

always seem designed to conform to the interests of the southern part of it. Those of us who have lived for any length of time in the North have always had a grievance on that score. I think the regulations for inspection should be relaxed, at any rate in regard to fruit going to the North.

A MEMBER: Say Marble Bar.

ANOTHER MEMBER: Hear, hear.

DR. HICKS: I was very pleased that the member for Subiaco mentioned the aborigines of the North-West, although it was with regret I heard him use that invidious term "slavery." I have spent about eight years in the North, and I think I am qualified to speak on this subject. During that time I acted as a medical officer and also as a magistrate, and I have travelled over the entire district. There seems to be some misapprehension amongst members about the kind of contract entered into by natives. There are two, one being the indenture system and the other the yearly contract system. I do not agree with the indenture system, by which children of tender years are bound until they attain their majority, for I think the time should be considerably lessened; but with regard to the yearly contract system, I see nothing we can introduce to better the natives in any way. It has been said the Government have given the squatters cheap land, but that squatters demand something more, namely cheap labour. I think that when this question comes before the House, I shall be able to prove that native labour is not the most economical form of labour. People go in for it simply because the natives must be fed, and employment is given to them to keep them out of mischief. Erroneous opinions have been spread with regard to the natives. People go to the North and are not successful there, and they come away looking through blue spectacles. They come South and make certain statements to the Press of this country, and the Press in turn publishes them. Some may be truthful, but as far as I have read these statements, a certain section of the Press, having an invidious reputation, has published assertions without going into the facts of the case. *Ex parte* statements have been published, and a person does not get fair treatment. With regard to the rabbits, we should at

once push on, and I think we have the assurance of the Premier that this is being done with all speed. We must do so, because we learn that the rabbits are coming into this country at the rate of about 100 miles a year. By this fence we shall certainly be able to retard the progress of the rabbits, but we should with all speed obtain evidence from France of some kind of treatment whereby rabbits may be exterminated. With regard to the redistribution of seats, I am quite in accord with the member for Albany (Mr. J. Gardiner), who says it should not be on a population basis but on an equitable basis. First of all, if we go on a population basis, it leads to centralisation, which is to be much deprecated at all times, and particularly in Australia now. If we go on a population basis, then three or four towns will have the ruling power of this State, and it does not give those sparsely-populated parts of our land a fair voice in the matter. The man who lives on the land is here for ever, and it is only right he should have a fair say regarding the amount of money which is being spent in the country. When I entered Parliament my original intention was not to have spoken at this stage, but I have been urged as it were to vindicate my position by reason of the uncharitable remarks made by members on the other (Government) side of the House. What right have any members of the House to question my actions? I have one tribunal, that being my electors. They, and they alone, have the right to call upon me to justify my position. At the last election they did me the honour to return me unopposed, and I will see I do nothing to cause them to regret the confidence placed in me. If I have said anything that has hurt the *amour propre* of any member, I can only plead the ardour of my convictions. My one desire is that I may improve the interests of this State by being true to myself.

MR. F. McDONALD (Cockburn Sound): When before my constituents, one question they always asked me was, "What leaders will you support in the coming session of Parliament?" To this question I emphatically answered that I considered it was time Western Australia had a change of Government. The views I placed before my constituents were in



accord with the policy enunciated by the Leake Government, and while the Ministry continue in the policy the Premier has enunciated at Queen's Hall and in the Governor's Speech, I shall be prepared to give them loyal support. I am sure my constituents are with me in the step I have taken. The member for Roebourne (Dr. Hicks) has said his constituents are with him in the action he has taken. Some members are in this House who, if going before their constituents, would not be again elected. The leader of the Opposition said the Government had no policy; but I am satisfied the Government have put a policy of administration before the country with which the views of the people coincide. They have given a policy of administration instead of a policy of borrow-and-spend.

MR. DOHERTY: How would you have obtained railways if you had not borrowed?

