

Mr. George: It was a big factor, anyhow:

Mr. S. STUBBS: I believe a great many did; but no civil service in Australia was treated more generously as a whole than our public service was by the last Government. There may have been one or two individual cases of hardship, but in controlling a big number of men like that individual cases will crop up. The vast majority of the civil servants in this State were treated handsomely by the late Government.

Mr. Lander: On sweating wages.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Labour Government paid 6s. a day to some of its employees.

The Minister for Mines: Good old State farm!

Mr. Lander: The late Government paid £90 a year to teachers.

Mr. S. STUBBS: When in Scotland recently I was asked many questions about the payment for teachers in Western Australia, and I said the salaries ranged from £100 to £150 for teachers capable of looking after schools of 40 or 50 children. Many men in England, Masters of Arts and Bachelors of Arts, are working for £90 a year, and are glad to get it. I advised many of them to come to Western Australia, and I do not think any of those with degrees attached to their names would get under £150 or £200 a year, and I have yet to learn I was incorrect in telling them that. In Scotland they are many teaching in schools, working far longer hours than the teachers do in Western Australia, and getting not much more than will keep body and soul together. I am no advocate of low wages for school teachers. I believe they have a monotonous life, and I think anything Parliament can do to raise the conditions and salaries of State school teachers will commend itself to the House, at any rate it will to me; but the wages paid here are not too bad. In England one can find numbers of people working 10 to 12 hours a day at from £1 to £1 5s. a week, when the same class of work here is bringing 12s. to 14s. a day. One wonders how they live.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I have seen them pay 50s. a year rent.

Mr. S. STUBBS: And pay heavy rates and taxes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): No one pays rates and taxes there.

Mr. S. STUBBS: You cannot get rooms in England now without having to pay a fair price for them. The wages in Australia are not too bad, and I think if the country is prosperous, good wages should be paid. There is such a thing as killing the goose that lays the golden egg. We cannot conduct the affairs of this country without borrowing money, and I say that the time is not far distant when the man from whom we are borrowing the money will want to know how we are spending it, in comparison with what is earned. I have no desire to keep the House any longer except to say that any measures that the Government may bring forward, which, in my opinion, are in the best interests of the State, will receive my cordial support, but anything which I think is detrimental to my constituents, or to any portion of the country, I shall not hesitate to voice my humble opinion against it.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans): I do not intend to occupy the time of the House at any great length on the subject of the Address-in-reply. There is just one matter that I would like to mention which struck me forcibly as a new member on the opening day in Parliament, and that is that many of the ceremonies in connection with the opening procedures could, in my opinion, be discontinued to the advantage and the welfare of the working of the State generally. I believe that the electors when returning members to Parliament do so in order that they may carry on the necessary business of the State; therefore I contend that there is a good deal of unnecessary formulæ adopted on such occasions which could be done away with. In connection with the debate on the Address-in-reply the leader of the Opposition stated in the course of his remarks, that the fact of no definite mention in the Governor's Speech of railways for the goldfields would be a bitter disappointment to the members representing



those constituencies. I wish to state, as a member representing a goldfields constituency, that I feel no disappointment at the absence of mention of any railways for the goldfields in the Speech. I also honestly believe that my constituents feel no disappointment. I will say that I realise, at all events, and I made use of it from the public platform in my constituency, that a great amount of benefit would accrue to the people in those electorates if there were sympathetic and proper administration of the Acts already on the statute-book. I also realise that the Ministers are new to their present offices. They certainly require a reasonable amount of time in order to get into touch with the working of the different departments. That being the case, and being firmly of the opinion that it is the wish of not only this side of the House but of members opposite, that the present session should not continue over Christmas, I contend that Ministers have acted wisely in the matters that they have placed in the Governor's Speech for the consideration of the House. There are many matters of vital importance to the constituents that I represent that I will be anxious to see in the Governor's Speech at the opening of the next session. While I am quite prepared to give the present Government all the assistance that I possibly can to carry out the proposals which are embodied in the Governor's Speech, on this occasion I do not intend to deal with the Speech generally, and I shall only refer to one or two matters. First of all I desire to refer to the question of the amendment of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Whilst I believe that we would not have sufficient time to give to the people of Western Australia, the workers in particular, a Conciliation and Arbitration Act which would be absolutely satisfactory, and to make all the alterations required to make it a workable and practicable measure, I do believe it is the intention of the Government to introduce a few most necessary amendments to this Act. In my opinion one of the most necessary amendments is that referring to the manner in which an organisation may approach the court. The Act at present

