

hope I acted constitutionally by handing in my resignation. Had I desired to perpetrate a political dodge, how easy it would have been for me to have suggested to my colleague Mr. Barry Wood (then Commissioner of Railways) that he should announce on the hustings that the railway repairers who were demanding 8s. a day should have it? Where would the present Premier, have been had I taken that course? It would then have been for him to say I was guilty of a political dodge. I say most emphatically this charge of a political dodge is not true. That is enough. I do not want to use strong language. Had I adopted the course imputed to me, had I shown a desire to remain leader of this House, had I shown a desire for party politics, then—if I am to believe the utterances of the people all round the State, the utterances even of the men on the goldfields—had I done what I suggested just now, and instructed Mr. Wood to make this promise, then I honestly believe that I should be to-night addressing this House from that (Government) side of the Speaker, and not from this (Opposition). The member for North Murchison challenged me to say whether I left some record on the question. He says I left a short minute to the Under Secretary. You will find it on record. I wrote to the Minister for Railways on Saturday asking that a copy of the minute should be sent to me. I received no reply to that communication; but from the Premier's office I received a reply enclosing the minute. The hon. member for North Murchison said that my minute was dated 17th May: here is a copy of the minute from the Premier's office, written by his own secretary, dated 18th May, one day later, and I now have the honour of reading it to the House:—

From the Honourable the Premier to the Hon. Commissioner of Railways.

The secretary of the W.A.G. Railway Employees' Association (Mr. Guilfoyle) waited upon me this morning with reference to a reply to his letter requesting an increase of wages for the gangers and men employed upon the permanent way. I have informed Mr. Guilfoyle that I considered it would be wrong of me, whatever my opinion on the matter might be, to give him a reply now, in the middle of the present political jumble. I desire, however, to place it on record that this request for increased wages should be regulated entirely by the law of supply and demand,

and from my present knowledge of the labour market, I think these labourers are entitled to the advance asked for in the petition. Of course, while expressing this opinion, it will have to be considered by the General Manager, and be subject to the approval of the Cabinet. I am merely giving expression to the views I hold upon the matter.—(Signed) GEO. THROSELL, Premier.—18th May, 1901.

That is an answer to the charge of political jobbery. (General applause.) The minute is dated one day later than the date the hon. member stated. If the Ministry of the day had not seen that minute, that is no fault of mine. I received this copy of the minute from the Premier's own office, through his own secretary, and it is for the Premier to explain whether he had seen the minute or not. In regard to the strike generally, I desire to be silent. I will say no more, nor should I have introduced the subject at all had it not been that I was charged the other evening, and unfairly charged, with political dodgery. I say it with deep earnestness and feelingly that it pains me to speak in this way of one whom I held in the highest esteem and respect as being a man of spotless honour. Why he should have made the charge is best known to himself. I hope it has not emanated from my old friend the Premier. I hope it has not emanated from Mr. Holmes, and that the Commissioner for Railways will be able to say he did not give this information to his supporter, the hon. member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead). If he does, I am satisfied. Certain it is that the hon. member has secured the information from some source which is not ordinarily open to members of Parliament. I hope I have made my position clear. Although I feel very indignant on this matter, I shall let it drop. If I have satisfied members of this House, and those who are listening to me—if my explanation is satisfactory—the man who has made the charge, if he be the honourable man I take him to be, will do the best he can to act the part of an honourable man and acknowledge that he was too hasty, and will make that reparation which is due from one honourable man to another.

MR. F. REID (Mount Burges): I must say that I approve generally of His Excellency's Speech. At the same time, with other members from the goldfields I am disappointed somewhat with it for

