possessing a fair grasp of the country. I am impelled to say that it is the paramount duty of the old members of this House to support any Government in power, to give any Government a general support, correcting the ignorance of Ministers if they show ignorance, and helping Ministers with such suggestions as we can hardly expect to occur to them. Many legislative and some public works projects presenting themselves here must be quite new to the present or to any future Premier. We are called a country party. Let us be a country party, and let that name be interpreted to mean that our country is at all times before our party, that we will ever labour to remember that we serve our party best when we serve our country best. I am giving no set speech, but am uttering merely the thoughts that occur to me, with a deep love of my country and a deep anxiety to see the best done for it. I reiterate, I conceive it to be my duty to give support to any inexperienced Minister, always maintaining my own independence, and always observing that there must be a cleavage. While I like the Government to go my way I am not quite such a fool as to expect that they will always go with me; but I do say, and I desire to say it publicly, that whether my friend Mr. Nanson be in office, or whether it be my friend Mr. James, our present Premier, such experience as I have, if the Premier of the day think it worthy of acceptance, will be always at his disposal, not in the interests of either the James Government or the Nanson Government, but in the best interests of our country, Western Australia. (General applause.)

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth): Speaking at this late stage of the debate I intend to be brief. I do not purpose to traverse or criticise the Governor's Speech paragraph by paragraph, but shall select merely two or three leading items and criticise them, as I hope my friends on the Treasury bench will ultimately admit, in an honest and a wholesome fashion. It seems to me that a number of blots are to be found on the Speech, though I intend to confine myself, as I have said, to but three of the number. One of these three is a blot of commission, and I consider it a grave blot indeed. The two other blots I may designate as blots of omission. Before alluding to these three cardinal matters, as I may term them, standing forth in the Speech and deserving of the most earnest attention, I wish to refer briefly to the matter of the railways and railway administration. The railway administration, indeed, has been prominent from the very commencement of the debate. One of the last speakers on this (Ministerial) side of the House characterised the railway administration of Western Australia as the "Waterloo" of every Railway Minister this State has seen. The expression is rather an unfortunate one; at any rate, I cannot consider it happy, because the view one takes of Waterloo depends altogether on whether he be British or French. I have no doubt every holder of the railways portfolio will claim to have been on the side of the British, and will be therefore glad to characterise his railway administration as his Waterloo, since in the result he comes out well on top. A better expression, to my mind, and an expression conveying a large measure of truth, would be that the railway administration of this State has been the grave of the reputation of nearly every Railway Minister, if not of all Railway Ministers. And this is not owing altogether to the fault of the Ministers themselves, but rather owing to the fault of a system which from the very beginning has been pernicious in character—necessarily pernicious. The system was one which allowed waste, extravagance, leakage, and fraud to permeate almost every branch of that vast business, that large asset of which we have heard so much. That there have been leakage, waste, extravagance, and fraud is of course manifest to all of us. We have heard this stated for years. The recollection of the things which have come to light, discoveries made from time to time of leakages and frauds—I may mention the Perth Ice Company frauds in particular—leads me to point out that my experience in the unravelling of defalcations and of wastefulness has shown that these evils are of a chronic character, that for every ounce you are able to put your finger on there is, behind, a pound or a hundredweight that you cannot reach or discover. Let hon. members bear in mind the discoveries in which the inquiry into the ice frauds resulted; let them consider what those discoveries amounted to. It is

plain that the frauds in question had been going on for years continuously, and had been chronic in character. Do hon. members think we got to the bottom of the matter? Not a bit of it. The Perth Ice Company was brought in a debtor to the State to the extent of something like £2,000; but does anyone think that this amount represented the full extent of the frauds? It is an open secret that timber of a certain class, chargeable with a high rate of freight, has been sent up to the goldfields, ton by ton and truck by truck, veneered over, as it were, with another class of timber carried at a much lower rate, the whole of the timber, as a result, being carried at that much lower rate.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Can you give an instance of that?

