

tablishment of this industry locally, and the time has arrived when the commissioner could with benefit, not only to the fruit growers but also to the people of the State as a whole, devote attention to the drying, canning and preserving of fruit. I would like to impress upon that official also, through my remarks in the House, the necessity for coping with the most dreaded pest which has ever infested the orchards of Western Australia. I refer to the fruit fly. Recently there was an outbreak of codlin moth in the orchards of Katanning, and it is indeed a tribute to the good work of the commissioner and his staff that they were able to check that outbreak as they did. Though the codlin moth is a most serious pest in the orchard, we have unfortunately a far more serious one in the fruit fly. The people of Western Australia generally do not recognise the ravages it is causing in our orchards. I have seen whole orchards—certainly not very large ones—absolutely devastated through the ravages of the fruit fly. It has been necessary to strip every single fruit off the trees, and not one was fit to send to market. So far the departmental officials have been able to cope with it only by adopting the very primitive method of putting kerosene in traps or saucers or something of the kind. If the commissioner and his staff redoubled their energies it might be the means of saving many thousands of pounds to the fruit growers of Western Australia. May I now ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for permission to continue my remarks at the next sitting of the House?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not possible for me to grant permission to the hon. member, but if it is the desire of the House that the hon. member be given such leave it is solely in the hands of the House to grant it, but a motion to that effect will be necessary.

The PREMIER: It is not usual, on the opening day, to sit after the tea hour. Therefore I move—

*That the hon. member be given leave to continue his remarks at the next sitting of the House.*

Hon. Frank Wilson: Will that be on Thursday or on Tuesday next?

The PREMIER: On Thursday.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why not make it Tuesday?

Motion (leave to continue) passed; the debate adjourned.

### TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Speaker desires me to announce that he has nominated the members for Coolgardie (Mr. McDowall), Albany (Mr. Price), and Kimberley (Mr. Male), as temporary Chairmen of Committees for the session.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

*That the House at its rising do adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Thursday, the 2nd July.*

Question passed.

*House adjourned at 6.16 p.m.*

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## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 1st July, 1914.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Report of the Education Department for the year 1913. 2, Amendment to the Regulations under the Mining Act, 1904 (regulations relating to fees for gold dealers' licenses

to banks). 3, Amendment to regulations and schedule under Workers' Homes Act, 1911, and Workers' Homes Act Amendment Act, 1912.

### COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the COLONIAL SECRETARY sessional committees were appointed as follow:—

Standing Orders Committee—The President, the Chairman of Committees, the Hon. D. G. Gawler, Hon. H. P. Colebatch, and the mover.

Library Committee—The President, Hon. W. Kingsmill, Hon. J. E. Dodd.

House Committee—The President, Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, Hon. A. G. Jenkins, Hon. J. Cornell, and Hon. R. J. Lynn.

Printing Committee—The President, Hon. R. G. Ardagh, and Hon. A. Sanderson.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### *Second Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East): While I am not able to adopt in its entirety the suggestion of the Hon. Mr. Cornell that the House should pass at once all the measures submitted by the Government in order that we may complete our business within a fortnight, I am just as anxious as he, or any other member may be, that there should be no undue waste of public time or of the time of hon. members. With that end in view I propose to make my remarks as brief as the importance of the different questions that I feel it my duty to touch upon will permit. But before plunging into the subject matter of my speech, I do feel impelled to make one or two congratulatory remarks in regard to the mover of the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. I feel that it is not an undue compliment to say that the Speech was admirably conceived, and delivered in a way which the House cannot do other than appreciate. Though I cannot accord altogether the same compli-

ment to the seconder of the motion, whom I am sorry to see is not in his place to-day, I do not intend to rebuke him. It did seem to me just a little illogical that he should start out by saying that it was not customary for new members in making their maiden speech to be interrupted during their remarks, and follow this up by a violent assault upon a new member who had not spoken at all. I refer to this question only with a desire to tell the new member who was attacked on that occasion that had he known the Hon. Mr. Cornell he would not have resented Mr. Cornell's attack. There are two reasons why none of us who know the Hon. Mr. Cornell ever resent the attack he makes upon us. First of all, we know that behind these attacks there is not the faintest suggestion of malice, and secondly we know that his attacks are always very easy to answer. The first thing that strikes one in regard to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor, is its inordinate length. One can only suppose that it has been made so lengthy, that it deals with such a mass of uninteresting detail, because of the decision of the Premier to depart from the usual custom of making a pre-sessional speech. Apparently the Governor's Speech is intended to serve both purposes. That may be a very happy method of doing things from the point of view of the Premier, but I doubt very much whether it adds to the interest of the proceedings in regard to the opening of Parliament. That, however, is a matter which is not of sufficient importance for me to occupy the time of the Chamber with in discussing. One of the first items mentioned in the Governor's Speech is that of workers' homes. We were told yesterday that there was "nothing too good for the worker." It was for that reason that I, in discussing the workers' homes proposal some year or two ago, insisted upon the merits of freehold as against those of leasehold, because I do not think that the leasehold home is good enough for the worker or for anybody else. It was only in regard to the leasehold application of these workers' homes that I ever criti-

cised the proposal for a moment. I attacked the whole proposal as it concerned leasehold workers' homes, and my attitude has since been endorsed by what has followed. I should like to point out that special inducements are held out to workers to take homes under the leasehold instead of under the freehold system. In the first place it is put before them that this is part of their party platform. In the second place they are given accommodation at one per cent. less interest than if they came in under the freehold system. Therefore, they have an opportunity of advancing their party platform, and at the same time of saving their one per cent. interest. Now, it might be that with these two special inducements there would be an overwhelming attraction to people who wanted workers' homes to apply for them under the leasehold conditions. But, I find that exactly the contrary is the case. I have taken the trouble to find out the proportion of leasehold and freehold applications which have been approved up to the present date. I find that the freehold applications number 1,169, amounting in money to £440,875. The leasehold, notwithstanding that these are in accordance with the political opinions of the party, notwithstanding that those who take on any leasehold home get their money one per cent. cheaper than the freeholders, notwithstanding all these considerations, we find that under leasehold there are only 223 applications amounting in money to £105,921.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is it not a fact that the Government cannot get suitable land?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: It will thus be seen that the applications approved under freehold are in the proportion of five to one as compared with those approved under leasehold. I do not intend to deal with the matter at any length as I prefer to have before me the report of the board before indulging in further criticism. There is one point that I would like to place before the consideration of hon. members. The average cost per house for freeholders is £400, and the lowest monthly payments, provided he is pre-

pared to spread the payments over the maximum period of years, namely, 30 years, is 48s. On the other hand, under the leasehold system the average cost to the householder is £475, and the lowest monthly payment, extending by way of house rent over 30 years, is 51s. It is thus apparent that the leaseholder must go in for a better class of house than the freeholder. I am not at all sure what the reason for that may be, whether it is due to the fact that he does not have to provide any capital or that he takes less risk. It is, however, quite clear that the leaseholder gets his money one per cent. cheaper than the freeholder, although he provides no security of his own. The freeholder, however, does provide security, and it is quite possible that the freeholder is more anxious than the leaseholder to confine himself to a home that he will be able to pay for. It does appear to me in view of the difference in these monthly payments for workers' homes that one of two things must be happening, either the workers must be in a wonderful state of prosperity (and I wish I thought that this was actually the case) or else the provisions of the Workers' Homes Act are being availed of very largely by a different class of people from those whom they were intended to benefit. However, as I said at the outset, I am prepared to await the report of the board before saying much more in regard to this matter. It has been brought under my attention that recently the board has absolutely refused to advance money for the purpose of enabling people to buy the homes that they at present live in. I do not know what reason there could be for that refusal. It is not a question of security. The board have not advanced that question at all. They have simply written to applicants, and refused even inspections. They say it is the policy of the board not to grant any further money to people desirous of buying homes already erected. If they demanded sufficient security, I would entirely agree with them. But they do not raise that, and I should be glad to be informed on what principle the board is acting when it refuses, even in the face of ample security, to grant people advances in order to purchase homes that

they have already erected, and in which they are already living.