the reason that there is no provision made for goldfields requirements. Referring to the Goldfields Act, which the Government have not touched upon in the Speech, I think it is absolutely necessary that very large improvements should be made in that Act, and not only that the Act should be amended, but in my opinion it will be absolutely necessary to see that it is administered properly. In the past, I am sorry to admit, this Act has not been administered on the goldfields fairly, and the inspectors in many instances have been very lax in their inspection of many of the mines to such a large extent that the lives and well-being of many of the miners have been sacrificed. There is a portion of the Act in regard to exemptions. That has been the means of withholding prosperity from many districts. In applying for exemption, it has been the practice hitherto that should the warden to whom the application is made for exemption refuse the application, the individual, if powerful enough and if he possess influence enough, can approach the Minister, and if the application to the Minister be abortive, the individual applying, if he still have sufficient influence, can go behind the Minister and approach the Governor, and if the Governor is with the applicant the Governor, in spite of the Warden and the Minister, can grant the exemption to the person applying for it. This provision should be eliminated from the Act. It should be absolutely impossible for a person to go behind the back of the Warden and the Minister and approach the Governor. It must be admitted that during the past year or two a very large number of fatal accidents have occurred on the fields, and I attribute this to the laxity with which the inspection of the mines has been carried out. I think inspectors should be more attentive to their duties than they have been in the past. Many of the fatal accidents that have occurred could have been avoided by better inspection. There is one mine in my district, I will not mention the name, where numbers of men within the last few weeks have absolutely refused to work although wanting it and having wives and families depending on them. Work is hard to obtain in the Coolgardie district, yet these men have refused work in the

mine referred to because it is unsafe. Not that the mine is naturally unsafe, but it is worked in such a way as to become dangerous. Very radical changes should be brought about as to the working of the mines, and I think the inspectors, instead of being allowed to remain in one district for years, should be transferred to a new district every two years. If that were done, the inspectors would not become "chums" of the mining managers in a mining district, and would not then make the cursory inspection of mines which they do at the present time. Another matter in connection with the mines I claim the right to refer to. I am a miner and have toiled in mines for a great number of years, therefore I know something about what I am speaking of, and perhaps what I wish to refer to is the most insidious foe the miners have to deal with, although it is almost entirely neglected on the fields at the present time, and generally in connection with the mines of the State. I refer to the ventilation of the mines, and I repeat it is the most insidious foe of the miners. A great number of miners have been compelled to knock off work, so that they may stand a little time in the fresh air to recuperate themselves and go back to their work.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The Act is all right.

MR. F. REID: I complain of the inspection of the mines, and if the inspectors attended to their duties more rigorously and enforced their decisions, perhaps the ventilation would be better than it is now. I trust the inspectors will be given strict orders that in the future they must attend very closely to the ventilation of the various mines. Another matter I should like to draw the attention of the Minister to is this: I think in His Excellency's Speech provision might have been made for prospecting various districts on the goldfields. I can speak of one district, Siberia, where the people themselves—and it is only a small community—have spent £2,000 in prospecting for a deep lead, but up to the present time they have not been successful in finding it. I think the Government should lend these people some assistance to encourage them to go on, for they believe that ultimately a deep lead will

be found in the district. I also think a more liberal system should be adopted in providing public batteries for the various districts on the goldfields. The Minister for Mines has promised us one in the Coolgardie district, but there is not only one district which requires a battery, but many, and I only hope the Minister will look into this matter, because if batteries were erected in populous centres there would spring up prosperous communities, and the Government would benefit and the Mines Department also. There is one other matter I would like to refer to, and it has been largely touched upon by some members, the manufacture of rolling-stock. It has been said that encouragement should be given to the people here to manufacture rolling-stock for the State. I am of opinion that the Government should take up this question and manufacture the rolling-stock and locomotives for the railways. I am given to understand that we have the best of timber in the world for manufacturing trucks and railway carriages, and if the Government start this national undertaking, it will be the means of settling a large population in the country. The apple question has been referred to to-night, and, so far as I understand, the apple has been a fruitful source of discord from time immemorial to the present, and I suppose it will be so in the future. In connection with the matter, I hardly approve of the action of the Government with regard to the apple question. I believe that very many people in this State have done their best to cope with the increasing demand for apples; and I certainly think the supply of apples should to a large extent be left in their hands, because I believe that in the near future they will be in a position to meet the local demand, and it is hardly fair that people who have planted large areas of country should have the market taken from them and opened to others. Of course, the Government seem at the present time in connection with the apple matter to be representing the people of the goldfields; but the reply is, if the Government had determined, in place of taking the duty off apples, to construct a railway line between the goldfields and Esperance, that would have been much better for the goldfields—[A MEMBER: We want a few apples]—because, at the

present time, the people on the fields are paying something like £50,000 more per annum for the goods and machinery they receive than they would pay if the same goods were brought *via* Esperance. It is estimated that a line between Coolgardie and Esperance would cost something like half a million of money; and in 10 years £50,000 per annum would just amount to half a million. I certainly think the Government should have adopted this policy, notwithstanding the fact that I believe they are, as one member put it to-night, in a tight place for money. They might have found sufficient to construct this line, which has been so badly wanted; because there is no doubt that Esperance is the natural port of the goldfields, and that the line must ultimately be constructed.