MR. PURKISS: We heard the same sort of statement regarding the transhipment by the railway, of cattle. I am not prepared to prove that there is anything in either the timber business or the cattle business; but, so far as the Perth Ice Company is concerned, some degree of certainty was reached. However, to make a long story short, both sides of the House are on common ground in the statement that the administration of our State railways has been honeycombed with leakage, wastefulness, and a want of trying to get at the bottom of things. Minister after Minister has tried, no doubt honestly, to probe the system to the bottom; but by reason of the system itself his efforts have been frustrated. A striking fault of the system is one which has been brought more especially to my attention since I have been in Parliament. I can see that practically the whole of the Minister's time is occupied by trifles. There he is, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, dealing with little twopenny-halfpenny departmental matters which consume practically the whole of his time. A railway servant has a grievance, or somebody wants to get employment in the railway service; and be the individual ever so humble, nevertheless you find him at the Minister's door knocking for an interview, on what no doubt to the individual himself means a great deal, but what is, nevertheless, a matter in respect of which the Minister should never be troubled.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: During the whole time of my administration only four men came to me seeking employment.

MR. PURKISS: Then your case constitutes a wonderful exception, and I can only congratulate you. The position comes to this. We have discovered that the existing system, which manifestly involves waste, extravagance, and leakage of every description, has led to an improper loading of the expense rate of our railways, and that consequently freights have had to be kept up, and even had to be increased two months ago, merely by reason of wasteful expenditure. Therefore, I think the Government—when I speak of the Government I do not refer to the immediate Administration or the late Administration, for this is a continuous Administration, all one Administration—did wrong in not trying to do a few months ago what they are at the present moment seeking to do; namely, to put the administration of the railways on such a basis as will prevent leakage, waste, and extravagance. Was that not a humiliating admission made by the Minister recently, that something like 118 of the department's wagons were lost—that the officials did not know where those wagons had got to? No wonder the customers of our railways have to pay high rates. No wonder the rates are increased when the system is such. And, be it remembered, this kind of administration has been going on for years. I think the Ministry, before imposing increased rates on agricultural produce, on timber, coal, and other commodities, should have used their best endeavours to set the departmental house in order, to get to the bottom of this wastefulness, to stop this extravagance, this rapine as it were, upon the funds and other assets of the railways, before saying one word about increasing the rates. Having increased the rates, they are going backward and are making—I give them every credit for it—an earnest endeavour to get to the bottom of the maladministration that has gone on for so many years; and I have not the slightest doubt that when they have set their house in order and initiated a pure and economical administration, they will find they can easily take off all the increased rates imposed on various commodities, from timber upwards or downwards, a few

months ago. I recognise that the railways should pay interest on the money borrowed to build them, together with working expenses and sinking fund. It is very well for us to talk of doing away with the sinking fund; but if we go to the money market to borrow, we go to the English creditor with the loan earmarked. We say to investors, "Lend us so many millions for this particular object." The amount applied for is earmarked in the schedule to the Loan Act, wherein we say the interest on the loan shall be so much, and there shall be provided a sinking fund; so that there is a solemn contract between debtor and creditor. We borrowed the money on the understanding that we should provide a sinking fund, and pay so much interest on the money borrowed. I therefore recognise that our railways must be made to pay interest, working expenses, and a sinking fund; and that all earnings in excess should go in reduction of rates. I am of opinion that in order to bring about a reform, our railways should be almost absolutely governed by one good, strong, honest, commercial head, and that such head should have under him good lieutenants. Now from all we have heard in this House, month after month and year after year, our railways have not been managed by a good, strong, straightforward head, and good, strong, loyal lieutenants. That is where the trouble is. I do not care what you call this general manager of the railways. He may be called "General Manager" or "Commissioner."

MR. DOHERTY: Call him a general servant, at once.

MR. PURKISS: I do not think we can have a better example than the management of the large railways of the world. How are the English railways managed? There is a company, with its directors equivalent to our Parliament. [MR. DOHERTY: No.] The directors are the representatives of the shareholders who own the concern. The directors appoint a general manager and give him plenary powers. All the directors do is simply to have a voice as the owners of the property, and to say "Our rates are to be so-and-so."

MR. DOHERTY: But the directors appoint their manager.

MR. PURKISS: So do the Government here, who are representatives of the people.

MR. DOHERTY: Do the Government, and not Parliament, represent the people?

