

general election; and therefore I am pleased that the Government intend to bring in a Secret Commission Bill. We know that the measure had its origin in the scandals connected with the butter bonuses in certain Eastern States; and all business men, at some time in their careers, have felt the ill effects of secret commissions. It is shameful that an agent employed to do business for his principal should take a commission not only from his principal but from the other party, and that the only redress available to the principal is to sue the agent in a civil court for damages. In my opinion, the taking of a secret commission ought to be a criminal offence. It is high time that the law recognised it as a criminal offence; so I welcome the Bill which the Government promise to introduce. At the present moment the Government have a big majority.

MR. A. J. WILSON: A brutal majority.

MR. PRICE: I am a young member, and this being my first speech, I think it offers a fair opportunity for members to exhibit some magnanimity. The big majority which the Government have at the present moment entails on them a big responsibility. Undoubtedly the country expects much from the Government. A serious responsibility rests on their shoulders; and did I not believe that they are prepared to give us fearless, straightforward, and honourable administration and legislation, I should not be found sitting on this side of the House. While the Government legislate without regard to class distinctions, my vote will be recorded in their favour. I trust that they will neither pander to the capitalist nor to the trades-hall party, that they will deal fearlessly with all classes of the community; and if they do, then when they again appeal to the electors the Government will be returned with as big a majority as they now enjoy. I have much pleasure in moving the adoption of the following Address-in-Reply:—

To His Excellency Admiral Sir Frederick George Denham Bedford, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

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.

(General applause.)

MR. W. T. EDDY (Coolgardie): I rise to second the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply, on the opening of this the first session of the sixth Parliament of Western Australia. I may be allowed to endorse the remarks of the member for Fremantle in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to the Chair. From that hon. member's speech it was clear that your election is welcomed by the people of the city and of the coast generally; and I may be allowed, on behalf of the people of distant parts, to add my congratulations. In my position as seconder of the Address-in-Reply, I feel that I should like, if it were in order, to make a sort of personal explanation, if only because I feel that this task should have been placed in better and abler hands than mine. I thank the Premier for placing me in so flattering a position; and I feel that a still greater compliment has been paid to my electorate, the mother-city of the goldfields, Coolgardie. It is doubtless with great pleasure that the House receives the greeting accorded to us (the elected majority) in His Excellency's Speech. As stated therein, the late election held throughout the State has resulted in the return of such a majority that stability of government should now be assured. The late three successive Governments, unfortunately for the welfare of the State, were unable to command sufficient working majorities for successful administration. Our credit has greatly suffered in the eyes of the world; and financiers have shut their pockets against us, closed their books against us, and stopped our credit, owing to the unsettled and unsatisfactory state of our affairs. An Opposition member interjects "Thank God." Well, if that is the feeling of the hon. member and his friends, to say the least of it the circumstance is regrettable. But to-day let us hope we are on the eve of an awakening, that confidence has been restored and progress and prosperity will be with us to such extent that we may take our place side by side with the Eastern States; aye, higher yet, take our stand and be one of the finest States in the world. Our mineral wealth

is proved, and in this respect there can be no doubt. A clause of the Speech states that the gold export for the ten months ended 31st October amounts to 1,629,000 odd ounces of gold; and the amount of dividends paid by Western Australian mining companies during the same period amounts to £1,887,533, and the total dividends paid to the 31st October amount to no less than £13,459,000 odd. Surely these figures alone would warrant, without any farther debate or argument, the building of the Esperance and Transcontinental Railways. In reference to our agricultural industries, I am somewhat sorry to say that I cannot congratulate our friends to the extent I would like; for with the very large areas of land taken up and the inducements held out to obtain land cheaply, it is a matter of regret that still an enormous amount of money is paid by the State for the requirements of the people by way of such every-day foodstuffs as bacon, butter, and cheese. I mention these three items, and we may well ask our agricultural friends the question, where are our bacon and butter and cheese factories? Although they are not in existence to-day to the extent they ought to be, let us hope the day is not far distant when our State will be loading ships from Fremantle to English and foreign ports. [MEMBER: And Albany.] And Albany too. And farther than that, loading our ships from the port of Esperance. It is pleasing and satisfactory to note that notwithstanding the criticism of many *re* our agricultural efforts, a marked improvement is noticeable day by day. Our land settlement goes steadily forward. We notice it is the intention of the Government to seek consent to build light lines of railway to assist the settlers on the land, and to encourage additional settlement, and quite right too. There are one or two remarks I would like to make here in reference to the feeling that has existed in past years throughout the whole of the State of Western Australia. There has been, much to our regret, a little bitterness of feeling between the coastal and agricultural members and the goldfields members. ["No."] I say that feeling does exist, but I believe the feeling now is being quietly and slowly

