to retire whence he had come, unable to get permanent employment in Fremantle. If the House had given an opportunity to any Judge to say that preference should be given to unionists we should have given that Judge the power to say that thousands should not work at all, because, while the union has power to exclude from its ranks any one whom it chooses, the power is in the hands of that union to say that persons whom it desires to cut out shall be starved. Not until a union bars from its membership only on the grounds of dishonesty, dishonourable conduct, or some other moral blemish, can reasonably ask for that preference which it so much desires. Personally I claim that the question of honesty stands above all. Yet we find unions with members who have been convicted of crime and who have been received back by that union and placed again in the employment in which they were engaged prior to the action which led to their conviction. And the employers have been unable to object to these unionists being employed, although they knew they had paid the penalty for their misdeeds in the past. When unions remove these blots from their escutcheons, there will be no necessity to ask for courts to have power to deal with this question of preference to unionists, for the employer himself in his own interests will employ unionists in preference to non-unionists, because he will have a guarantee of honesty in the men

whom he employs. Until that time arrives I would not vote for preference to unionists. While speaking of crime, I should like to refer to an incident which occurred the other day. I am going to speak of the action of the Attorney General in releasing the man Bennett who was convicted of a fearful crime at Midland Junction a few years ago. When that man was convicted and sentenced it was said by the Judge that he was a person unfit to live. Yet in the short space of a year or two this monster in human form is released to prey upon society a second time. I claim that this action on the part of the Attorney General shows that he is unfit for the position he occupies, and that any party which supports an action of that kind is not worthy of sitting on the Treasury benches of the State. I have one more remark to make, namely, I believe, notwithstanding all our friends of the Labour party may say, that the people ultimately will arrive at a just estimate of what they may be in regard to this; I believe the good sense of the people will ultimately prevail, and I believe their judgment on those who claim to represent them will be right. I claim that the will of the people, when it is expressed intelligently, will show who are the people's friends and who are not, and I believe the time is not far distant when those who at present claim to be the friends of Labour will be weighed in the scales of public estimation and will be taught by the people that the only basis upon which national greatness can be built is that of justice and equity.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): I think I may be excused for saying I feel, as the hon. member who has just sat down said when he arose, a certain amount of diffidence in following so carefully thought out a speech, and one so eloquently put as that of the hon. member. The hon. member referred to changes in this Council. He referred to his predecessor of the West Province; and while I deplore the loss of Mr. Moss, with his intimate knowledge of Parliamentary procedure, and Western Australia statute law, and with his wonderfully

quick grasp of circumstances, may I be allowed to say that if we have lost in one direction, we have gained in another; that the hon. member is no mean successor to the gentleman who occupied the seat for the West Province which he now occupies.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: It is characteristic of Fremantle.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: The observation of Mr. Lynn is quite correct; it is characteristic of Fremantle that it should send to these halls gentlemen who have been for years, and who I hope will be for many years to come, ornaments to the Parliament of Western Australia. As I have already said, we have had a great many changes in this Chamber. I condole with some members, who have disappeared involuntarily, and I congratulate those who have taken their places. I listened with great interest to the speech made by Mr. Millington in moving the Address-in-reply. I have been in this Chamber a few years, and have listened to several speeches of the same sort. The hon. member reminded me of the month of March.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: A March hare?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I thought some hon. member would refer to March hares. However, I am not referring to hares at all, but to the month of March, which in England, if not here, is reputed to come in like a lion, even if it goes out like a lamb. The lamb-like demeanour of Mr. Millington has yet to be seen, but certainly it may be said that he came in like a lion. It might not be considered courteous of me, but I hope the hon. member will take the remark in the spirit in which it is made, if I remind him that none of us knows everything, not even the youngest of us.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: How can I determine the spirit in which the remark is made?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: If the hon. member has any doubt he can ask any hon. member sitting near him. I have to refer to the utterances of Ministers going around the country like another personage going to and fro upon the earth, and repeating libels and slanders on this Chamber. It is true those utter-