MR. PURKISS: We in Parliament appoint the Government, our directors; and the Government appoint the General Manager or Commissioner. Give him plenary powers, reserving to Parliament, or to the Government who represent Parliament, certain control as owners of the property; such control as to say what the rates shall be, as for instance whether they shall be differential, to decide their quantity and quality. Beyond that, I say I should give a good strong, honest, commercial man full power to manage the railways, uncontrolled by this Parliament; because if we seek to control every act of our General Manager or Commissioner, we shall have either a man who will not stand it, or one who will be an abject slave to his position. I am altogether opposed to the appointment of three Commissioners. It leads to circumlocution. If, instead of one Commissioner who has to act and can act in a moment, you have three Commissioners, there is a formal meeting called, also a secretary taking minutes, motions proposed, differences of opinion, discussion, all leading to circumlocution, and — a bigger danger than ever—leading to a feeling of want of responsibility. One Commissioner transfers responsibility to another. We find two carrying out a certain line of policy against a minority of one, who may tell the public, "I did not agree to that." And on another question we shall find that Commissioner joined with another against the third, who in his turn is in a minority; and he will say, "I was not responsible for that." This will cut away the sense of responsibility which one sole Commissioner would feel so irrevocably fixed on his shoulders. With three we shall have this divided responsibility, which in some cases will lead to no responsibility at all. Let us have one good, strong man. He need not be an engineer, nor need he be a traffic manager; because if he have the nous and the commercial training and the observation to be able to select good lieutenants—a first-class traffic manager and an equally competent locomotive

engineer as divisional commanders—if he have honesty and good commercial training, sound common sense and strict probity, then I know of no reason why the concern should not run smoothly. The same system runs smoothly with companies owning railways worth more than all the railways of Western Australia; and most of the railways run on this system are made to pay; satisfaction is given to the public, to the officers, to the directors, and finally to the shareholders when they receive their 4½ per cent. dividend.

MR. DOHERTY: It is not easy to get the man you talk about.

MR. PURKISS: No; it is very difficult.

MR DOHERTY: You would have to build him. He is not in Western Australia.

MR. PURKISS: Of course, in all circumstances of life it is difficult to get a first-class man.

MINISTER: There would be the same difficulty in getting a General Manager.

MR. PURKISS: Exactly. What would your best general do if he had not good divisional commanders? Passing away from this, and just touching on the appointment of Mr. George, I cannot help thinking the Government have not made a mistake in appointing him a Commissioner.

OPPOSITION MEMBER: It is a bad system.

MR. PURKISS: The system may have been bad. The appointment was made by the immediate predecessors of this continuous Ministry, and has been loyally confirmed by the present Government. Both sides of the House have admitted Mr. George's straightforwardness, honesty, and strength; and I think they have credited him with a very large measure of commercial experience. I think that man, if he make a clean sweep of all those divisional commanders and those lieutenants, and go out of his way to select good divisional commanders and good lieutenants, will succeed. Let him be entirely free from political influence, and I think there will be an end to the maladministration of the railways, of which we have been throughout this debate complaining.

MR. CONNOR: Would you allow him to fix the rates?

MR. PURKISS: No. I say, let the owners fix the rates. I think the owners should retain that power.

MR. JACOBY: Then you again divide the responsibility.

MR. PURKISS: No.

MR. JACOBY: How can he make the railways pay if he cannot fix the rates?

MR. PURKISS: In a word, I have nothing to complain of in the appointment of Mr. George. If we imported the best man obtainable in England, but did not give him undivided control, what would be the effect? When the Victorian Government imported Mr. Speight, they thought they had secured one of the best railway managers in the world; and perhaps they had, but he was the victim of political influence; and that political influence, *plus* the influence of one of the large newspapers in the State, absolutely crippled that man in pocket, and ultimately, no doubt, killed him. And such has been the history of nearly all the best railway men imported to Australia. If we brought down an angel from heaven, endowed with the highest attributes which could possibly be desired in a railway manager, and we allowed political influence to operate, then in a few years we should have to say to him, "The time has arrived when you must go," or we should make the life of that angel so miserable that he would perish in good name, would be ruined in pocket, and would ultimately die.

MR. JACOBY: Try someone from the other place.