Member: Perhaps the price is too high.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I say the question of security or of price is not raised. A man sends down his application and says, "I am living in a house that is worth £400 or £500, and I am prepared to find £100 of the amount, and I want you to find the balance." The board do not even inquire as to whether his statements and valuation are correct. They say, "No; it is not the policy of the board to grant any further applications to people desirous of purchasing homes already erected." There may be some good explanation for it, and, if so, I hope it will be published in the report of the board. No question of price, or frontage, or value has ever been raised. To my knowledge, one place was on half an acre of land. It has been stated as the policy of the board, not to advance for that purpose. The next matter dealt with in the Governor's Speech is the agricultural position, and, of course, it is very gratifying to all of us to know that the yield last year was so great as it was. But we must not overlook the fact that many people were very unfortunate and are still suffering severe hardships; and, if we look at the position critically, we shall find that it is just these people who are suffering these hardships, who have been picked out for additional burdens by the Government of the day. It is just the people along the dry eastern areas who have to pay that abnormal water rate and the extra charge for water, and it is just the people farming at a considerable distance from their markets who feel most heavily the increase of the cost of fertilisers; and it is the new settlers who feel most heavily the removal of the cheap freights for breeding stock and things of that kind. But I do not intend to dwell upon that point further than to remark on the different attitude taken up by the Premier in regard to the increase of the fertiliser freights and the increase of coal freights. Deputations were asked for in both instances. The deputation with regard to the coal freights came from the coal miners, from the political supporters of the Government; and it was not only readily received, but the proposed increase

was for the time being abandoned and a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the condition of the industry and see whether it would stand the increased freights. But when the farmers requested that a deputation should be heard in order that they might place before the Premier the condition of their industry, he did not suspend the increases, he did not appoint a Royal Commission to inquire whether the agricultural industry was in a position to stand the extra impost at the present time. He absolutely refused to receive the deputation or listen to the arguments in any way whatever. Reference is made in the Speech to the profitable conduct of the Perth tramway enterprise during the past twelve months, and in seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply the hon. Mr. Cornell taunted me with the position that I had taken up in regard to this particular purchase; and I notice in another place a supporter of the Government tells the public that these tramways during the past twelve months have made the wonderful profit of £20,000. He arrives at that profit by setting the interest and sinking fund figures somewhat lower than they actually are, and by eliminating altogether any allowance whatever for depreciation. I think anybody who knows the condition in which the Perth tramways were taken over, will agree with me when I say that about 10 per cent. ought to be the least amount that any prudent business man would allow for depreciation in a concern of that kind. So that, regarded on that basis, and even admitting that the heavy sum paid for goodwill need not carry depreciation, it will be easily seen that, instead of making a profit of £20,000 during the past year, the tramways have actually been operated at a loss. At any rate, I am not in any way ashamed of the attitude I took up in the matter. I am only sorry that I was not successful, that the three-quarters of a million of money that has been spent, or is at present being spent, merely in transferring a public service from one ownership to the other—with no apparent profit to the users, without giving employment to anybody—that three-quarters of a million was not devoted to public works in different parts

of this State where they are so badly needed. My friend, Mr. Cornell, directly after touching on this act of the Government in purchasing the Perth tramways, started talking about centralisation. To my mind, that is almost the first specific act of centralisation that can be charged against any Government in Western Australia. That, to my mind, is the only time when a huge sum of money has been spent for no good purpose in the City, whilst it was urgently required all over the country.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do you call the ownership of public utilities, centralisation?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Not at all. The other purposes on which the money would have been spent, would have been public utilities also. If hon. members turn to page 7 of the *Monthly Statistical Abstract*, they will see how the 27¾ millions of Loan money expended up to June 30th of last year has been applied, and from that they will be able to draw their own conclusions as to whether all this talk about centralisation is not, for the most part, wild talk indeed. Fifteen and a quarter millions have been spent on railways and tramways, and none of that expenditure—with the exception of the item that I have already referred to—can be described as being in the nature of centralisation. Three millions has been spent on harbours; and if, as is probably the case, a large proportion of the amount has been spent on the Fremantle harbour, I think we must all agree that that is not in the interests of the citizens of Fremantle, but in the interests of the community at large, and in the interests of the producers who want to reach their markets in the old world as cheaply as possible. A great deal more money will have to be spent on Fremantle and all our other harbours before they can be considered altogether efficient. Then, nearly four millions has been spent on water supply; and probably there is no other portion of the State worse provided for in the matter of water supply than is the City of Perth itself. There is no centralisation about that. A million and a quarter has been spent on the development of the goldfields; probably not

enough, but certainly not centralising expenditure. Two and a half millions have been spent on the development of agriculture, and so you find that practically the whole of the loan money has been spent in developing industries in all parts of this State; and when people talk about centralisation in Western Australia, I should like them to point to any other community in the world, with so small a population, that has reached out so far and tried so hard to give a chance to every industry in the State, wherever it may be situated. Then we have a reference in the Speech to the mining industry. I am quite willing that the Government should take credit for every good thing that happens in the State, and I only wish them to take the blame of a few of the bad things that happen. Now, the increase in the gold yield of 1913 over the previous year was 31,395 ounces, and a very large proportion of it was contributed by the Yilgarn field. I had with me a little pamphlet dealing particularly with this increase in the Yilgarn yield, but I have mislaid the pamphlet; and I should be personally obliged if some of the members representing that province, my friend Mr. Kirwan for instance, would place the particulars of that field before the House. It would be to the public interest. However, as a matter of fact, so far as the mining industry is concerned, we find that although there was this very gratifying increase in 1913 over the previous year, the returns for the first five months of 1914 are not only lower than the yield for the corresponding period of last year, but the lowest for the first five months of any year since the early history of the goldfields. Now, I for one do not believe that this ought to happen. I do not think our goldfields are played out. I think that it is largely due to the fact that our goldfields are not getting a chance. I am not going to blame the Government in particular for this, but I do feel that industrial conditions have been imposed upon those who are endeavouring to develop our goldfields, which are not making for the interests of the State or even for the interests of the men employed.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What would you do to improve the gold yield?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Better the industrial conditions, bring about conditions under which people would be more inclined to invest their capital in our goldfields.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Decrease wages?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Not at all. We remember that some time ago the Arbitration Court made an award—a good many years ago—covering the wages for the Kalgoorlie goldfields. They were good wages, based on the fact that these mines were highly productive and able to pay a good wage; and the Court, I think inadvisedly, then ordered that for districts remote from Kalgoorlie the wage should increase in proportion to the number of miles that the mine was situated from Kalgoorlie. In that instance I do not think sufficient attention was paid to the ability of these mines to pay the higher wages. Generally speaking, they were mines of lower grade than those on the Kalgoorlie field. But the particular industrial embarrassments that I intend to refer to now are not those imposed by the Arbitration Court. I suppose all hon. members have read the account that appeared in the paper a few days ago of the strike at the Youanmi mine, and this was not a matter of reducing wages. What happened in this case was that the manager of the mine, for the purpose of development and in order that he could keep a large number of men in employment, was anxious to proceed rapidly with the sinking of a shaft, and that he gave a contract to twelve men to sink this shaft. I am informed—I think not misinformed—that one of the conditions of this contract, as has been the case for years past with nearly every contract let on the goldfields, was that the men should be able to earn in the specified time not less than the standard rate of wages. In other words that the men took no risk. If the work that they did by the piece rate of pay did not come up to the standard rate of wages, the mine would take the risk and pay the standard rate of wages nevertheless. But, as a matter of fact, instead