HON. F. H. PRESSE: The machinery landed at that port would not come from Adelaide.

MR. DIAMOND: The machinery comes mostly from England and America now, not from Adelaide.

MR. F. REID: There is another matter which concerns not only the workers in my district but the welfare of some of the large mines: I refer to the Kurrawang Firewood Company. I am pleased to see one member present in this House to-night who, I understand, has an interest in that company; therefore, I expect that anything I say to-night will not be taken personally by him, but will be taken in a general way. I am sorry to have to admit that the firewood company in question have to a large extent been taking timber which undoubtedly should be the property of the mines in my district. They have gone to within three miles of the Bonnievale district, and within a very short distance of the Kuranalling district. This has undoubtedly been done in the interests of the firewood company and of the mines at Kalgoorlie. Kalgoorlie certainly deserves every encouragement. It has good mines, plenty of gold, and everything requisite for success; but I think it hardly fair that the Kalgoorlie people should go out of their way to despoil of timber other districts where we have low-grade mines, mines which are pushing on at the present moment fairly well, and which should be encouraged. Yet, from the evidence which has been

collected and placed before the Government, I think it is the duty of the Government to stop at once the operations of the Kurrawang Firewood Company in that district. With respect to the various opinions delivered by hon. members since the debate on the Address commenced, it has been stated by members on both sides of the House that the Government are worthy of support. Well, I certainly think, judging by the policy they have submitted, that they are undoubtedly worthy of support, and that those gentlemen in Opposition who stated that they are worthy of support should see that it is their duty, while holding that opinion, to take their seats on this (Government) side of the House. Another matter I shall refer to is that the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby), dealing to-night with the question of the influx of aliens and the desire of agriculturists in this State to obtain a plentiful supply of cheap labour, gave it as his opinion that these aliens were of an inferior race, and he thought they ought to be encouraged to come here so that settlers in the agricultural districts might be able to obtain a supply of cheap labour. I am of a different opinion from the hon. member. I have had some experience of these people; and while objecting to their coming here, while believing that they should not be allowed to land here unless under strict supervision, I am of opinion that, after they have arrived here, after they have become accustomed to the ways of English-speaking people, they should be treated just as we are. I believe they are as good as we are, once they get to know what are our ideals and aspirations. But, with the hon. member, I do not think they should be taken advantage of for the purpose of working for selectors in the coastal districts; because we know very well that even if they were brought here in numbers, they would remain in the coastal districts for a short time only, and would ultimately gravitate towards the goldfields; therefore I am opposed to the landing of Italians or other European aliens in this country, unless under strict supervision and according to law. The member for Cockburn Sound (Mr. F. McDonald) referred to removing the duties off butter, bacon, and cheese. Well, while the agitation was proceeding over the question of federation or no federation

being submitted to the people in a referendum, it was tacitly promised by the goldfields people that a sliding scale should be permitted to exist for five years, and that these duties should, at the end of that period, be wholly removed. I certainly believe we should adhere to that compact. I do not believe in taking the duties off until the times at which they should be removed expire. Were we to do so, we should certainly be breaking our word with the people of the coast, and should render ourselves objects of contempt and detestation; and therefore I think we should adhere to the compact and still retain the duties in question. I have no more to say to-night. I have been speaking somewhat at a disadvantage, because we heard a very eloquent address just before I started; so that I will now resume my seat. I hope the Government will pay at all events some attention to those matters to which I have to-night referred, namely the inspection of mines and the necessity, in any future mining legislation, of seeing that mines are properly ventilated. (General applause.)