MR. PURKISS: I now come to what I have alluded to as the blots in this Speech, and I have limited my remarks to three of these, because at this stage of the debate I do not wish to speak at length. What I consider the biggest blot in the Speech is a blot of commission. [MR. DOHERTY: That is the five per cent.] It is nothing about five per cent. It is to be found in the eighteenth paragraph, which refers to the retention of the dual system of taxation, to the retention of inter-State duties *plus* the Federal duties. The paragraph reads:—

> In October last the Commonwealth Government commenced the collection of Federal duties, and Section 95 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act came into operation. That section provides us with the means of raising a revenue sufficiently large to meet the ever-increasing needs of a rapidly growing State,

and is also recognised as exercising a fostering influence in the establishment and growth of industries, which by such encouragement promise to add to our permanent wealth and prosperity.

The Government distinctly throw down the gauntlet by saying, "No surrender," in respect of the imposition of the inter-State duties and the Federal duties. Well, to me that savours of madness. We have heard various reasons given for federating, from the time the joint select committee of both Houses sat to inquire into the desirableness of entering the Commonwealth. They took much evidence, and were engaged a long time in considering whether it was wise or unwise to enter this Commonwealth; whether the Commonwealth Bill should be sent to the people Many reasons were given us in respect of Section 95 of the Commonwealth Bill, and we have heard many since. First of all, it has been said, "We cannot afford to do away with the inter-State duties, because we cannot afford to lose the revenue." On the other hand, it is said by the producers, by the agriculturists, "Do not remove these inter-State duties. We cannot afford to lose the protection they give to our native industries." I was very much pleased—and I do not know what the supporters of the retention of this dual system of taxation will say, those supporters who look at it from an agricultural point of view—with reference to the remarks of the member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell) to-night. The hon. member admitted candidly and fully that half of these duties do not protect at all, and will not protect. He says, "We do not want them: they are no good to us as protective." He makes that assertion as clearly as possible, and it will appear in print. He made, I assert, the most candid and most full admission that many of these inter-State duties do not protect; mentioning the very items, such as ham, bacon, butter, and so forth.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: He was talking of wheat-producing districts.

MR. PURKISS: He mentioned ham, onions, bacon, and so on. No wonder members representing other agricultural districts feel unhappy.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It is one-sided.

MR. PURKISS: What are we to believe? Are we to believe that it is right to maintain these duties in the interests of revenue, or is it right that we should maintain them in the interests of protection? When it was first suggested, as it was at that joint committee to which I have alluded, when tongue was first given to the argument that we must retain all our powers under Section 95, because we could not afford to part with revenue, our revenue was £2,500,000——

MR. DOHERTY: When?

MR. PURKISS: In 1899. Our revenue was £2,500,000 when we were saying that we could not afford to lose £200,000 a year. Since then our revenue has gone up to £3,700,000, and here we have the same old cry, "We can't afford to lose it, because our revenue won't stand it." If we could not stand it when our revenue was two and a half millions, cannot we stand it now when our revenue is £3,700,000? What nonsense! Our revenue has been going up by leaps and bounds, terrific leaps and bounds, leaps and bounds which, I fear, will lead us into very great disaster and trouble by-and-by. Our revenue in 1898-99 was, I repeat, £2,500,000; in 1899-00, £2,800,000; in 1900-01, £3,078,000; and now, £3,700,000. Here is a revenue equivalent to something like £18 a head extracted from 205,000 or 210,000 people. It is the highest taxed country existing. I defy anyone to prove that there is a higher taxed country in the world. Even Turkey or China cannot touch it. We get from the pockets of every man, woman, and child something like £18 10s. In Tasmania, which has about the same population as Western Australia, the revenue barely reaches a million. In New Zealand, with about 800,000 people, it is about six millions. And here we, a little State with 200,000 people or a little over, are obtaining a revenue of £3,700,000; yet we are told in the face of this that we should not repeal the inter-State duties on the ground of revenue. After what the member for Northam has said, if other agricultural members want proof I can show that these duties are not protective in many instances, but in others they are affording, together with a natural protection, such a difference in price as to amount to something like 50 or 60 per

cent., compared with the outside article. In Victoria duties of 25 per cent. went up to 30 and 35. Many people were horrified, and you will be horrified to find the extent of the difference existing between the prices of commodities in Adelaide and Melbourne and the prices here. Take the case of onions, an article of very large consumption indeed, in fact a necessary, people to a very large extent living on onions.