provides that a majority of the union, or the organisation, shall vote in favour of the resolution authorising that a ballot of the members be taken to approach the court. That in my opinion is absolutely unnecessary. I think that the individual members are safeguarded inasmuch as they have the right to have a say by ballot as to whether or not the court shall be approached, and I fail to see where the necessity comes in for having a majority of the members of the organisation present at any meeting to decide that point. The organisation of which I have the honour of being a member, the Kalgoorlie and Boulder branch of the Miners' Union, would have to take one of two courses to get to the court. It would either mean that we would have to hang up the mining industry on the Eastern Goldfields for at least one day, or else convene a meeting for Sunday, in order to get a majority of the members present to carry a resolution authorising the members to take a ballot to approach the court. That, in my opinion, is quite unnecessary and should not remain in the Act any longer. I hope that the Government will see that that alteration is brought about. I might instance another society, the Engine Drivers' Union. We have had one experience already of the Perth branch of the Engine Drivers' Union endeavouring to get to the court. It necessitated the hanging up of the whole of the timber industry in the South-West for a whole week in order to get all their members to come to Perth to carry the resolution to say whether they should go to the court. Those instances are sufficient evidence in favour of amending the Act in this direction immediately. There is another point which needs serious consideration at the present juncture and that is the registration of unions as they are at present composed. Under existing circumstances it is a very difficult matter for many organisations on the goldfields—I know of some organisations which have been in existence for six months, and through no fault of their own, and from my way of thinking at all events, through no reasonable grounds, have been refused



the right to register. I contend that when an organisation is formed, if it is anything within reason at all, every facility should be given to it to register, even though on the face of it it appears to be a continuance of composite unions. There are many other alterations I would like to see included, but representing as I do a district which this Act particularly affects, I am prepared to wait until there is sufficient time to deal with the comprehensive amending measure. There is another matter I would like to touch upon which is not referred to in the Governor's Speech. If there is any constituency in Western Australia which should be disappointed over anything, my constituents, I think, ought to be disappointed at the absence of any mention of an amendment to the Mines Regulation Act. I am prepared to say from practical experience that the existing Act is not a fair one so far as the employees are concerned. I am also prepared to say that under fair administration the measure as at present constituted can be made considerably better for the employees. I hope that not later than next session the Government will introduce an amendment, and when they do that I trust the amending Bill will re-enact Sections 20 and 27 of the 1895 Mining Act. Section 20 in particular, and the section giving the right of the employee to sue the company for injury or for neglect resulting in injury should find a place in the amending measure. I think a majority of the members are well aware that since the passage of the Mines Regulation Bill in 1906, hardly a case in Western Australia in regard to suing for damages has ever been successfully contested, though I am prepared to say in many instances evidence has proved almost wilful neglect on the part of some of the officials of the mines. There is another matter which is a burning question with the mining community, and that is the appointment of check inspectors. I wish to refer to the fact that just prior to the present Act coming into operation the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Gregory, invited the Executive of the Miners' Federation to meet him in conference with regard

to making a suggestion which would be of advantage to the employees. We agreed to meet the Minister and we put three or four requests before him, which we desired to have embodied in the Mines Regulation Bill. After we had discussed the pros and cons, the Minister stated that personally he believed the requests to be reasonable, and added that he was quite prepared to do his utmost to see that they were given effect to in the Mines Regulation Bill of 1906. One of those requests was the right of the employees to appoint their own check inspectors. After debating that point with the Minister at considerable length we felt pleased at the thought that we had been able to convince Mr. Gregory of the absolute necessity of having check inspectors. But what did we find? The Bill came before the House and we found that the most bitter opponent of the idea of the men having the right to appoint their own check inspectors was the Minister for Mines, and that too, after having promised the Executive of the organisation that he would do his utmost to see that the suggestions made by us were embodied in the measure. The section dealing with check inspectors provides that the majority of persons employed in any mine may, at their own cost, once a month or oftener, appoint from among their own number one to act as check inspector. The provision is absolutely unworkable, for many reasons. Prior to the Act coming into force, and ever since, the officials of the different unions have been rapping at the door of the Minister for Mines for the right to appoint check inspectors. The Minister has repeatedly referred us to the provision made; yet in no case has advantage been taken of it by the employees. They realise that, so far as they are concerned, it is absolutely useless. In the first place it would mean the holding up of a big mine for at least one and a half hours during the day, because to obtain a meeting of the majority of the men employed on any of the mines would necessitate keeping the shift about to go below above ground until the arrival on the surface of the shift knocking off. All this in order that the check inspectors might be