obliterated, and will be in a short time swept entirely away. I would just like to ask our coastal and agricultural friends, when some of the questions with reference to the building of railways on the goldfields are brought forward that they will not forget us. The question of the building of railways must be introduced sooner or later, and I feel sure the common sense of the House will give us every fair and just consideration. There has been a cry during the late election that we have adopted the principle that it is our duty to guard and protect the future welfare of the State first, and our electorate and constituents afterwards. Quite right. But I say again I hope when these questions come forward—there are many little matters which require attention more probably on the goldfields—we will get fair and just consideration. We come now to the question of immigration. This matter is touched upon in the Speech. I think this question may be passed lightly over for the moment; but we must be careful, for the poor we have always with us, and we must be very careful indeed not to add to our poverty list and not lay aside the principle of a white Australia. The finances, as His Excellency's Speech suggests, require close and careful attention. It will be our duty to see there is careful and just administration. A measure is suggested for the imposition of a tax on totalisator receipts. This brings us in contact with the question that engages the serious attention of all right-thinking people in the States—it brings us face to face with the gambling evil. I am sure that in our life we can never hope to eradicate the gambling evil, but it is our duty as legislators to reduce it considerably. My friend who moved the Address-in-Reply referred to some of the questions relating to coastal districts, and I submit it is my duty just to mention one or two matters in reference to the goldfields. The measures already outlined by the Premier—not very many certainly—are of vital importance. We are told we are to get increased water supply for the goldfields. This is a matter to which I am sure no objection can be taken. The success of the Coolgardie Water Scheme stands out to-day as one of the world's greatest and most



successful works, and it is almost impossible to conceive what chaos and disaster there would be to-day were it not for this big scheme. We have just passed through a season which I suppose cannot be equalled for the last 10 or 12 years, and we can hardly imagine what would happen on the goldfields if the people had not the privileges of the water from this scheme. The Minister for Mines, or rather the Premier, in his speech told us we are to take steps to farther advertise the resources of our State, more particularly regarding its mineral wealth. Matters of this kind will add to our advancement, and later on, instead of the average monthly output of about 170,000 ozs. of gold, I believe the years are not far distant when the State of Western Australia will produce half a million pounds' worth of gold monthly. We come to a point touched on in the Premier's policy speech with reference to aid to prospectors. This is one of the most important and valuable features of the Government policy. We agree to help and assist the farmers and agriculturists, and so we should extend help and assistance to the prospectors, the men who have struck out and are ready to strike out again in our interests, the men who have tackled the burning bush and blazed the tracks that are now beaten roads leading us to settled fields and golden cities, the men who have taken their double share of toil; yet to-day we find only bleached bones in distant parts where many of those good old battlers have fallen by the way. This may be regarded as a little sentiment on my part, but it is no sentiment, it is solid, bitter fact; and not only must we aid the prospector in opening new fields, but it is our duty to assist the poor men, the men on shows, the men with small syndicates, the men who toil from year to year, oftentimes not having the price of a meal and hardly sufficient to get a feed. Many men have had to throw up mines, perhaps on the eve of success. Therefore I claim it is only fair that aid should be given to prospectors in the same way that aid is given to agriculturists. There are one or two other matters that I had noted here, but I think members will agree with me we should pass them lightly over. [MR. HORAN: And a bit annoying.] They are

not annoying. Perhaps I may be better able later on to deal with the hon. member's interjections than I am to-day. There are other reforms that are promised. The Minister for Mines has promised to see that the prospectors are looked after, and I may say I think the present Minister for Mines (Mr. Gregory) has done more for the prospectors than any previous Minister for Mines. My friend spoke lightly of the suggested improvements of the new stock routes. I think it is only a fair suggestion, to every right-thinking man; it is not going to be an expensive item, and it will bring the whole of the State—the distant parts—into a trackable condition, and will mean the settlement of a great deal of land in parts at present unknown. Before concluding, there are one or two matters I should like to notice, and here is one of them. During the late elections on the goldfields, there was a hue and a cry raised that the Government are in opposition to the welfare of the worker. I cannot believe that, nor do I believe it. I gave it out on the hustings and from the platform that if I found the principles of the workers were at stake in any direction, I would stand by them. My feelings towards labour are the same to-day as they ever were, and the workers will not suffer anyhow at my hands. [MR. HEITMANN: Come over to this side.] I shall never be on your side while you have the caucus and the pledge. There is another matter, in reference to electoral reform. We must all agree that the state of the rolls during the last elections was deplorable, and I much regret that that applies more particularly to the electorate of Coolgardie; so much so that probably there is a chance of my being thrown out of the seat I am occupying to-day, through the rolls being in a bad and I may say rotten state. Whoever may be to blame for that at present I do not know. I think a lot of blame rests with the officers who have been on duty, and I hope it will be the duty of the House at the earliest opportunity to place the rolls in a better and more workable condition. We have been told that our distinguished visitors from time to time have unanimously expressed every satisfaction at our prospects and advancement. Well, it is pleasing and satisfactory to note that the state of affairs to-