MR. DOHERTY: I hope not. (General laughter.)

MR. PURKISS: When I say "living on onions," I mean that the onion, in some form or other, is to be found associated with almost every dish on every table; at any rate, we have only to look at the number of tons of onions consumed in any colony or in any part of the world to know what a very large article of consumption onions are. The Melbourne prices last Saturday week show that they were sold for £6. My figures are taken from the *Argus* and *Australasian* of that date, the wholesale price being given. Here in Western Australia onions were quoted by the West Australian Produce—I forget the term, but at any rate the leading firm of produce merchants always quoted by the *West Australian* every Saturday morning—the price of onions quoted last Saturday morning was £10 to £11, a difference of 65 per cent. We get most of our onions from Melbourne, and the price here is, I repeat, 65 per cent. higher than in that city. That 65 per cent. represents the natural and artificial protection.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Is the difference accounted for by the duties?

MR. PURKISS: The difference is not accounted for by the duties, but I say that if you take the duties off you find 45 per cent. of natural protection. Is not 45 per cent. of natural protection enough for you? Do you want 65 per cent.?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: All we can get.

MR. PURKISS: "All we can get"—exactly. We are paying for onions 65 per cent. more, and if you just look at the state of things with reference to onions you will find that for the season ending the 28th February, 1900, we produced locally 349 tons, for the season ending 28th February, 1901, we produced 190 tons, so that actually in the year 1901 we produced 159 tons of onions less than we did the year before. Is this duty, then, protecting onions? It seems to me to be driving all production of onions out of the country. Here are the figures taken from the statistician's returns. I have them in print, as well as in my own manuscript. Notwithstanding this high measure of protection we had 349 tons of onions produced in one year, and 190 tons in the next, showing, I repeat, an absolute deficiency of 159 tons. What is the use of talking to us about levying a duty on onions to protect the native industry, when it is not doing so, and when the actual production is less? Take the case of potatoes, which are necessary, and of which there is a very large consumption by almost everyone, especially by the poorer classes. The price of potatoes in Melbourne, according to the last quotations in the *Argus* and *Australasian*, the same papers of the same date, was for prime Gippsland potatoes £4 10s., and for New Zealand pink eyes £4 15s. Taking last Saturday's quotations for West Australia from the same produce merchants, there were no local potatoes, and Victorian and New Zealand potatoes sold at from £9 to £10, a difference of 50 per cent. Nearly all the potatoes that we are consuming now are from other States; in fact there were no quotations for local potatoes. The firm which the hon. member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) represents gave their quotations last Saturday, and said there were no locals, and they quoted Victorian and Tasmanian. There appeared to be no local potatoes in the market, and while New Zealand potatoes and prime Gippsland were quoted in Melbourne at £4 10s. to £4 15s., the Victorian and New Zealand potatoes in the market here were quoted at £9 to £10, a difference of 50 per cent. This cry of the cost of living is no empty one. You see a difference on this item of 50 per cent.; and recollect that the Tasmanian grower gets 30 shillings a ton, and is satisfied with it. The potatoes are shipped to Melbourne, transhipped from Melbourne to Western Australia, and duty is paid on them here; consequently we find them quoted at from £9 to £10. Has all this natural protection *plus* the artificial protection, amounting to 50 per cent., led to an increase in the local production? Has that led to an increase in the crop of potatoes here?

For the season ending 28th February, 1900, there were 8,373 tons of potatoes, and for the last year from which we have had the statistics compiled, 1901, the total production of potatoes in this State was 4,836 tons. Notwithstanding this 50 per cent of natural and artificial protection, our potato yield decreased in one year by 3,537 tons; and yet members talk about protecting native industry. As to bacon, it is no use to talk about protecting that. The member for Northam admits at once that there is no bacon to protect, for two reasons; one being that while bacon growers are able to get the price they can for pork as pork they will never go in for bacon curing, and until you have a dairy industry well established in this State you will never have a bacon-curing establishment on anything like a large scale, because one is the complement of the other.

A MEMBER: No; wheat.

MR. PURKISS: For prime sides of bacon in Melbourne last Saturday week the wholesale price was quoted at 8d. per pound. Here in Western Australia it was quoted at 11½d., another difference of 50 per cent.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Not quite.