of earning the standard rate, these men earned a wage of 27s. per day per man. Therefore it was not a case of cutting down wages at all. Then the union stepped in and ordered these men, who were unionists, to abandon their contract. I do not know why. I do not know whether they objected to their making so big a wage, or whether it was that, this Chamber having refused to sanction an Act of Parliament abolishing contract work, the union thought that it would do the job itself, or whether it was that these men, in earning this 27s. per day, were somewhat reflecting upon the amount of work done by other men in the mine. I do not know what the reason was, but the union ordered these men to cease their contract work. The men refused. The union then dismissed them from the union, in complete and absolute violation of the Arbitration Act. The men still persisted in their work. The unionists then went on strike. The men still persisted in their work. The unionists then arranged that the storekeepers in the town should not be allowed to supply these men with provisions. Those of the contractors who were living in boarding houses were expelled from their boarding houses, and subsequently—this is a statement that is made, a sworn statement that has been made—the wife of one of these contractors was called upon and given a certain period of notice within which to leave the town and the district. Ultimately they did leave the town and district under threats from the union. Some of them were sent to Sandstone and directly they started in the employment of one of the mining companies there, the same process of threats and intimidation was indulged in. Those are the conditions that make it impossible to develop the mining industry.

Hon. J. Cornell: Has the hon. member read the secretary's statement in the *West Australian*?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I have read the whole of it, but I also know that the statements to which I have referred were the sworn statements of the people concerned.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Action is being taken and the matter is *sub judice*.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I am pleased to hear that, but I venture to say that we should have some means of knowing what is being done. This union has obviously committed an offence against the Arbitration Act. I do not care whether the Government see fit to prosecute these people under the Arbitration Act; we know well what will happen if that is done. Probably the men will be fined a paltry £1 or £2, and if the union is fined the fine will be totally or partially remitted, and there will be no punishment. In a case like this I do not think the people concerned should be proceeded against as semi-political offenders under a discredited statute; they should be prosecuted as criminals under common law. While such things are allowed to continue, we shall drive capital from the country and we cannot expect our industries to flourish. The next matter referred to in the Governor's Speech is the State sawmills. Mr. Cornell has seen fit to denounce the Federal Government for cancelling the contract entered into with the State Government for the supply of powellised sleepers. What are the facts? The original contract was fixed up in, I might almost say, a secret manner between the Federal and the State Governments in August, 1912. It was a contract for the supply of 1,400,000 powellised karri sleepers, and delivery was to start in June, 1913. By April, 1914, there were to be delivered 288,000 sleepers, and thereafter the delivery was to be at the rate of 60,000 monthly. At the request of the State Premier the time for the first delivery was extended from June, 1913, to November, 1913, and in November 1913, the Federal Government called the attention of the State Government to the necessity for prompt delivery in accordance with the contract. The State Premier then applied for a further extension on the ground that the construction of the works had been delayed by exceptionally wet weather. As a matter of fact that was not a valid excuse, because the meteorological

reports showed that the winter had not been an exceptionally wet one. The Premier altogether failed to take into account the heavy rains which always fall in this portion of the State, and he prepared his Estimates as if the rain was to be withheld in order that the Government might carry out these works. On the 18th December, 1913, the Premier wired to the Prime Minister that it was unfortunately quite impossible to fulfil the terms of the contract as to delivery. The Premier himself admitted that he could not carry out the contract. What would any business man have done in such circumstances? Surely the Prime Minister, in cancelling the contract, and offering to enter into another, such as the State Government could carry out, did the only reasonable and sensible thing. It has been said, however, that the action of the Federal Government was taken to discredit and embarrass the State Government. That is an absurd suggestion. If they had wanted to do so, all the Federal Government needed to do was further extend the time and let the State Government go on until they found themselves in a position of embarrassment that they could not get out of. On their own evidence the State Government undertook a monthly delivery of sleepers in excess of the capacity of their plant. When the Prime Minister cancelled the contract, and offered to enter into a new one, and made no stipulation as to what it should be, our Premier, in what I can only describe as a childish and petulant spirit, sought to retaliate by revoking the timber hewers' licenses. Mr. Cornell admitted yesterday that it was an act of retaliation. Surely no more foolish act could be imagined, but the revocation was cancelled because a deputation of the friends of the party came along and asked that this should be done. In this petulant spirit of retaliation against the Prime Minister, the Premier discovered that he had only hit his own friends, and he was compelled to go back on the attitude he took up. Then the Premier went to Sydney and agreed to a tentative agreement for the supply of 500,000 karri sleepers, 78,000 to be delivered by the end of June, 1914, and the balance at the

rate of 50,000 a month. There were also to be delivered 500,000 jarrah sleepers at the rate of 30,000 a month. On the 14th February of this year the Premier, speaking at a public meeting in Perth, said that the State sawmills could supply 72,000 sleepers monthly. Two or three days later the manager of the State sawmills, Mr. Properjohn, told the Royal Commission, which was taking evidence in Perth, that the maximum capacity of the mills was 53,000 sleepers per month. It was apparent that when the Premier submitted his new agreement to the Prime Minister, he was acting on the estimate of Mr. Properjohn that he could supply 53,000 sleepers monthly, but after he came back to the State he found that even that estimate could not be carried out at the price quoted, and he wanted to cut down the supply to 30,000. I understand that the agreement is now likely to be settled with satisfaction to both parties, but the House and the country are entitled to all the information at the disposal of the Government. We know that there was another secret agreement entered into with the Powellising Company, that they should supply one million powellised sleepers, and we are entitled to know whether there was a provision for a penalty in the event of the contract not being fulfilled, and whether the failure of the Powellising Company had anything to do with the failure of the State Government to keep their contract with the Federal Government, a failure which we, as a State, have every reason to be ashamed of. We should be able to keep the contracts we enter into, and it is not creditable to the country that the Premier should go about making bargains and then asking for extensions of time in order to keep the arrangements made. I hope that the old spirit of pufulance in regard to the brewers' licenses will not be renewed, and that so far as the supply of jarrah sleepers for the Transcontinental Railway is concerned, if the Government fail to receive a contract they will throw no obstacle in the way of private people carrying out the work, so that Western Australia may derive the advantage.

