

MR. BATH: Then I give notice that I will ask the question at the next sitting of the House.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL INQUIRIES AT
FREMANTLE.

MR. G. TAYLOR (without notice) asked the Premier: Will the Government lay on the table the papers called for on the resolution of the Assembly last session, in connection with the electoral departmental inquiries held into the four Fremantle contests during the last general election?

THE PREMIER: Notice of the question should be given.

MR. TAYLOR: In now giving notice that I intend to ask the question at the next sitting, I do so because the Government have failed to carry out the resolution of this Parliament in the matter, and I am within my rights in again moving in connection with it this session, at any rate in giving notice.

NOTICES.

Numerous Notices were given relating to Questions and Motions for the next week.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

FIRST DAY OF DEBATE.

MR. A. C. GULL (Swan) said: Before entering on the more business-like portion of the Address-in-Reply, may I be permitted, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate you on your return amongst us; and I trust that your general health does not belie your appearance. May I also tender my congratulations to the member for Bunbury, on his attaining to the high position of Premier of this State, also to the new Ministers on their appointment, and to the Leader of the Opposition on his reappointment to that position. I trust that in view of the recent election of members to the Upper House and of the Fremantle election (return of the new Minister for Works), the demeanour of the Opposition in this session of Parliament will be rather that of generous critics than of factious opponents. [MR. TAYLOR: Time will tell.] I trust so. I trust that after the general blowing off of steam from the Opposition benches, those members will settle down to kindly

criticism rather than factious opposition. With regard to mining—which industry is stated in the Speech to be satisfactory—I have great pleasure in endorsing the action of the Minister for Mines, and I am in full accord with the liberalising regulations which the Minister has introduced. [MR. TROY: What are they?] Liberalising in giving increased security to capitalists, and in matters generally throughout the goldfields by assistance to prospectors, assistance to boring, and various other items. I am also pleased to know that the question of the baser metals, tin and copper, is in a satisfactory position, and that efforts will be made this coming year to increase very largely the production of those metals. I must say without hesitation that the transfer of the Phillips River smelters from the Government to the parties who have bought them is a good riddance to the country, inasmuch as the Minister has wisely provided that at all events for two or three years all existing contracts shall be dealt with by the purchasers. With reference to this sale of smelters and the taking up of a very large number of leases by the copper smelting company, the question of railway connection from Ravensthorpe to the smelters has been dealt with, I think, in a most satisfactory way by Mr. Gregory, the Minister for Mines. If it can be shown that it is to the advantage of this State to build that railway, by all means build it. Then in connection with railways and the mining interest, I wish to bring under the notice of the Government particularly the advisability of doing something in regard to the Pilbarra Railway. This is one of the wealthiest undeveloped districts of our territory, and I feel perfectly sure that serious consideration at all events is due to that proposal. In regard to the position of this country and the Government administering it, I think I am voicing generally the opinion of the country when I say I am with the Minister for Lands as the head of the Government in his land settlement proposals; also his wish to decentralise, because there is no doubt that a great deal of trouble, and a great deal of irritation, has been caused to settlers through the length of time that elapsed before they were able to get on their land and obtain a start. I am also pleased to note that the

Minister has decided to discontinue the sales by auction of workmen's blocks, and I trust he will consider the advisability of including suburban land also. [MR. HOBAN: Where is all this taken from?] From the Governor's Speech. Also I approve of this policy of survey before selection, inasmuch as the present system of allowing land to be taken up before survey has entailed on the Survey Department of this country endless expense for surveying lands that are not ultimately gone on with. I also agree with the Premier as Minister for Lands in deciding that half of the survey fees shall be paid on application. I would also rather see the whole of the surveys paid for on application. [HON. F. H. PIESSE: Oh, no.] That is my opinion, because I think the Government at the present time cannot afford to pay out the vast sums every year for surveys which are extended over 20 years' purchase. I would not care, if the State were in a solvent and prosperous condition, but with a deficit facing us I think it would be wise if the cost of the surveys were paid on application.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The new Act provides that half the survey fees is to be paid in two instalments, half-yearly.