MR. PURKISS: Very nearly. Take 8d. from 11½d., and it is 50 per cent. in round numbers, as nearly as possible; at any rate quite nearly enough for my argument. It only wanted another ½d. to make it 50 per cent. There we are again; and where will you buy? Take up any catalogue. Take up the catalogue of the Fresh Food and Ice Company, or take up Watson's, next door, or that of any storekeeper, and you will find that where they quote bacon they will quote Queensland, Victorian, New Zealand, and so forth, but not a single line, not a word, with reference to West Australian bacon. No; we know it is not made. There may be a side or two made here and there, and so forth, but if you look at the figures and see the enormous quantity that comes in, the little bit of bacon made here is not worth talking about. So with ham. In Melbourne the best bagged ham—and bagged ham is a trifle more expensive—is quoted at 10d. In Western Australia it is 1s. 3d., this being an increase of 50 per cent. And so we can go through to butter. Take the butter industry. Practically there is no such industry here. One butter factory was established two or three years ago, and it must have been an object lesson, and still is an object lesson, to every one of us. That factory, or rather the syndicate who put that factory up, got the land for nothing. Then they went to the Government and asked for £500 to put up the building. They got it. Then the machinery cost another £500, and they went to the Government on their knees and got that £500. That is how the syndicate got the factory. When I was in Busselton last time, I had the curiosity to go and see this butter factory, and to see it is almost heart-breaking. It is shut up, and I asked Mr. Gale to show it to me, and he did so. I asked him how much butter had been made since it had been established, and he said "I would be ashamed to tell you." What is the use of protection in the face of this factory? It is a shame and a delusion. Protection is absolute hypocrisy in the case of bacon, potatoes, hams, and butter, because there is nothing to protect, and where there is some slight thing to protect, surely 50 per cent of artificial protection with the natural protection is enough, and a great deal more than enough. In the interests of the revenue, and on the ground I have adopted in the interests of protecting the natural industries, there is no solid argument to stand on. It seems to be almost disgraceful to say that we should increase the burdens of life by £200,000 in the face of a revenue of £3,700,000. And this brings me to the next blot in the Governor's Speech which I have to speak on. When the Speech refers to a Commission appointed to inquire into the classification and reorganisation of the Civil Service, of course that is very good, and I am in accord with it, but I should liked to have seen a Commission of able and straightforward men to have gone right through from top to bottom, and to have swept out the drones from this vast hive that exists.

MR. GORDON: That will be the result.

MR. PURKISS: They do not say that, and they do not say whether there is to be an examination, or what the classification or reorganisation is to be like. I hope that reorganisation will improve the service, because it must be manifest

to all of us that there is room for retrenchment. It must be manifest. It is absurd to extract nearly £4,000,000 from the pockets of 200,000 people. Where is it going to end? Our revenue this year is nearly £4,000,000, and if the Government go on taking that amount out of the pockets of the people, then there is likely to be a reverse. It is all very well to talk of a surplus. As your income is, so will your expenditure be. A few months ago we were talking of a surplus at the end of the financial year, on the 30th June last. First it was £100,000, then £200,000, then £300,000. Where has it gone to? It has been whittled away. First it came down to £200,000, then it was £173,000, and I think the Treasurer said to-night there was £211 in the Treasury.

MR. DOHERTY: And 7s. 6d.

MR. PURKISS: Yes; £211 7s. 6d. What has become of it? It has all been whittled away. So will all the surpluses be whittled away.

MR. DOHERTY: You remember you have voted for them.