Hon. J. Cornell: We are not prepared to allow concessions for cutting on Crown lands.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I am sorry I have not with me a publication I was reading a day or two ago, and which was issued only last year by the Minister for Lands, Mr. Bath. This publication held out, as one of the inducements to people to come here, the fact that there were millions of acres of Crown lands covered with splendid jarrah timber waiting to be developed. If the Government do not get the contract for the supply of jarrah sleepers, I hope they will throw no obstacle in the way of other people securing it, so that the State may secure the advantage. With regard to the State trading concerns, there was published the other day the balance sheet of the butchers' shops, but in that there was no statement of the amount of stock on hand at the beginning or at the end of the period. It was suggested that the working of the Government meat shops meant that 1,500 people got cheap meat, whilst the whole population of 300,000 odd people had to pay for it. That is, apparently what is taking place. To-day, I believe, there has been an advance in the price of meat, so that, whatever intention the Government might have had in reducing the price of meat to the community in general, that intention has not been realised. Of the State steamers we are heartily tired. Their revenue for the expired eleven months amounted to £57,800, and the actual expenditure was £68,913, a loss of over £11,000 on working alone. These figures do not include the large amount which was spent on the "Western Australia" for repairs at Sydney, and do not include over £5,000 paid in interest. Neither do they include depreciation which should be set down at not less than £15,000. We were told that in this year the State steamers would be making a great profit, whereas they have actually cost the State no less than about £30,000. So far as the general principles of State trading are concerned, I am not opposed to State trading, so long as it is confined to public monopolies, but directly you venture into a competitive business



you will get into trouble, and all the State concerns which the present Government have entered into are in trouble already, and the position will not be altered until another Government comes along with courage enough to stop them. There is ample scope for the Government in regard to public monopolies, but there is no need whatever to embark in competitive trading enterprises. They should be left to those with a more intimate knowledge of trade detail. So far as harbour improvements are concerned, I heartily approve of what has been suggested, with the reservation that what the country wants now is work and not promises. The achievements of the Government in regard to the protection of public health have been successful. We have had mention of a maternity hospital, and I would throw out the suggestion, without pretending to have special knowledge on the subject, that it would be more economical, and more efficient, to conduct a maternity hospital as part of the general public hospital. I am prepared to be told that I am wrong, and that technical reasons can be given against the proposal, but it occurs to me as a layman that what I have suggested can be done cheaply and effectively. I welcome the proposal in regard to making provision for sufferers from miners' phthisis. Last year I argued on the lines that it was an entirely proper thing that the Government, the mine owners, and the employees should take the matter in hand. All that is wanted in a matter like this is the acknowledgment of the State of its liability, a just recognition by the employers of their obligations, and a clear sense of responsibility on the part of the miners themselves. There is good reason to believe that this matter will be brought to a successful issue, and if it is, every credit will rest with those members of the Government who have carried it into effect. So far as education is concerned, I welcome the establishment of a secondary school in Kalgoorlie and the Narrogin farm school. I believe the latter is being run on thoroughly sound lines, and I hope it will not be long before the Government see fit to establish similar schools

in other parts of the State. There are other places—and I do not hesitate to mention Northam amongst them—where there are greater opportunities even than at Narrogin for the establishment of such schools. The progress being made with the continuation classes is also gratifying, but I must refer to the boast of the Labour party that education is free from the kindergarten to the University. That privilege is confined to one section of the community only. Hitherto any smart boy or girl in the country, by winning a scholarship and showing that he or she was of that material which would take good advantage of educational facilities was able to go on by means of scholarships from the primary schools to the secondary schools and the University; but in March last the Minister for Education introduced a new regulation under which no pupil at a State school could sit for a scholarship without having first supplied a declaration that the total income of its parent or guardian was not more than £250 a year, or not more than £50 per annum for every member of the family, excluding children earning 10s. a week or upwards. The practical effect of that was to deprive from the scholarship the children of all parents whose total income was £250 a year or more, and also to deprive the children of practically all farmers, for although their net income might be much less than £250 per annum, their total income would be more than that, otherwise they would be faced with bankruptcy. It would also deprive all small business men of the privilege, although their net income might be no greater than that of a skilful artisan. In my own district there has been quite a number of scholarships won during the last three or four years; not more than one in five of the children who won those scholarships would be eligible for a scholarship under this new regulation, and in few cases could their parents afford to send them to a secondary school in the City without very great sacrifice. I should like to know under what section of any Education Act in existence this regulation has been framed. Power, I know, is given to the

Government to set the subjects of scholarship examinations, but no power is given to distinguish between the classes of the community and say that this one shall have the privilege while another one shall be denied. There might not be so much objection to the regulation if the amount of gross income were set much higher, at say £500 or £600 per annum, but in any case the regulation would be rotten in principle; as it is it is not only rotten in principle but it inflicts a cruel hardship on a number of children who will be denied altogether the advantage of secondary education. The small storekeeper with a brilliant boy will have to send that boy to work instead of allowing him to go through the higher schools, and that boy being out of the road will probably make way for some less brilliant boy the net income of whose parents is not above the prescribed limit. If this is not objectionable class legislation I do not know what is. When, recently, I called the attention of the Minister for Education to it the Minister said that it had been framed as the result of a request from the headmasters of the secondary schools; I now have it on the authority of those headmasters that this regulation is as repugnant to them as it must be to most others in the community, and that this regulation undoubtedly destroys all that the Minister pretended to give. I hope there will be forthcoming some explanation of it, and that it will not be long before the regulation is repealed. Now I come to the reference in the Speech to proposed constitutional reform. Mr. Millington has said that these are ominous words. I am curious to know to whom they are ominous. Mr. Cornell yesterday introduced a mass of figures, and after listening to them I was inclined to doubt whether the electoral officer had not made some mistake in his returns, and whether you, Sir, had not been incorrect in advising the House that certain new members had been returned. But, as a matter of fact, I find it was all right. What has really happened is this: at or about the time the Labour party took office there were, out of the ten provinces in this State, four that pronounced in favour of

that party. That was not including the Fremantle seat, to which at any time the Labour party might perhaps reasonably aspire. They had four seats and a good prospect of winning a fifth, which meant that if the Labour party made good and satisfied the people that they intended to govern in the interests of the whole of the people, they had an excellent opportunity of securing in a short period of a few years, half the seats in this Chamber, despite the restricted franchise. But what has happened? Before the Labour party had been in power more than six or seven months they lost one of those seats, and at the election which took place a month or two ago they not only failed to regain that seat but they lost another. At or about the time the Labour Government came into power, when they were judged by their promises, they had four seats out of ten; now that they are judged by their performances they have only two. In view of this I do not know for whom it is the present position of affairs is ominous. At this last election the Labour party won in only one province out of the ten, whereas three years ago they had four and a good chance of winning a fifth. Of course I am quite prepared to recognise that Mr. Kirwan is occupying his seat in the House by the support of the Labour party. I have no fault to find with that arrangement. Indeed I welcome it for two reasons: one because of my long personal friendship with Mr. Kirwan, which I hope the most strenuous political opposition will never entirely destroy; and in the second place I welcome it even more fervently because I regard it as striking a blow at the selection ballot and the pledge. I regard the selection ballot and the pledge as miserable excrescences on our boasted free Constitution, and I welcome the fact that there is even one man in regard to whom the Labour party will say, "This man's good services are entitled to recognition." And his claim is strengthened rather than weakened by the fact that he will not sacrifice his principles to retain his seat in Parliament. I hope we shall have many similar experiences until both these blots on our

