

for though we have got a long way ahead of the other States with our gold production during the past year, I should like to see every other industry go ahead to the same extent, and to see our population also the largest in Australia.

MR. W. ATKINS (Murray): With great diffidence I, a new member, rise to speak in this House for the first time; and I hope I shall be excused for any hesitancy I may exhibit. I should like, first, to explain my particular reason for trying to get into Parliament; and that was to help, as far as I could, to reduce the burden of taxation, particularly the expenses of government and the cost of public works. [MR. JACOBY: Hear, hear.] I do not know much about politics, but I think I do know a little about works; and I am bound to say that from my experience of 20 years in this country, I think we have had more public money wasted in the last five or six years than was ever wasted in this country before; in fact, we never had it to waste. And it struck me, having had experience for seven or eight years of public works in Victoria, and for six or seven in New Zealand, that in the first place one of our great troubles is political influence. Gentlemen to whom I have spoken in the Government service and out of it—in fact, all the employees—will tell you Government officers cannot do this and cannot do that, because they are interfered with. And I must say I do not think it fair or right to put a man in a position of trust—I am now speaking of men in charge of works—and then to interfere with him. If that man be not fit to do his work get rid of him, but do not interfere with him. I feel I am not speaking as a new member ought to speak; but I must say I do not think it is the place of members of Parliament to go outside and use their influence either to get men into positions or to interfere in any way with the working of the departments.

MR. HASTIE: Was Hodgson's a political appointment?

MR. ATKINS: I do not know. If you want to know anything about Hodgson, here is the report of the Coolgardie Royal Commission. (Laughter.) With regard to the railway question, I consider that department is inordinately expensive mainly because it is a political institu-

tion; and as for its being conducted on business lines, that has been talked about, but it is impossible; because one of the main principles of business is that you have to put up with competition. Now a Government railway has not to put up with competition.

MR. JACOBY: Yes it has; with sea-borne competition.

[MR. HASTIE interjected.]

MR. ATKINS: I did not interrupt you when you spoke. The particular trouble of the Government has arisen from their raising the rates. If they were competing, they would have to make better arrangements in order to get their work done cheaper. We know that in contracting. If we tender too high for a job, it is no use putting in another tender at the same price: we have to see if we can do the work more cheaply. That is what I say regarding the railways. I do not wish to say much of Mr. George's appointment. Give the man a show, and let us see what he will do. He may be the best man in the world, and he may not; but I think we shall, at any rate, get the thin end of the wedge into that department, and get it to a certain extent cleared of political influence. If a man can manage a job, he must manage it as he likes; and if he is not good enough to manage it, get another man. I think the House knows that I know as much about managing men as does the next man; and I would not manage a job for five minutes if I were not allowed to do as I liked; and no man can manage a job effectively or cheaply unless he can do as he likes. Then, besides the railways, our Public Works Department needs reorganising just as much; because whenever we get a comparative estimate of the work done on the Government day-labour system and under contract, the Government day-labour method goes down; and the officials tell you: "Oh, well, that is only one case, and that is an accident. That is wrong, but all the rest are right." But in every case of which you get the details, it is always found that departmental day labour is more expensive, and also that it involves more delay than there is in contract work. I can give a lot of instances. I hope that before long we shall have some more information about what is being done, because I certainly intend to ask in the

House for the cost of works done by Government day labour. I do not blame this Government at all, and I am not blaming any particular Government, but I say that this expensive Government day-labour system has grown up. As a member stated to-night, it was a Tory, Sir John Forrest, who started it. I believe that the reason he started it—though I do not know whether it was so or not—was to get political influence, and not to cheapen work, because there is no State in Australia, or almost in the world, where the railway work has been done cheaper than it has here. With regard to redistribution of seats, I am merely a new chum, and I do not know enough about government to give much of an opinion; but from what I saw in my election, I assert that certainly from three to four hundred electors in my constituency are not represented. I do not know whether you will say they are disfranchised—you can use any word you like—but what I mean is that they did not want me. I think that such a position of affairs is not right, and if it could be improved it would be a very good thing. I would ask the legislators if they cannot make some arrangement in regard to more class representation, so that men who want my sort can have one representative, and other people can have somebody who may suit them. Probably it would be a difficult problem, but, in my opinion, it would simplify matters and satisfy people very much better than the system of cutting the country up into certain districts, under which, whether a person wanted a Labour member, a Tory, a Liberal, or whatever it might be, he had to put up with whatever man came along. I do not know that I need refer to other subjects, for I suppose they will come up in course of time; and with these observations I will conclude.

On motion by Hon. F. H. PIESSE, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.44 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 7th August, 1902.

Question: Stock Export to South Africa—Question: Hospital Grievance, Kalgoorlie—Question: Experimental Farm, Narrogin—Lands Department, Questions—Address-in-Reply, ninth day, conclusion—Administration (probate) Amendment Bill, second reading—First readings: Public Notaries Bill, Indecent Publications Suppression Bill, Justices Bill, Public Works Bill, Roads Act Amendment Bill, Explosives Act Amendment Bill, Elementary Education (District Boards) Bill, Railways Act Amendment Bill, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment Bill, Droving Bill—Returns Ordered: 1, Victoria Quay, Fremantle; 2, Criminal Libel Prosecutions; 3, Land Purchases (railway); 4, Railway Stores (value)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—STOCK EXPORT TO SOUTH AFRICA.

MR. F. WALLACE: By leave without notice, I beg to ask the Premier whether his attention has been drawn to a paragraph appearing in the *Morning Herald* newspaper of to-day, having reference to an expressed intention by the Minister for Lands to levy an export tax or heavy inspection fees on cattle leaving the State of Western Australia.

THE PREMIER: My attention has been drawn to the paragraph, which has occasioned me some surprise. I have seen Dr. Jameson on the matter, and he states that he has not been correctly reported. The subject has not even been considered by Ministers. There is no occasion for taking any action which would affect or interfere with existing arrangements.

QUESTION—HOSPITAL GRIEVANCE, KALGOORLIE.

MR. J. RESIDE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Whether his attention had been called to a Press report which stated that at Kalgoorlie Government Hospital a lad with a broken arm was refused medical attention, and told to seek it elsewhere. 2, Whether he will make inquiries into this statement, and, if true, issue instructions to prevent such actions in the future.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, My attention has not been called to the Press report referred to. 2, Yes. Inquiries have been instituted, and