MR. PURKISS: I have not voted on the question yet. The surpluses will always be whittled away. Is not a surplus always a standing temptation to the strongest Minister? While you have men clamouring, while you have supporters clamouring in the nature of members and outside the walls of the House, if you have a surplus, the argument that the funds will not stand a gift of money for a certain work is taken away, and the beggars say, "You have a surplus; give us £500 for this road and £500 for that road." There never will be a surplus, but an accidental one, and then it ought to be traced. The Estimates have been ignored from time to time and from year to year. The underlying principle of constitutional government is this. The people are the taxpayers; they have a say as to how the money of the State shall be spent. The Treasurer comes to this House every year and says, "I estimate the revenue for the year to be so much. What will you do with it"? The Estimates are passed and are boiled down into the Appropriation Act. Then the Minister spends what is in the Estimates and no more. The Government spend what is down in respect of a particular vote, and for that vote only. But that is not what has been done in the past and what has led to all the mischief. This was one of the planks of the platform put forward at the series of elections which took place last year. If the Ministers knew what a boon it would be to govern constitutionally in that way, they would do it. It would do away with the pertinacious requests from friends for money. If I headed a deputation for a request for £1,000 for a road, all the Minister would have to do would be to call in the Under Secretary and ask "How does such and such vote stand." Then the Minister would say, "I am sorry, gentlemen, but the vote is exhausted." That has not been done in the past, and the pernicious principle has been carried farther by the reappropriation of loans, which I maintain, and always have maintained, was absolutely dishonest, If you go to a London creditor and say, "I want £1,000,000," and you ear-mark that in a Loan Bill, the London creditor looks at it; he looks at the country and he looks at the work for which the money is to be used, and he has a right to know that the loan is used only for the purpose for which it was obtained. We have had these earmarkings, and we have these farther loans for reappropriation. If such a thing had been done by a private individual, I do not know what to call it, but a criminal lawyer might give it a very harsh name. If a man borrows money for a special purpose and tells the person from whom he is borrowing the money the purpose to which it is to be put, if the borrower spends that money in another way, I do not know what the lender would think; yet this is the system that has been carried out. I ask Ministers to consider, and to think, and to look this question of economy straight in the face. I feel perfectly satisfied that Ministers will do it. I feel perfectly satisfied that members know there is an extravagant waste, not only in the Railway Department, but throughout the service. The pruning knife can be used to a large extent, and consequently there ought to be due economy. Ministers ought to be able to cut our expenses down to very much less than £3,700,000. We can do then with very much less revenue. We can then look straight in the face at a

reduction of the railway rates and the repeal of the food duties. I do not wish to weary the House at this late hour.

MR. DOHERTY: What is your opinion about the £60,000 land purchase?

MR. PURKISS: I quite agree with a bold stroke. There never was a good rule yet which had not a very good exception, and this is one of those exceptional cases, similar to that in connection with the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, which Ministers were justified in making. I quite agree with what has been done, although I am one of the victims. Still I was given what I asked, and I have no feeling of soreness or anything about it. I had a little suspicion when they were running after me, and I wondered what was up. Notwithstanding that, it would not influence me, the small amount I got; and as the hon. member asked me the question, I tell him I quite approve of the policy of the Government in regard to that matter, and from inquiries which I have made and from statements which have been made to me, I do not think the member for Cue is very far out when he said that probably the result arrived at in the future will be a saving of £100,000 in the interests of the Government. So much for the Governor's Speech. I think, in conclusion, it is only due to members, as I think it is due to my constituents, that I should just explain why I am sitting here (Opposition cross-benches) rather than there (directly behind the Government). Members understand that I was returned in the interests of the Leake Government. I had strong support from the Leake Government, especially from the late Premier. I took my seat, as I gladly did, behind the late Premier. Members will all recollect the turmoil that was rife just after my election, and at the elections associated with the one when I was returned. The balance of power was very nicely poised; depending, I think on one vote given to one side or the other. Members all know how very hard and strenuously the late Premier worked to retain his position. He fought a very hard fight—a fight against odds, a very uphill fight indeed, and he almost succeeded, but not quite. And he found, after this fight, that it was necessary to make some sacrifice to keep the party intact, and he kept them together to preserve the position in respect of which the fight had been. It is an open secret that in order to do that he included my friend the Minister for Works in the Government. Members also know—it is an open secret, therefore I am not divulging anything—that a good deal of resentment was felt at the time at the inclusion of my friend the Minister for Works in the Government. I felt very bitter indeed. It put a severe strain on my loyalty to the late Premier, and for this reason, that on my platform and on the platforms of various supporters of the Leake Ministry a great deal had been said about the "wobbling" of members, about their changing sides, about members "ratting" from one side to another. That argument was made use of, not by myself but by my supporters, against the candidature especially of my opponent, Mr. Wilson. One of the leading arguments used against that gentleman, at any rate by my supporters, was his passing so readily from one side to the other.