supposed free Constitution are entirely removed. We were told that the British Parliament had passed a Veto Bill, and that we could not very well object to doing the same thing here. I am not going to draw comparisons between this House and the British House of Lords, but it may be pregnant with meaning to some of us that the political party in England responsible for that Veto Bill has fared badly at the hands of the electors at every subsequent by-election, and is by no means secure against losing office at the next general elections. I am prepared to pay every respect to the example set us by the Mother of Parliaments, but I say we should wait and see how those examples work out. However, the pleasantest feature of this proposed constitutional reform is the altered attitude of Mr. Cornell, who told us yesterday that the Legislative Council must be ended or mended. That attitude is entirely different from anything we have previously heard from the Labour party. In the past that party has only aimed at mending the Chamber in order to end it. My friend yesterday did not suggest that he wanted to end it, but rather that if we were prepared to mend it he would be satisfied to leave it at that. And, after all, that is the most logical position to take up. One does not make a House of Parliament perfect in order to destroy it.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): But one would do so when that is the only way to overcome the difficulty.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: But if the House be made perfect, then everyone will wish to maintain it; if we make of it a good thing surely all will wish to preserve it. In my view constitutional reform should lie rather in making another place truly representative of the mature will of the people before we have so much talk of ending or mending a Chamber which I find has the confidence of the people in a most marked degree. I would like to refer to the proposed legislation. On the subject of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Bill, I desire to correct Mr. Mil-

lington, who said that we threw out this Bill last session because there was no time in which to discuss it. Nothing of the kind. We had ample time in which to discuss the Bill; we discussed it thoroughly, and we did not throw it out. There were differences of opinion in matters of detail only, and as we shall have the Bill before us again I do not propose to say anything about those matters of detail now, except this: that the attitude of this Chamber is endorsed almost unanimously by the whole of the people concerned. This endorsement has not been secured by Mr. Clarke or myself or anyone else going among the people, but it has been secured by a recognition of their own interests. When the Government sent engineers down to the Harvey to tell the people what was proposed those people rejected the proposals. Towards the end of last session I moved a motion affirming that certain plans and specifications relating to the works at Harvey should be placed upon the Table. The motion was carried without a single dissent, and consequently I naturally expected that the plans and specifications asked for would make their appearance in the course of a few days. After waiting a week or a fortnight I asked the Colonial Secretary if there was any difficulty in the way of doing what the House had resolved should be done, any difficulty which, perhaps, the Minister had not foreseen when allowing the motion to be carried without a word of protest. But the Minister said no, there was no difficulty; it was merely that some returns as to the money already expended would take a little time to compile, and he hoped to place the plans and specifications on the Table at the end of that week. The end of the week came, and the end of the month, and in its turn the end of the session, but the plans and specifications were never produced. And I may say that the plans and specifications submitted to the people of Harvey some months after the session closed were not those on which the works were started. Indeed I am at a loss to know whether there were any substantial plans and specifications at all when those works

were started. Let me make this appeal to the Government: In Victoria, after a few years' experience of irrigation, it was found necessary to write off  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions out of the  $7\frac{1}{4}$  millions invested, and even after that the irrigation scheme failed to the extent of £50,000 per annum to meet interest charges. In California the tentative estimates of the cost for irrigation works were exceeded by no less a sum than 20 million dollars. In California and Victoria they have larger populations and many advantages from an irrigation point of view which we in Western Australia do not possess. We cannot afford to face these big losses, and at the same time we cannot afford to leave this important work untouched. The question then arises, how will we go about it? The only sensible way is to bring down a Bill for the Harvey irrigation scheme, the only one which is at all far advanced, and which offers any immediate prospect of success. Let the Government bring down a Bill for that scheme, a Bill which will recognise and meet all the peculiar circumstances of that place, and I venture to say that this House will pass it readily, and when that is done let the Government put before the water users estimates of the cost and say to them, "These estimates represent the maximum amount which will be payable, so far as you are concerned. Can you carry on irrigation at this cost?" If they are prepared to accept it, and the cost eventually proves to be less than the estimate, so much the better. If the cost does exceed the estimate, as most probably will be the case—I am not reflecting on the engineers or on the Government, but this is the case all the world over—then surely this great State in starting a project of the kind will say, "We are prepared to take our share of the risk, and whatever the cost in excess of the estimate might be, we will pay it." If a measure for an irrigation scheme of this kind is brought down, I believe the House will pass it and that the people of Harvey will welcome it, and that in this way an important step will be taken in a direction which all of us desire. Another matter in connection with which we are promised legislation

is that of the initiative and referendum. The initiative and referendum proposal usually appears in the form of a trinity: there is the initiative, the referendum, and the recall. Those hon. members who have studied the report of the latest Labour conference held at Fremantle, will remember that in almost every matter the Labour Ministers and members of Parliament were outvoted by the rank and file, but when Ministers and members made an appeal to the conference to knock out the recall, it was conceded, I suppose, as a sort of recompense for other proposals which had been rejected. As a matter of principle I intend to fight against this proposal, and I will state frankly my objection to it. Some hon. members may think it a bad objection, but I give it as my objection and my only objection, to the proposal. My objection is that the initiative and referendum are not suitable instruments of government in other than a free country. They are only suitable for employment in a country where every elector is not only technically, but actually, free to express his own opinion and view. They are not suitable instruments in a country where hundreds, even thousands of people, out of duty to organisations, vote as they are told. Anyone who disagrees with my objection is welcome to do so, but this is my honest and sincere reason for opposing the initiative and referendum, and I have no other objection.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is not the ballot secret?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Yes; that is a suggestion which I would scorn to make. It is equivalent to saying that these people would admit their bond to their organisation and say, "I do not agree with this proposal, but my party support it, and I must be loyal," and that they would then sneak up to the ballot box and put in a contrary vote. I do not suggest such a thing, and do not believe that it would be done. In connection with the Federal referenda I have met not one, but hundreds of electors who have told me that they considered the proposals were wrong, but as they were put forward by their party they had to

support them. Under conditions such as these the initiative and referendum are not safe implements to employ in the government of this country. They are not calculated to bring about good government or to serve the best interests of the people, and for this reason and this alone, I will oppose the Bill.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Would it not tend to weaken party government?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I am afraid it would not, but I am not prepared to take the risk. The Traffic Bill is to be resubmitted this session. I will not support this measure so long as it strikes at the root principle of the right of the ratepayer. If that objectionable element is removed, then I will support the Bill, but for my part I intend to stand firm on principles, and this is one of the principles on which I insist, namely, the recognition of the right of the ratepayer. As my good friend Mr. Davis, who used to be here, and who I am somewhat sorry for personal reasons is not with us now, often said, "The man who pays the piper is entitled to call the tune." There is another Bill which is not mentioned in the Governor's Speech, a Bill which was rejected last session and which I understood was to be re-introduced this session—the Plant Diseases Bill. I hope it will be brought down this session. It was rejected by this Chamber last session because it was brought down on the last day of the session.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It was not rejected; the second reading was carried.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: That is so, and the Bill was then passed over. I was not speaking in a technical sense. The Bill reached this Chamber on the last day of the session, and there was no opportunity to consider it. The measure embraced several drastic clauses, and a number of hon. members had been communicated with by the Fruitgrowers' Association, whose president complained that a promise made to them that the Bill would be submitted to them had not been kept, and that they did not desire the measure to be passed. I have been informed—I do not know whether there are good

grounds for the statement—that officers of the Government and of the Fruit-growers' Association have arrived at an understanding with regard to a Bill which will be acceptable and useful to all parties, and I hope it will be submitted this session.

