

force, that they are not doing good for the State, they will at once alter them, so that the people may be satisfied and feel some safety in laying out money to develop the State.

Hon. W. MARWICK (East): I cannot let the opportunity go by without offering a few words of congratulation to the leader of the House, Mr. Drew, on the high position to which he has been elevated, and also to his colleague, Mr. Dodd. I also desire to congratulate the two new members for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province, but I regret very much that they have brought into this Chamber an element of party feeling. I fail to see, as has been explained, how they can give fair and reasonable consideration to the measures which are brought into this Chamber if they adopt a party attitude. I only desire to touch upon a few points in the Governor's Speech. First, I would like to congratulate the Government on the substantial majority which they obtained at the recent elections, and I trust that they will not use that majority to the detriment of this young State. I feel that they have men in their party who have too much interest in the State to do anything which is going to be harmful. I might say also, with regard to the mining industry, and to which I owe a great deal of my prosperity, because I was one of the early pioneers of that industry, that I have watched it carefully and have always been pleased and interested to see any new development take place. At all times I shall give my support to any measure which is brought forward in the interests of that great industry. The State owes a great deal to it and I regret very much that on a recent visit to the goldfields I saw evidence of so much stagnation. It is hard to account for it but let us hope that something will be done to further develop the industry. I trust the Government will follow on the lines of the late Government, and, while on this subject, I would like to take the opportunity of paying a tribute to the late Minister for Mines, who I have heard spoken of, not only in the goldfields but all over the agricultural districts, as one of the men

who had done great work for the gold-mining industry. No doubt there has been a decline in the mining industry in the Eastern Goldfields, but we find from time to time new fields breaking out, and that will probably continue. None of us can help the partial failing of the industry. However, I would draw your attention to another item. I feel somewhat surprised, and I regret very much that so much should have been said in another place about the alleged drought. I have been pretty well all over the agricultural districts during the last few months, and I can say there is no such thing as a drought. We have had a scarcity of rain in many of the agricultural districts, but it is very far from being a drought. The rain has fallen so moderately that it has been absorbed by the growing crops, and but little has been left for the dams. But I am quite safe in forecasting that along the Great Southern line and in the Avon valley the average yield will be better than it was last year. I take it the Government will find when the year is ended that there will not be so much deficiency in the railway freights as they anticipate, and I am confident that they will get a pleasant surprise. There will be more hay carted than there has been for many years. I know that out a considerable distance east the crops are very good. This cry has had a detrimental effect on the progress of this young industry. I know many cases of merchants who have been advancing to our storekeepers large quantities of goods and who are a bit chary about continuing, because they have listened to this cry and are afraid of a failure. I say there is no failure. As Mr. Wilding pointed out, a good deal of this alleged failure has been due to the inferior manner in which some of the farmers have carried out their operations. It will serve to prove to those gentlemen who continue this careless and indifferent way of cultivating the land that it would be wiser to do it in a more systematic manner. I met a man a few months ago who has been eight years on a farm in the dry areas, and he told me he has not yet bought a plough. Talk to some people about farming without a plough and they

would regard you as a lunatic. However, that sort of farming has been going on in our agricultural belts, and I must confess that the best crop of wheat I ever reaped was taken off cultivated land; that is, land that had not been ploughed, but merely gone over with a cultivator. However, such a thing might happen only once in six years, and so it is not advisable to go on with that method. I do hope this cry of drought will cease, because we want the credit of our agriculturists extended. They cannot have too much capital, or have it too cheaply. There is any amount of money available throughout Australia and in the mother country, and the capitalists are only too willing to lend it to the farmers. But the farmers want it cheap, and it will be a difficult task to get it cheap if this cry of drought goes on much longer. One question which seems to have been left out of the Governor's Speech is that of providing abattoirs and freezing works. I very much regret that the present Government have not included that as the first measure to be undertaken. We have heard, especially on the goldfields and in the metropolitan districts, the cry about dear meat, about meat rings, and about cattle kings and so forth. I happen to be one of those who have contributed small quantities of live stock to the metropolitan markets for a considerable time, and I know a little about the conditions. Leading auctioneering firms have asked me how I thought they could overcome the difficulty of stopping supplies of live stock going on the markets at a time when the markets are not able to absorb them. The only possible way is to erect abattoirs and freezers in Fremantle and at Wyndham. Only last week I had a striking demonstration of the fact brought home to me. This week, last week, and the week before, I have had lambs on this market. The week before last they sold very well. Last week there was a pretty good supply on top of the previous week's supply, and still there was a fair market. This week, however, there has been a drop of something like 20 per cent. in the values, and numbers of lambs have been turned back unsold, and will now become stores. Had