MR. McDONALD: It is time we stopped borrowing and spending so much. I am satisfied, also, the Leake Government will not ear-mark moneys which have been passed by Parliament, and spend them for other purposes. This policy of reappropriation is a bad one, and the State has had too much of it. People throughout this State demanded that the financial question should be thoroughly straightened out and explained in a satisfactory manner. The member for Northam (Mr. G. Throssell), when addressing his constituents, told them the statement of affairs he put forward was an honest one. When the hon. member was speaking to his constituents he was not only addressing them but the electors of the State, and I take it the electors could infer from his assertion that the statements which had been placed before the electors in times past had not been altogether true. I consider the decision of the Government to separate the Railway Department from the Public Works Department a wise one. I am sorry the present Commissioner for Railways (Hon. J. J. Holmes) has had this unfortunate trouble to face when coming into office, but no doubt we shall hear a little more in connection with this matter, and I trust it may be settled very soon. The administration of the Public Works Department has been open to very severe

criticism, and I trust the Minister will thoroughly reorganise his department. The establishment of a Board of Advice must be good for Western Australia, and if this Board of Advice had been in existence, many public buildings and some of the railways would not have been constructed. I refer especially to the Greenhills railway and some other agricultural railways. The leader of the Opposition has said the late Government intended to bring in a Harbour Trust, and I am glad the present Ministry have taken that subject from the programme of their predecessors. I do not think any of the other members advocated that before it was mentioned by the Premier in his address in Queen's Hall. One of the problems this Parliament must take into consideration is the high cost of living in this State, which falls very heavily upon the working man. As one who is intimately acquainted with the high cost of groceries especially, such as butter, cheese, and bacon, I must say that, if it be possible on the part of the Treasury, I shall be glad to see the removal of the duty on those articles which are necessary for the working men. I should like to see the working men able to have a free breakfast table.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND: That is settled by the Commonwealth.

MR. McDONALD: I do not think so, for we have the five-years sliding scale, and I think this House has agreed to keep that sliding scale in force. But if we consider that the working man only receives from 42s. to 50s. a week, we must see that when he pays from 10s. to 15s. a week rent, and pays for the articles necessary for life, he has very little left at the end of the week. I trust the removal of the duties on the articles I have mentioned will be one question which the present House will deal with during this session. It is stated in the Governor's Speech that there shall be no new railways. I am not going to ask for any new railways, but I am glad that surveys are mentioned, and I trust that the Minister for Works, when he is instructing the Surveyor General to proceed with surveys, will get a survey made of the Owen Anchorage railway through Jandakot to Armadale. I think that railway will pay working expenses, and will be reproductive. In my opinion that



railway is wanted more than the Colliery railway, advocated by the member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. J. Ewing), who spoke so much about it. This railway which I advocate would relieve the traffic coming through the Perth yards, and bring timber and coal direct to Fremantle. It would also open up this large Jandakot area, and settlement has proceeded there very rapidly indeed. My constituents do not advocate any particular point. They are satisfied to leave that with this Board of Advice, if the board be brought into existence. On the night that he spoke, the leader of the Opposition (Hon. F. H. Piesse) gave a mass of figures in connection with our public debt and the working of our railways. He told the Premier he had painted matters too brightly. I take some interest in financial questions, and I cannot see that when works which have been taken in hand by the late Parliament, and works which must be taken in hand—works for which immense sums have been appropriated—are provided for, our debt can be any less at the end of 1903 or 1904 than about £17,000,000. That is a very heavy debt for a handful of people numbering something like 180,000. I am glad indeed to see that the only question of new works mentioned by the Premier in Queen's Hall and the Governor's Speech was the water supply for Perth, its suburbs, and Fremantle. In connection with that I would like members to look to the Chief Inspector of Explosives and Government Analyst's report, in which he condemns the present supply very severely. In connection with this water supply, I trust that when the Government bring in a Bill they will make the board an elective one, to be chosen by the various municipalities from Fremantle to Midland Junction. The ratepayers of these municipalities and the metropolis are prepared to pay for a good and pure supply; and I trust this board will not be saddled with the incubus of debt which is hanging over the present Perth water supply. I do not think this debt should be saddled on that board, if elected, but the Government should wipe that matter off the slate. I have taken an interest in the agricultural affairs of this State, and I trust the Premier, who represents the Minister for Lands in this House, will see