properly appointed. In the event of such appointment, if the inspectors went conscientiously through the mine—as I believe they would—and give a true report of their investigation, in less than a week some reason would be devised for dispensing with their services. Having regard to the fact that an attempt to take advantage of the provision would mean the discontinuance of the bread and butter of the duly appointed inspector, you can readily understand why the men have disregarded Section 16 of the Mines Regulation Act. There is another matter of great importance in connection with the inspection of mines. On the Eastern Goldfields, on three or four different occasions, I have been appointed one of a deputation to interview the inspector of mines on various subjects, but particularly the lack of the management in neglecting to comply with the regulations under the Act. The system adopted by the mines' inspectors on the Eastern Goldfields is to notify the manager of the mine to-day that they intend to visit to-morrow; the result is that in almost every instance when the men are about to go on work at four o'clock in the afternoon, when getting candles or giving in their time, the underground manager or the shift boss will "word" each of the men to see that things are fixed up, to put their dynamite carefully away, and to see that the ladders and gear are in good repair. He does not say that the inspector is coming to-morrow, but everyone knows from the instructions given that the inspector will be there. We believe this is not in the best interests of the men employed. The inspector argues that it would be absolutely impossible for him and his colleagues to do the amount of work expected of them if they paid surprise visits. In the interests of the men employed I contend that if two inspectors could not do the work it only requires representation by them to the Government, and the Government would be inhumane indeed if they did not give them some assistance. But irrespective of that, the inspector argues that this giving of notice is the right course to pursue. He contends that it is not the trifling faults he is there to deal

with, but that his business is to get the best and safest system of mines' working. I agree that it is desirable to get the best system, but the best or the worst system is not responsible for the great number of fatalities and minor accidents which occur; it is the faults in the system, and if the inspector desires to locate those faults it is only by paying surprise visits that he can do it. That is another reason why we are so anxious for the appointment of check inspectors. I trust that when an amending Mines Regulation Bill is introduced the Government will see fit to give the employees power to appoint their own check inspectors. Another point of interest in connection with the Speech, and one to which I would refer, is the matter of the building of workmen's homes. I am pleased indeed to see that the Government intend to assist the people of Western Australia to build homes for themselves. During the elections I read both in the *West Australian* and the *Kalgoorlie Miner* reports of speeches in which it was stated that the Labour party had practically stolen the policy of the then Government in connection with the building of these workmen's homes. This came as a great surprise to me, because I was of opinion that for some considerable time past the Labour party had favoured the idea, notwithstanding which the Ministerial party professed to be of opinion that in this respect we were practically taking their platform. I would like to draw the attention of the House to an incident coming within my own knowledge. At a conference held in the Workers' Hall, Boulder, in 1906, the present member for Forrest was representing the Menzies branch of the Miners' Union at that gathering, and he moved "That the time has arrived in this State when the Government should take into consideration the advisability of building homes for the people." That resolution was carried on the 20th June, 1906, and forwarded to the proper head of the Ministerial department; yet on top of that we have to-day supporters of the late Government contending that we are stealing their platform because we announce our intention of doing our best

to encourage the building of homes for the people. Another point to which I would refer is the statement made by the member for Moore, who expressed the opinion that the desire of the Government, and of members on this side was solely to increase wages. While I thoroughly agree that every individual who has to work for his living should get a fair remuneration for the work done, in my opinion that is not the object of the Labour party. I contend, and I am positive that this party will prove to the member for Moore, that it is our desire, so far as possible, to introduce legislation which will increase the spending power of the money that people already have, rather than increase the wages. In the recent history of South Australia we have a fair illustration of how much good it is to increase wages and take no further steps. One of the first actions of the Verran Government was to increase the whole of the lower-paid civil servants 6d. per day, and the Premier also intimated his intention of reducing the railway freights, and thereby increasing the purchasing power of the money. But he found that after about three months the workmen were practically no better off with the increase of sixpence, inasmuch as the landlords had increased the average of rents by half a crown per week. That, I think, was the chief reason why the present Government got such a hustle on with regard to the building of workmen's homes, and I believe it has had the desired effect, if not of reducing rents, at all events of preventing their further increase. There is little else I wish to say. I am firmly of opinion that at the conclusion of the life of this Parliament, I do not mean this session, the Labour party will have demonstrated to the people of Western Australia that it was considerably to their interest that they voted as they did on the third of last month.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie): I feel considerable pride in being able to present my case from the Kalgoorlie standpoint before the House to-day. Unfortunately in the past Kalgoorlie has not had that meed of representation in this Chamber to which the people of that city con-