MR. TAYLOR: That's what beat him.

MR. PURKISS: I did not have, nor have I now, a word to say against the Minister for Works and Railways, who I know will understand me when I say that I do not wish to be in any way personal in my references to his inclusion in the Ministry. The late Premier saw that the inclusion of the member for Guildford was the only means of consolidating the position of his Ministry. Notwithstanding the strain put on my loyalty by the inclusion of the Minister for Works, I remained loyal. I said nothing. I recognised that my late leader had fought a hard fight, and I therefore sat loyally behind him. But did the present Premier and the present Treasurer, who were the late Mr. Leake's henchmen, his loyal friends as well as his political supporters, continue to sit behind him?

MR. DOHERTY: No; certainly not.

MR. PURKISS: They came over to these (cross-bench) seats by way of showing their resentment. When, therefore, I find a few months later those gentlemen taking office and including the very man whose selection for a portfolio caused them to sit as nearly as possible in opposition to the late Mr. Leake, a

feeling of discomfort is created in my mind. I do not understand their conduct. Farther, there is the throwing over of the then Treasurer (Mr. Illingworth). [MR. DOHERTY: That's it.] To me, the proceeding has an un-English savour; there is something un-English about it. [MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear.] The conduct of these two gentlemen, I know, caused the greatest grief to the late Premier. I have reason to know that Mr. Leake at that particular juncture felt nothing so much as the personal desertion of those two great friends and old political supporters. When I see these gentlemen a few months afterwards taking office and joining with them as their colleague the very gentleman whose inclusion led them to remove to these cross-benches, I cannot well understand their conduct.

MR. DOHERTY: There's a chair on this (Opposition) side for you.

MR. PURKISS: I am quite prepared to admit that the Minister for Works is a good man and has proved himself an excellent administrator. [MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear.] He has done good work while holding his present portfolio.

MR. DOHERTY: He has proved himself an excellent Minister.

MR. PURKISS: Yes; he has proved himself an excellent Minister; and I think he has both surprised his friends and disappointed his enemies.

MR. DOHERTY: He has no enemies.

MR. PURKISS: I thought it due to members of this House, and also to my constituents, to state my views. I have nothing farther to say on that head; and I certainly have no more to say on the Address-in-reply, because I feel I have already wearied hon. members somewhat unduly.

MR. D. J. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): On a recent evening the Premier brought the debate on the no-confidence amendment to a hasty conclusion. As a member of the party on this (Opposition) side of the House, I requested an adjournment, since the hour was becoming late. I made that request believing, of course, that a gentleman in the Premier's position would grant to the Opposition a request of the nature indicated. However, the Premier——

THE PREMIER: I should just like to give the hon. member's statement an emphatic denial. The call for a division came from that (Opposition) side of the House.

MR. DOHERTY: I asked you across the House to grant an adjournment, and you replied, "No; go on with the division."

THE PREMIER: I deny that.

MR. DOHERTY: I thought, at the time, the Premier was using the force of the big majority behind him to the great discomfort and disadvantage of the Opposition; but now I readily admit that probably I erred, and that I must put down his conduct to want of experience. Viewing the political situation as it was last year, we see that the Leake Government came into power on a high wave of public opinion. When, however, the waters returned to their natural level, the people of this State found, though too late, that none of the promises made by the Leake Government had been carried out, and that there was not even the indication of one political principle or one economic reform. The late Premier, when leading his party, carried with him the people of this State; otherwise he could not have conducted the business of the House at all, for numerically his party was in a minority. It was only the full knowledge that he had the people behind him which enabled the late Premier to carry on the administration of the State. How was it that the deceased gentleman had the people behind him? For various reasons, the primary reason being that, one man having ruled the country for ten years, the people demanded a change. How came that change to be demanded? Through the promises of the gentlemen who then led the Opposition. They promised to the people economy; they promised to the people a reduction of food duties; they promised to the people good railway administration; they promised reduction in railway rates; and lastly, they piqued the curiosity of the people by such statements as that once the Opposition got into power they would clear out the pigeon-holes, which would disclose such facts as would for ever damn the administration of the Forrest Government. Now these gentlemen have been in office for 18 months; and I ask, have they produced from those pigeon-holes one document staining the