Hon. J. Cornell: We want to have the miners' diseases Bill re-introduced also.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I have referred to that measure. Another proposal to be submitted this session is the Esperance northwards railway. I must say that I have never been enamoured of this proposal. I have recognised that a tremendous lot can be said for the Coolgardie to Esperance railway, because in the interests of the women and children of Kalgoorlie and the eastern goldfields it is important that they should be able to get to the nearest seaport. There have been obstacles in the way in the past, but I have always looked forward to the time when I could safely vote for a proposal of this kind.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Then you will vote for it this session.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I will give my reasons for the vote which I intend to cast on the Esperance-Northwards Railway Bill. This proposal is altogether different. We were told by the hon. Mr. Millington that it will be purely an agricultural line. Those who listened attentively to the hon. member will have noticed that he made a virtue of the fact that as a goldfields representative he would be found supporting this agricultural line. He gave us the impression that, although he was a goldfields member, he intended to support this measure, and so make a sacrifice.

Hon. J. Cornell: He is a farmer.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: The hon. Mr. Millington did not tell us that; I hope he is not a farmer in the Esperance district.

Hon. J. Cornell: He is a farmer in your district.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: The hon. Mr. Millington followed this statement up by making an unfortunate remark. After stating that this would be purely an agri-

cultural line he said that the Esperance lands had been tested. Personally I do not agree with him; I do not think they have been tested. If they had been properly tested, surely it would be easier to put up a better case than can be made out at the present time. The hon. member, however, said that these lands had been tested, and I will take his word for the purpose of argument. Neither he nor Mr. Cornell, who spoke eloquently in regard to this proposal, provided any facts of the test.

Hon. J. Cornell: I said it was impossible owing to the difficulties with which the settlers are faced.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: The last harvest was better than the previous test. The Government had promised that they would buy the produce from the farmers at what it would be worth if there was a railway to take it away. It was rather an impracticable proposal. The wheat crop for the season 1912-13 from 918 acres was 2,935 bushels, or an average of 3.2 bushels per acre. Last season they improved on that, for the acreage was 1,574, giving a yield of 6,552 bushels or an average of 4.2 bushels per acre. For wheaten hay in 1912-13, 1,458 acres produced 681 tons, an average of 10 cwt. to the acre. In 1913-14, 2,117 acres yielded 790 tons, or an average of 8 cwt. to the acre.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: If the hon. member visited the district he would understand why the averages are so low.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: The hon. Mr. Millington stated that these agricultural lands had been tested, and surely I am entitled to supply the House with the results of the test.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Have you the results in connection with Thompson's farm which is properly worked?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I am giving the results of the whole district, and apparently neither in wheat, wheaten hay, oats or oaten hay was the crop profitable. In no case would it pay the expense of putting the crop in, let alone taking it off, and the grand total value of the yield would scarcely amount to what might be obtained from one of the

big farms in the proved agricultural districts. The yield of oats in 1912-13 for 19 acres was 119 bushels, an average of 6.2 per acre; in 1913-14 for 41 acres it was 452 bushels, or an average of 11 to the acre. Of oaten hay in 1912-13, 227 acres produced 151 tons or an average of 14 cwt. to the acre, and in 1913-14, 279 acres yielded 159 tons, or an average of 12 cwt. per acre. It is customary in this House, at all events, that every agricultural district requesting the construction of a railway, should prove its case before coming to Parliament and asking for it. In regard to the Esperance district we have been asked for what has been called a purely agricultural line and we are told that the land has been tested. This is the test, and if it were a true test it would damn the cause of the Esperance railway for ever. But I do not believe that it is a true test. I believe that better results will be obtained, and I trust that the time will come when the agriculturists of this district will be able to establish their claim for the construction of a railway. Even when they do so, I would ask the practical men of this House to put this question to themselves: "What is the use of the proposed railway assistance to these people? Is farming such a wonderfully good proposition in Western Australia that these settlers, who are so far off from the market, can depend solely upon the export of their wheat from an unequipped port like Esperance?" It is not, and every practical man knows it. What is required is, as I have stated over and over again, a line from Esperance to Norseman so that farmers will obtain the benefit of the local market with an east and west line travelling through the best portion of the agricultural belt, and joining somewhere on the Great Southern line. The complete scheme is the only possible scheme, and I will vote for the whole thing if it can be shown that the money can be obtained without prejudicing the claims of works of greater urgency. The Minister for Works, in the course of a reply to a deputation at Wongan Hills the other day in regard to the route of a railway along which there are far more farmers than

there are in the Esperance district, and where the land has been abundantly proved, stated, "I will have a survey made of an alternative route. You need not worry that this will delay your line because the construction department already have their hands full for the next two years." If we pass the Esperance-Northwards Railway Bill, what will it mean? Will it mean that the measure will lie as so much waste paper for two years? Will the people of Esperance be fooled in this way, and go on planting crops for the next two years without any prospect of getting their stuff away? Or is this line to be built at once, and if so, what other projects are to be held up while it is pressed on? Did the Minister for Works state the case accurately when he said the department could not take on any fresh railway construction for two years? If so, what alternative is there to hanging up the Esperance line or other work which in the present circumstances has greater claims to precedence? There is one other railway proposal in regard to which I would like to say a few words, though not in a particularly critical spirit, and that is the Kondinin to Merredin line. It is a pity that so long a period has been allowed to elapse without doing substantial justice to those people settled in the Kuminin and Emu Hill district. I was under the impression that their needs could be more readily met by constructing the Kuminin line to Bruce Rock. I have been through the district but I do not profess to be sufficiently familiar with the country to give a definite opinion on the point. However, I would like to think that justice was being done to them and that the obligations entered into—I care not by which Government—were being met. I do not intend to say anything more in regard to the Governor's Speech. The Hon. Mr. Millington said that the Government had established a record in regard to careful and efficient administration. It is, however, customary to judge a tree by its fruit. I would just detain the House for a moment to give a short study in contrasts taken from the *Statistical Abstract*. Take first the question of immigration. I say that in a great unde-

veloped and sparsely populated country like this the Government that fails to perform its duty in regard to immigration fails in everything. There is no hope whatever for a Government which fails in such an important matter as immigration. I see that in the excess of arrivals over departures for the year 1911 the figures were 12,465. In 1912, the figures had dropped down to 6,289. In 1913, there has been a slight recovery, for the excess had risen to 8,577. Then we had that famous, or I should say, infamous resolution of the Fremantle Labour congress that no more money should be spent in the way of assisting immigration. For the first five months of the year 1914, the excess of arrivals over departures comes out at the miserable figure of 579.