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): It would be a charitable action if it could be arranged that new members of the House should have their say at the start; because, after the experienced members have spoken, with their flow of eloquence and the training they have received in many years of experience, we must appear to great disadvantage. I hardly like to refer to what is becoming a hackneyed theme, by paying a tribute to the memory of a late member of this House, Mr. Alexander Forrest. I say before this House that I am one who has to thank Mr. Forrest for a good turn in my past life. There are many men in this State who have to do the same. His loss is a great one, socially, commercially, and politically, and I am sure his memory will long be cherished in Western Australia. I do not propose, as some hon. members have done, to make excuses for sitting where I sit. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) is pleased to receive my remark with laughter. [A MEMBER: Shame on him!] I think I shall make him laugh on the other side of his mouth before I have done with him. But I do not at present propose to

encumber my few remarks with this excuse at the beginning of what I have to say. I shall be very happy to talk about it at the finish. It is an unimportant matter, and I think I shall be able to deal with it in a manner satisfactory to myself and to the House generally. I shall, on the contrary, confine myself at the start to the matters before the country which are mentioned in the Governor's Speech. To a very large extent, the greater portion of the policy put before this House has previously been submitted to the country, and I think has received generally the approbation of the people. It certainly is not a progressive policy. It errs, I think, a little on the side of retrogression. Instead of a game of borrow-and-spend, we shall have a spell of sorrow-and-mend. That is what appears to me. Whether at this present epoch that is a good policy for the State of Western Australia I think time will very shortly show. Just recently, there has been too much of a disposition to decry our position, to make the position of the State appear perhaps not so sound as it might appear in the English financial world. I for one am not prepared to accept this. I believe that in the past there has, perhaps, been too much tendency to spend money freely. For that, I do not hold myself responsible. I, as a new member, am not here to defend what has been done by the Forrest Government. There are gentlemen here present, the remains of that old party, who I think are perfectly competent to defend themselves; and it is not for me to do it. But in the face of the fact that the railways of Western Australia could to-day be sold for a sum which would pay the whole national debt of this State, I venture to say that even to the eyes of the greatest financier in the centre of the world's finance, London, ours is a magnificent position; and it only requires a little careful engineering to put us within a very short period on a cash basis. As regards the general policy of the Government, I think those who know me know very well that the bulk of its planks will receive my support. I am not a party man. I do not come here to vote for a party, but to vote for what, in my humble opinion, will be for the good of the State. The Speech touches on the water-supply. With a water-supply we

must have a sewerage system. The one is the natural corollary of the other. If we have a good water-supply for Perth, Fremantle, and the surrounding districts, we must have a sewerage system. I for one, as I told my constituents on the hustings, will not consent to any municipal control whatever. I think we have recently seen quite sufficient, in Perth at any rate, to show that a municipal council is not a proper body to control a great State scheme of this sort; and I would therefore respectfully suggest to the Premier and to the Government that they study the system which has for some years past been such a success in Adelaide. It is absolutely the best in Australia—the sewerage combined with a water-supply; and I think we ought to turn our attention to its study. Next is the question of land settlement. On this subject I feel, and for many years past have felt, very strongly. I do not think that with all the talent and ability of the late Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. G. Throssell), sufficient has been done in this State to induce land settlement. Some years ago, on the hustings in Fremantle, in opposing the late lamented Mr. Marmion, I put a scheme before the people which I should like to see carried out, and which to my mind to-day is as fresh and as feasible as on the night I put it before the Fremantle electors: that the Government should not attempt to sell heavily timbered lands, the prices of which are almost out of the reach of the ordinary selector because the cost of clearing is far greater than the value of the land, and necessitates an amount of capital which is certainly not within the command of the ordinary settler, certainly not within the command of the settlers amongst whom I have lived for 25 years in South Australia, and certainly, I think, not within the command of those in any part of Australia, or England, or Germany. Instead of attempting to sell those lands encumbered with this heavy timber, and subject to the outlay of an enormous sum of money in clearing, large districts should be set apart and cleared by the Government; and the land so cleared should be offered to selectors at a rent which would provide a sinking fund to pay for the cost of the land, the interest on the capital expended in clearing it, and a