MR. GULL: On the question of the Loan Bill I am pleased to be able to support the Premier to the utmost of my endeavours in carrying the Bill through Parliament this session, because I recognise that the advancement of this country is inseparable from this loan expenditure for the development of agricultural districts. I am quite in accord with the introduction of the railways adopted last session, and I am perfectly satisfied the House will accord a generous support this year to fresh lines also; chief amongst these being the completion of that vexed Jandakot-Armadale railway, the Greenhills extension—perhaps the wish is father to the thought—Newcastle-Bijording, and Narrogin-Wickepin railways. Those are all lines worthy of consideration from this House, and as I said just now, the whole future policy and future success of Western Australia is locked up in this land settlement question. I feel certain that the building of railways and the settlement of land will go hand-in-hand, and that there will be no permanent prosperity in this

country until a large and contented population is settled amongst us, because at the present time—as we all very much regret—we are importing a great deal more of those foodstuffs which are our necessities rather than producing them. That is a most unhealthy position, and a position we are justified in coping with assisting to the best of our ability the producers settled on our lands. I have also noticed—every one amongst us, I suppose, has done the same—that immediately there is a cessation of loan expenditure there is a temporary depression. The reason is not far to seek, because directly we cease to import English money into this country we notice the leakage which is going on every day, year in and year out, to the other States, to provide supplies for our people. As regards the Midland Railway Company and the sales that will take place to-morrow, I am pleased indeed that the Government have at last seen their way to assist the company in the unlocking of their lands. [MEMBER: In what way?] They at all events have guaranteed that the purchasers will get their titles, and I trust that principle will also apply to all those men who have held land in the Midland concession for many years, and who up to the present have not been able to receive their titles. I hope this will meet with the consideration of the Government. I am quite with the Government in supporting their Bill for boring for artesian water in the North-West areas, for improving the stock routes, and assisting in every possible way to bring fresh meat down to the goldfields centres. In connection with the agricultural railways I have always felt that it has been a wrong system entirely that the Colonial Treasurer should treat as current revenue the proceeds from the sales of Crown lands; and this applies more particularly to the increased price of those Crown lands which has been brought about by the extension of our spur agricultural railways. The principle, to my mind, should be the survey of those lands before selection, and the revenue derived from the sales of those Crown lands—at all events the enhanced value—should go as a sinking fund for the reduction of the cost of those railways. I do not consider for a moment that the Colonial Treasurer has

the slightest right in the world to consent to the sale of Crown lands for the purpose of current revenue. I throw out this suggestion, which at the proper time others will either accept or leave alone, as they like. I also support the Minister for Lands in his suggestion of partially clearing areas for new settlers; and in connection with this I would suggest to the Minister that it would be a good principle to give the selector himself the contract for clearing that land. He would do it to his own satisfaction, and would clear the land just in those places where it would be of advantage to him. With the idea ahead of him that he can get certain employment in clearing his own land, for which he has ultimately to pay at the end of the term of 20 years, I am perfectly sure that the man will rise to the opportunity and that he will be only too glad to seek it; also that this will in a very large measure dispose of the vexed question of immigration. [MR. SCADDAN: The system has been in existence at Nangeenan for years.] But I want to see that system extended. With regard to the proposed establishment of freezing works in the Kimberley district, I would support any Bill brought forward to the utmost of my ability, because I recognise the extreme danger existing now of infesting the South-Western District with tick. I know that it is the idea of experts that tick will not live here in the South-West; but I say that if the tick will not live here now it will very soon adapt itself to the circumstances. I know that the tick is living here now; but the suggestion of the experts is that the second generation will not, that ticks cannot propagate their species here and inoculate the cattle with fever. Whether this is so or not, I do not propose, at all events for my own part, to take the risk; and I shall be with the Minister for Agriculture right to the hilt in stopping anything of the sort, in stopping all danger of infecting the Southern areas with tick. Regarding the freezing works at Kimberley, I would much prefer that the parties interested in sheep and livestock from Kimberley should take this matter upon themselves. I think I am quite within the mark when I say that every beast shipped from the Kimberley district loses from 1cwt. to 2cwt. before