Member: Does that not apply to the whole Commonwealth?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: States like New South Wales and Victoria, which we should be able to lose in the matter of immigration, are, on the other hand, doing very well indeed. We are the only people who are going to the bad. We are certainly going to the bad very fast—I cannot, of course, say that it is the result of the resolution passed by that Labour conference at Fremantle. The fact remains that since it was passed we have been going ever backwards. Let me now turn to the question of borrowing. The Government started with a small surplus; it is now in debt to the extent of half a million. It has broken all records in the matter of public finance. It has increased the public debt by almost £20 per head of our entire population, although it started out pledged to the restriction of all public borrowing. In the case of the Savings Bank, for the year ending June, 1911, the excess of deposits was over half a million. For the year 1912 it had dropped to £188,513. For the year 1913, however, the excess of deposits was only £32,139, while, for the first eleven months of this year there was actually an excess of withdrawals of over £43,000. If now we turn to trade, we find that for the year 1911 our exports were over ten and a half millions, while our imports were over eight and a half millions. In 1912, how-

ever, our exports had dropped to below nine millions, while our imports had increased to nine and a half millions. We were, therefore, actually living beyond our means. The total trade for last year per head of the population, was £60 10s. 10d., as against £67 3s. 7d. in the year 1911. We are therefore, it is apparent to everyone, drifting steadily backwards, notwithstanding the fact that upon the Revenue and Loan account combined the Government have spent ten millions of money in excess of the money which was spent by their predecessors during the three years previous. Again, we find this drift going on in other directions. For the year ending June, 1911, the Government railways made a net profit of £224,441. In 1912 the net profit was £191,474, but last year the profit was only £25,328. Whether the profit this year is going to disappear altogether or not I do not know. In regard to land settlement, under conditional purchase, for the year 1910, the last complete year of the Wilson Administration, the number of acres taken up was 1,727,720. In 1911 the acreage taken up was 1,349,497. In the year 1912, it was 889,031, and, for 1913, there was a further drop to 515,877. For the first five months of the present year the number of acres taken up was 155,116. Apparently the only compensation that is left to us for this state of affairs is the enterprise shown by the "Eucla squatters" in taking up land and forming themselves into a company, which I understand was registered in the Supreme Court last week. Apparently this is the first instance on record of a whole Ministry forming themselves into a company in this way.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: It was a pastoral and not an agricultural company.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: This is probably the only instance on record of the whole of the members of the Government of any community forming themselves into a company to exploit the leasehold land held under the Crown.

Hon. J. Cornell: It shows their faith in the country.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: There was a very large falling off in land settlement

in every direction. I do not know whether the operations of this company are really going to make for the benefit of Western Australia, but I cannot help thinking that the Government would have done better to have continued the land settlement policy in force before the present Government came into office. As a matter of fact, I think that the development of our agricultural lands would be very much better carried on by private individuals who devote themselves entirely to this purpose, than carried out by members of the Government who should be directing their forces to the development of the State.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The Western Australian Cabinet limited.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I venture to think that we shall not get as much advantage out of the Eucla Pastoral Company or syndicate as we would have got out of the live land settlement policy generally.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Have not the lands been forfeited?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I do not know. Why should they be forfeited? I am not going to say anything about the attack upon the Country party by the hon. Mr. Cornell. I shall leave them to speak for themselves. My own attitude in this matter is this. There are two parties in the State having policies which are practically identical. I am not going to allow any differences between the two parties to betray me into playing into the hands of the common enemy as to the reference to Liberal squabbles in the North. I am quite satisfied to leave this matter to my hon. friend Mr. Holmes, who I have no doubt will explain why it is that amongst individual Liberals there is not that complete harmony which characterises the proceedings of a Labour caucus. There is one other matter which I would like to touch upon, and that is the accusation of the hon. Mr. Cornell that this Chamber was responsible for the recent strike. He says it is for the reason that we did not allow preference to unionists. The hon. member subsequently corrected himself by saying that we had continued to give, or



had allowed the court to grant, preference to unionists. In connection with the dispute, the workers themselves did not want preference to unionists. They did not want that. What they wanted was that no non-unionists should be employed at all. It was not a case of the unionist carpenters wanting work and not being able to get it; that was not the position. What they wanted was that non-unionists should be excluded altogether. They wanted to say that the non-unionist should not be allowed the right to work at all. Whatever power had been given through the Arbitration Court in this particular it would not have helped the situation one iota.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is a distinction without a difference.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: There is a great difference. If they had preference to unionists, they would be in a position to say, "I shall be given a chance in front of the other fellow," but what they demanded was "that the other fellow should not be given a chance at all."

Hon. J. Cornell: If we had preference to unionists, everyone would be a unionist.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Is it not a fact that Mr. Justice Higgins, in the Federal Arbitration Court, has said that he will never order preference to unionists unless it is proved that there is discrimination against unionists?

Hon. J. Cornell: That is what we want.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: In this carpenters' strike the question of preference to unionists did not arise at all. The question which did arise was that these men said that non-unionists should not be allowed the right to work at all. I cannot conceive even the Labour party going to such extremes. They may want preference to unionists, but I cannot imagine even the Labour party asking that non-unionists should not be allowed the right to live. My hon. friend also complained that this House had passed 122 Bills and had rejected 32, and that we had passed only those that the Government did not want and rejected those that the Government did want. If we rejected the wrong ones, how were we to know? In rejecting a number of the

Bills, I was firmly under the impression that the Government wanted us to do so. I was under the impression that owing to the pressure which had been brought to bear from outside, they had allowed their sense of responsibility to the State to be overcome and that they knew that in any event the Legislative Council would protect the interests of the country. If I am mistaken, and if we did pass Bills that they did not want us to pass and failed to pass others which they did want us to pass, perhaps the hon. Mr. Cornell will explain the mistake which has arisen and ask the Government in future to tell us which they want and which they do not want. I do not of course know whether we would pass them if they did. We should like to be able to satisfy the Government. The attitude, however, which we take up, is that we are here to satisfy the country. I consider that the result of the last elections held only a few months ago, gives me confidence in the belief that now, as in the past, we are rendering such a measure of satisfaction to the people as to induce us to follow very closely the same practice which we have followed during the past few sessions.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South): The hon. member who has just resumed his seat is a prominent member of the Opposition of this country. It is a duty of the Opposition to find fault with the Government and to point to the sins that the Government have committed. I know of no member of the State Opposition who is more competent to point out the faults committed by any Government than he criticises than the hon. member. After commenting for an hour and a half upon the work of the Government for the last three years, and upon their proposals of the future, anyone who listened to that speech with a mind unbiassed by party prejudice must come to the conclusion that this Government has committed less faults than usually runs with Governments. If the Opposition fails to find fault with the Government it might as well go out of business. An opposition that cannot find something to blame a Government for might as well shut up shop as an opposition. It is a

very good thing so long as the party system of Government obtains, that there should be an opposition, and in every country where party Government obtains it is desirable that there should be a strong and vigorous opposition. The speech which has just been delivered by the hon. member, to my mind, is a speech which, if circulated throughout the country, would help the Government very considerably, inasmuch as there were few faults, few real and genuine faults, that that hon. member had to find with the Government. There are some matters to which he refers upon which he criticises the Government, and in which I am in entire accord with him. I deeply regret, for instance, the lessened number of immigrants that are coming to Western Australia. I also feel sympathy with the criticism that he indulged in regarding the regulation which was issued in connection with the Education Department. Speaking generally, in a broad way, as to what was the nature of his criticism of the Government, that criticism was to the effect that the Government had badly administered the departments, and that financially things were not as they ought to be. It is customary with the Opposition to bring forward continually the question of the deficit—the deficit of half a million. That deficit is represented as entailing a condition of financial chaos, and very exaggerated statements are indulged in with regard to it. Now, what is the true position? The deficit is larger than any of us like to see it; larger, I am sure, than any member of the Government likes it to be. We all hope that it will be reduced. There is, however, nothing in the financial position to justify extravagant language. When the previous Government were in power there was a deficit correspondingly large, when taken in proportion to the then revenue of the State. Speaking roughly, the revenue of this State now amounts to nearly five millions. The deficit is half a million. That is, one-tenth of the total revenue of the State. Let any business man consider that as applied to himself. Take the position of a business man whose income is £5,000 a year. I think that no one in his senses would regard that man's position financi-