sidered themselves justly entitled; so it is that instead of returning a supporter of the Government with a 500 majority over his Labour opponent, as happened at the previous election, this time a supporter of the Labour party was returned with the greatest majority in the State. I must congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon election to your high office. I am satisfied that it is not only because of your integrity to the Labour party, but because of your worth as a man whose honour and work are known throughout the State, that you are in that proud position. As a goldfields member I must raise a protest against the manner in which the Eastern Goldfields have been treated, almost since the inception of Responsible Government in Western Australia. That is generally recognised. As far as the late Government were concerned so much were the people on the goldfields satisfied that it was impossible to get a fair deal from them that we have presented to us the spectacle, unique in any State of the Commonwealth, of ten solid supporters of one party—the Labour party—being returned by the goldfields. That represents the opinion of the goldfields with regard to the late so-called Liberal Administration. Previous Governments have been known in Kalgoorlie as "Perth Governments" and whilst we have had the labour paper in the State supporting the Labour party we have had the spectacle of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* fighting tooth and nail against the late Liberal Government because that paper recognised that so far as the goldfields were concerned, whether they were Liberal or Labour in sentiment, there was no chance of getting fair treatment from past Governments. We have many grievances against the late Government. We have paid excessive charges on the railways. Everything which we wear on the goldfields and every article of consumption has to be carried anything from 380 to 500 miles and in many instances 600 miles, and on all of these we have had to pay excessive rail charges. It is not as if these particular railways were not paying and paying handsomely. So handsomely were they paying that the late Liberal Government refused from



time to time to give us sectional returns which they knew would show that the rates charged on these lines were excessive. Much has been said by the past Government with regard to the large amount of money spent on the construction of railways on the goldfields, but in many instances and particularly in connection with the Yilgarn railways, the people of the goldfields paid for the lines as they were being constructed, because the Government made arrangements whereby the contractors were allowed an undue time for the construction and during that time the contractors charged the people exorbitant rates, thereby reimbursing themselves for all costs. In this way have the people of the goldfields had to pay for the construction of their railways as they have gone along. The policy of the Governments in the past has been one of centralisation. This evil of centralisation is one with which the whole of the States of Australia are confronted to-day. In Sydney they have had to grapple with it, because it has assumed such proportions that it is easier to bring goods from Tasmania to Sydney than it is to carry them from the interior of the State a small distance of 250 miles to Sydney. In this State the late Government not only did not propose to do away with the policy of centralisation, but they were determined to fight for it tooth and nail; they never made the slightest promise of decentralisation. The late Premier was fairly frank when he told the electors in that tortuous constituency which he represents that so far as the Esperance railway was concerned he was determined that he would have none of it. We can imagine that he felt quite safe with his little parochial policy so far as his own seat was concerned, but a man who persists in a policy of that kind must eventually receive his deserts at the hands of the electors, and whilst he has been allowed to favour us with his presence in this Parliament he has at least been hurled from the high office which he previously occupied. That is a sufficient indication that the policy of the late Government has not commended itself to the general body of electors. The Esperance railway

is not a thing which we fought for yesterday or the day before; 16 years I have been on the goldfields, and when Sir John Forrest went to Kalgoorlie to open the Water Scheme, which was a magnificent work, I admit, what was the writing on the wall? Right across the wall in the hall in which the visitors were banquetted there appeared these words, "We want the Esperance railway." Year in and year out the daily papers have fought for it and the people have fought for it, and yet past Governments have consistently turned a deaf ear to our entreaties. In the circumstances some of us may be forgiven if we regretted that the Constitution prevented us from severing our connection with such a Government. The late Government spoke a great deal about opening up this vast State, but we must accept that statement with a certain amount of reservation. It was proved by the majority of the advisory board whom the late Government sent out that this country between Norseman and Esperance is good and that there are 1½ million acres of first-class wheat country that could be opened to the settlers of Western Australia. The majority of the board recommended that 60 miles of railway should be constructed, yet what do we find the leader of the Opposition saying in one of his late memorable speeches? In spite of what the board said, he was still opposed to the railway and he stated that the land was arid and porous. At the time he made that statement the dams in that district so favoured by nature were overflowing. In this district south of Norseman the rainfall is always certain. It was only the other day that I received this telegram—

Grass Patch cutting two tons per acre. Rodger's crop, harrowed in 30 mile, ton and half; others good.

This is land that is close to the miners of the Kalgoorlie fields who wish to leave work on the mines and make homes for themselves and their children in a country that is sure of rainfall, has a cool climate and faces the Southern Ocean instead of being on the tropical seaboard.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The late Minister for Lands inspected it in the dark.