that the good work done by the late Commissioner of Lands (Mr. G. Throssell) is to be continued, and that the drainage scheme which has been before this House previously shall be carried into effect. I know we have a magnificent stretch of country extending from Pinjarra southward, which, if properly drained, will be of immense value to the State. We have had the civil servants criticised severely in this House, and I think some of them deserve all that has been said; but I consider there is one official, this being Mr. Patterson of the Lands Department, who carries out the work in connection with drainage, the Agricultural Bank, and other things, who is worth the highest praise which can be given to him for the manner in which he has laboured for the department. One question practically settled is that of the importation of fruit, and I am quite in accord with the action of the Government. Lately, whilst in New South Wales I had the honour and privilege of visiting Hawkesbury College, and I consider that the regulations and restrictions which the Government have placed on apple importation will be quite sufficient to prevent the codlin moth and other insect pests from getting into this State. In my opinion the State will be kept free by fumigation and other safeguards. There is one matter which the Premier mentioned, and that is the need for taking into consideration the purchase of a steamer for the pilot service at Rottnest. I consider that the way the pilot service has been neglected in the past is a disgrace. Men have had to go out in a small boat in all kinds of weather, and I trust that in a very short time the Premier will be able to place a steamer at the disposal of those men. I am in accord with the statement that a Factories Act should be brought into existence, and when the measure comes before this House I hope also the present Early Closing Act relating to shops will be so amended that it will give power for enabling a majority of merchants or storekeepers in the metropolitan area to give effect to their wish, if a majority desire to close on Saturday afternoon or to close on Wednesday afternoon. This is a question which I am sure will come before this House very soon. There are two troublesome questions we shall have



to deal with this session. One is the necessity for checking the incursion of rabbits, in regard to which so much has already been said; and I think that if the two previous Governments had been so anxious to conserve the interests of farmers and agriculturists as they professed to be, they should have taken action as soon as the Rabbit Commission handed in their report, by setting about immediately to erect the fence recommended in that report. I trust this House will act at once, and try to prevent this dreadful scourge from coming into the settled parts of the country. The other troublesome question is the management of the aborigines in this State. When in Melbourne recently, I and some other members of this House were surprised and pained at the appearance of letters in the Press, professing to make exposures in regard to the treatment of natives in Western Australia, some writers saying the natives were treated so cruelly that the practice here was a disgrace to humanity. I do not know anything practically on this matter, but I consider this House should take into serious consideration this question, and place the natives under a proper board of management, so that they may be looked after in such a way as will not give cause for the publication of such scandals as have been set forth in the *Age* and *Argus* newspapers. One question which I hope this House will take into consideration is the amendment of the Municipalities Act, which was amended only last year. This Act, comprising close on 400 sections, was left till the end of the session, with the result that many of its provisions are antagonistic to each other; and I consider that an effort should be made to get the Act amended so that an opportunity will be afforded to municipalities to control their own affairs. The municipal bodies have had four or five conferences, and have come to a unanimous decision on certain questions which they desire to see settled. I am sure those bodies have given serious consideration to the various matters, and it is for this honourable House now to sanction the alterations in that Act asked for by those bodies. A local question affecting my constituents is that of the removal of the explosives magazine from Owen's Anchorage. The Government Analyst and Inspector of

Explosives reports on this very strongly. He says:—

During the year several risks have been run from the action of persons whose motives, I regret to say, do not appear to have been altogether free from mischief.

I think the Government Analyst refers to bush fires which came very close to the magazine; indeed, I have seen bush fires raging within 20 or 30 yards of it. I think it is to the interest not only of my constituents, but of the whole State, that the explosives magazine should be removed to Garden Island, or some other place where it would be free from the risk of bush fires, and other dangers of the kind. All explosives come by water from England or the Continent to this State, so that they could be loaded into lighters alongside ships and taken to Garden Island without coming into Fremantle at all.

MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear. The late Government promised to do that.

MR. McDONALD: We trust the present Government will carry out the promise.

A MEMBER: That is all they did in the days gone by—promised.

MR. McDONALD: I can only say, in conclusion, that so long as the present Ministry proceed on the lines laid down in the Governor's Speech and in the Premier's speech at Queen's Hall, I shall give them my loyal support. I am sure the great majority of the electors of this State are with the Leake Government at the present time.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): An opportunity should be taken to place before this House and the country a statement of the position taken up by fruit-growers in regard to the new regulations drafted by the Government relating to the importation of fruit, and I propose to deal with this subject a little this evening. Before coming to that, I should like to pass a few criticisms on other portions of the Speech. The question of immigration is one that has been debated to a considerable extent during the last election campaign. I felt that it was impossible for us to enter on anything like a satisfactory immigration scheme. The difficulty that I foresaw, and now foresee, is that when you have imported your men, there is no certainty of keeping them in the State. We in