there been freezers here those lambs could have been killed off and put into the cold chamber ready against the time the market required them, which would be in a month or so. What a boon this would be to the squatters of the Murchison and Gascoyne districts in drought seasons, when they lose their sheep by thousands. They had to kill a large number of lambs this year because the market could not absorb them. I hope the Government will establish these freezers, not only for the purpose of taking away our lambs and providing a place to store them in, but also for the assistance of the export of surplus fruit. We have a considerable amount of fruit grown in the South-Western districts, and we look to the London market to take the surplus. I just mention these facts, and I hope they will be taken into account, for I am sure the Government realise that it will be necessary to do something in this respect. In reference to the Lands administration, the announcement of Mr. Bath's policy has raised a great scare among a good many of our farmers. To an extent Mr. Bath is right. I do not believe in land dunning, in any man holding land without using it, and I hope that Mr. Bath will see that the land is used. But I think he is going somewhat too far when he says he will not allow transfers for a number of years. The Hon. Mr. Dodd speaks of having to repurchase alienated lands. I am not going into these details, for I will have a better opportunity later on, but I will say that in many cases the allotments have been too small. I know instances in which, after two years on 500 acres, it has become necessary, even for men trained in offices in London, to sell their 500 acre blocks and buy 1,000 or, perhaps, 2,000 acres on which to exercise their energies. Such cases should be met, and I feel confident Mr. Bath will meet them. I know he will not carry out his policy in the way many fear. He will be lenient, I am sure, and I hope also that he will be cautious. I know from experience that Mr. Bath's utterances have resulted in a great scare, but no doubt that scare will pass. If the genuine farmer works his land he will have no trouble in getting his transfer, if



necessary. Ministers, we are told, intend to bring about a reduction of their salaries. I cannot understand this subtlety, taking into consideration that when the Bill was introduced in another place no objection was raised in any quarter. I take it, in fact I know, that these gentlemen were then desirous of having an increase, and at that stage they had no desire to prevent Ministers from getting an increase also. I think this latest attempt is somewhat ridiculous, and I hope they will drop it altogether.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew) : As the hour is late I shall necessarily have to condense my remarks. In the first place allow me thank hon. members for their congratulations upon my elevation to the position of leader of the House. I desire to thank them also for their assurances of help in my efforts to carry out the business of the Chamber. I had no misgivings as to the treatment I should receive, when I accepted the position I now hold. I have had experience in the Legislative Council before, when I occupied this same position for 12 months. I accepted it at the time without experience, and took charge of one of the most important portfolios in the Government, and although I had not had time to get a grip of the details of various measures this Chamber gave me every assistance, with the result that of the 41 Bills brought down 39 passed the Legislative Council.

Hon. W. Kingsmill : Yet we are told to-night it is a party Chamber.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Members, of course, exercised their right of criticism, as they do on every occasion, and I cannot see that there could be any possible or reasonable objection to such a course ; but on no occasion, so far as I can recollect, have the members of the Chamber been unfair or guilty of anything in the direction of wanton criticism. I have reason to extend every courtesy to the members of the House, and to furnish them with every available information to assist them in coming to a fair and impartial conclusion in dealing with measures before the House. The question of freehold versus leasehold has been

freely touched upon during the course of the debate, but I wish to inform you that so far as the Government are concerned, that is a battle which has been fought and won. It was fought and won during the recent general elections, when both questions were submitted to the decisions of the people and were thoroughly discussed from every standpoint. On the one side the advantages of the leasehold system were pointed out, dwelt upon, and emphasised, and on the other side the leasehold was described as something approaching confiscation. After hearing both sides the electors of Western Australia have come to a decision, and that decision is in favour of the introduction of the leasehold system. I do not wish to deceive members, I wish to take them into my confidence, and I tell them that the day is not far distant when the leasehold system will be adopted in its entirety in this State by the present Government. Up to the present only town lots have been withdrawn from sale, but it is the desire of the Government to do nothing that will interfere with the course of settlement, and it is their intention not to abolish the old system until the new is in thorough working order. Their first efforts, therefore, will be to perfect the new system before abolishing the old. There seems to be an impression that land settlement will be very much affected by the introduction of leasehold. But after studying the question closely I have come to the conclusion that whatever may be the effect on town blocks, agricultural settlement will be considerably helped by the new system. At the present time land 20 miles from a railway is bringing 30s. per acre. I do not know what is the experience of members in other districts, but in my own district land remote from railways is being sold at 30s. per acre. A man must have at least 1,000 acres of that land to become a successful farmer, and consequently he must pay for 20 years a sum of £75 per annum. How can an ordinary man who is without capital find £75 per annum for conditional purchase payments over a period of 20 years? If something could be introduced on the lines of the