being put on the market at Perth. This is a dead loss to the man shipping the beast, and a dead loss to the consumer who has to pay an additional price for the loss that nobody gets the benefit of. Not only that, it is a horrible cruelty to the animals themselves. There is a distinct loss to the State also, and to everybody connected with the cattle. I may point out in this connection the horrible state of the existing yards at Fremantle. The other day there was a prosecution for cruelty to animals. I think the Government and not the individual should have been prosecuted. However, I would support the building of the freezing works, as I think the difficulties can be overcome in that way. I would prefer to see the work carried out by private individuals; but in the event of their not doing it, I would support the Government doing it. Coming to what I suppose is the most controversial item in the Governor's Speech, that of the land tax, I must say straight out that for a country seeking a developmental policy it is a bad advertisement. At the same time when I recognise that we deliberately and with our eyes open threw our Customs revenue into the gutter by joining the Federation, I cannot see any alternative but to raise additional revenue by the easiest and handiest method we have; and though I have always had a hesitancy about putting a tax on land, especially in a country which is seeking to induce population, yet I am prepared to accept the proposal of the Government and to advocate and support a tax on unimproved values. I say on unimproved values, because it will tax practically every man in this country, whether tenant or owner, and my friends in the city will pay very much the larger proportion of it. If this land tax were proposed solely with a view to bursting up the larger estates, I would have voted against it without the slightest hesitation; but when I recognise that we are out after revenue, and that we must have revenue, then I am prepared to support the Government in their proposal. I omitted to state that as this is to be a tax for revenue purposes, supported at all events by myself with the idea that it is for revenue purposes, there should be no exemptions—[Several Labour Mem-

bers: Hear, hear]—because I suppose it is a tax in lieu of the Customs revenue we used to receive. Having done away with that revenue, having chucked it into the gutter, as I said just now, we then have to look round for that source of revenue which will draw from everybody in the State; and I am perfectly satisfied to accept this tax on those terms, and on those terms only. I notice a paragraph in the Governor's Speech relating to the Premiers' Conference and to the opinion of the Leader of the Government that he does not fear that the Federal Government will put into practice the ideas that were passed at that conference. I wish I could feel the same amount of trust and faith in the Federal Legislature. Everything up to the present has given us decidedly the other feeling. There has never been a question of trust. We have placed our trust in it, and it has been in every instance shallow. We could not even get a paltry Survey Bill for £20,000 passed for the Transcontinental Railway, which was repeatedly promised and the building of which was made the great inducement to Western Australia to go into the Federation. The Federal Government, no doubt chiefly through the Federal Treasurer have brought the Survey Bill before the Federal Parliament again, and I trust that it may be passed; but I have very great fears that it will not be passed. Also I fear that even should it be passed, South Australia will exercise the veto which she undoubtedly possesses by making the conditions so awkward that they cannot be accepted. Should the Survey Bill be again refused, I think it will behove us to seriously consider whether there is any farther need for Western Australia being made a sort of chopping-block as we have been. [Several Members: Oh!] Why, we cannot get even a paltry telegraph line built under six or seven months, and then we have to guarantee ten per cent. on the cost! It is a ridiculous scandal that these things are perpetrated every day; and I say it behoves us to seriously consider the question of secession. Whether we could ultimately carry out secession is another matter; but I think we are perfectly justified in assuming that attitude, and I think that by assuming that attitude we are more likely to get the fair con-

sideration that it is argued exists. I trust that if this Survey Bill that is again before the Federal Parliament is again refused—[MR. DAGLISH: What has that to do with the Speech?]-the Government will take into their hands the matter of moving in the direction of secession. If they do not, I shall be only too pleased to have a cut at it myself. In conclusion I trust that this session of Parliament will be a happy one, that at any rate the bickerings that seem to be attendant on parliamentary life will exist in a modified form, that with the large and solid party sitting behind them the Ministry will be able to carry through their reforms, and that a fair measure of just criticism will come from the Opposition benches. I hope there will be no huckstering opposition, and that it will be unnecessary to call for a return of the cost of printing speeches made in this House. I beg to move the adoption of the following Address in reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Governor:—

We, the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our most gracious Sovereign, and to thank your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to address to Parliament.

MR. J. EWING (Collie): Seeing the impatience of hon. members on the Opposition side of the House, I rise to second the motion with considerable diffidence; and knowing the desire of members opposite to end these proceedings, I promise that if I get their patience for a few moments I will not delay them at any great length. Before dealing with the Address-in-Reply, I would also like, Mr. Speaker, to tender you my congratulations on seeing you in such excellent health. I would also like to tender my congratulations to the Government on their great success during the late elections which they had to fight. There can be no doubt that the feeling of the people of the State has not undergone any material change during the last few months. [MR. BOLTON: Give us a chance at East Fremantle.] It is a matter of congratulation to the members on the Government side of the House that in such a constituency as Fremantle there should be such a glorious victory for the Government and for their principles. I am simply placing stern, solemn facts before you, and we have a right to