ally as one causing grave concern, if he were to have an overdraft at the bank of £500. And that is the proportion, one-tenth, of the deficit to the total revenue of this State. But there is another aspect of the financial position, one that is altogether overlooked by critics of the Government, and it is this: Every year the sinking fund is being added to, and added to in a larger proportion in this State, happily, than in any other State of the Commonwealth. If any hon. member cares to look up the amount that has been paid into the sinking fund during the period that this deficit has been accumulating, he will find, I think, that as much has been paid into that sinking fund for the purpose of paying off our debts as constitutes the deficit at present. Surely the position is not so very serious if, in correspondence with the deficit, we have also paid off proportionately our general indebtedness to those. These are points that somewhat alter the aspect of gravity that the Opposition endeavour to place upon the financial position of this State. In speaking of the alleged deplorable condition into which affairs have got, the hon. member concluded his speech by quoting a number of figures which would almost seem alarming. I have been in this State a considerable time, and I have never known an Opposition that has not been able to produce figures to show that everything is going from bad to worse under the conduct of the Government in power. That also is part of the party system. But, in the meantime, the State has been going along by leaps and bounds, the population increasing, revenue increasing, expenditure increasing, and generally, although some temporary set-backs may now and again have come along, I think the progress of the State, when we look back at it, either during the last three years, or the last 10 years, or the last 20 years, has been nothing but what was satisfactory. There is nothing in the present position to justify our believing that the progress of the State will not be continued in the future. The hon. member, in his references to a new party that has come into existence in this House and in this country, spoke in a way somewhat

different from that in which he wrote, and in which he spoke outside this House.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: No, not at all.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I, as a member of the Chamber, welcome the representatives of the Country party who have been returned to this House. I also, although I probably differ in many respects from the Country party, welcome the formation of that party, because, so far as its two chief planks are concerned, I am in thorough accord with them. One of those planks is that in favour of removing from the producers, the agriculturists and the mining communities, the burden of a protective tariff. Ever since I have taken any interest in public affairs, I have always done my very utmost to support a system of free trade, or a revenue tariff. To me there is nothing whatsoever inconsistent in a revenue tariff and free trade. A tariff levied purely for revenue purposes is not in any way a restriction upon free trade any more than excise duties are. But I would remind the Country party that it is to be feared they have come too late in their endeavour to establish a system of free trade. There was a party in the Commonwealth, in the first Commonwealth Parliament and in the second Commonwealth Parliament, which made a gallant fight for the principles of free trade. The party sought to impress their views on the Commonwealth by public meetings; and in the House, night after night, long weary nights, they sat up in the hope of reducing the duties upon the machinery of the farmer, upon the machinery of the mining industry, and upon all the requirements of the producers of the Commonwealth. They went to the country and they were defeated, were defeated in two elections, and they went down fighting for their principles. The agriculturists of the Commonwealth, I am sorry to say, did not lend to that party the support which the party expected at the time. Take the case of Western Australia. If the agriculturists look up the records of the voting, when the tariff was under consideration in the Federal Parliament, they will find that without a

single exception the vote of the single representative, at that time, of the farmers and the agriculturists of this State was always given for protective duties. However, the free trade party throughout Australia, including Mr. Cook, who is now the Prime Minister, Sir George Reid, the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, and all of those who fought hardest for free trade, recognised that they were beaten, that the settled policy of Australia was to be protection, that the majority of the people of Australia wanted protection. That position is accepted to-day. It is accepted by the Cook Ministry, which includes a number of freetraders. In their policy they provide that the protective incidence of the tariff must be maintained. When that situation arose the Labour party was in this position: In the first two Parliaments the party was divided on the question of free-trade and protection. One half voted for free trade, the other half for protection. What happened to the protectionists and the freetraders in the way of a fusion also, to a certain extent, happened to the Labour party. They had to sink their fiscal differences, and they devised the scheme of new protection. It was a system that recognised the disadvantages of the old system of protection. Under the old system of protection—the system that is still in existence, but I call it old to distinguish it from what is known as the new protection—the manufacturers, the employers, got the sole benefit of the high protective duties. They obtained increased profits by the monopolies that they were enabled to create, by reason of the tariff barriers; they could charge what they wished for their goods; and consequently it was recognised that the entire advantages of protection went to those individuals. The Labour party came along with a scheme by which they sought to distribute the advantage which had hitherto gone to the individual manufacturers, amongst the consumers and the workers. I admit that the whole scheme is an artificial one. It is called a scientific scheme, but the whole system of protection, to me, is artificial, and if we are to have an artificial protection, if

those duties are to be imposed, then to my mind it is better that the benefits derived from them should not go to a few individuals but should be distributed as widely as possible amongst the consumers and amongst the workers. Sir George Reid has delivered several speeches stating that if he had to choose between protection as it has been hitherto understood, and the new protection, he would undoubtedly favour the new protection, of the two.

Hon. J. Cornell: He did not say that.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The Country party is now coming forward and endeavouring to advocate freetrade at this juncture, or advocate a revenue tariff, are but crying in the wilderness. There is no party that I know of, possessed of sufficient influence in the Commonwealth, to bring the question of a revenue tariff or freetrade within the realms of practical politics in Australia. I am sorry that it is so, but it is so; and, therefore, those who desire to have the burden of protective duties lessened on the producers, have to choose between protection as it is at present, the maintenance of the existing protective incidence of the tariff, and what I, at any rate, think the better of the two, namely the new protection that is offered by the Labour party. Whether the new protection will be a success remains to be seen, but, at any rate, it is an experiment worth trying. If the new protection were to fail, it would be proof positive that the whole basis of protection is wrong; and probably then there would be a chance for those who believe in a freetrade policy for the Commonwealth. There is another plank in the platform of the Country party with which I have the strongest possible sympathy, and that plank is decentralisation. The hon. Mr. Colebatch, in the course of his speech, stated that the policies of the two parties, of the Liberal party and the Country party, were identical.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Oh, no.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I say that the actions of the Liberal party and the actions of the hon. gentleman himself

show that on the question of centralisation the two parties are diametrically opposed. I can show how the Liberal party has invariably, in every single instance, favoured the policy of centralisation for this State.

Member: What about the Coolgardie water scheme?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I venture to hope that the influence of the Country party will be such that at any rate we shall do something in Western Australia to prevent the extension of this evil of centralisation, for we all know what an evil centralisation has been throughout the Commonwealth.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Before tea I was referring to a statement made by Mr. Colebatch to the effect that the policies of the Country party and the Liberal party were identical. I was pointing out that they were not and that as a matter of fact the two main planks of the platform of the Country party were diametrically opposed to the policy which has been pursued by the Liberal party. In the case of the Liberal party in the Commonwealth—and I assume the same policy is shared by the State Liberal party—they have declared strongly in favour of the maintenance of the protective incidence of the tariff. That is certainly a portion of the Liberal policy which is not identical with the policy of the Country party. But the other important plank of the Country party's policy is the question of centralisation, and I was pointing out that the Liberal party in this State has been in the past the champion of centralisation. In every State of the Commonwealth the evils of centralisation exist, but to my mind there is less excuse for centralisation in Western Australia than in any other State, because of the vastness of its area. In proportion to the vastness of the area of Western Australia, covering as it does a million square miles—one-third of the continent—the proportion of people centred in Perth is greater, if the area be taken into account, than in any other city of the Commonwealth. Of course in estimating the number of people

in the capitals the area of the State as a rule is not taken into account, and in that way it would be shown that the proportion is not so great in Perth, but that is scarcely a fair way to compute the extent to which centralisation is carried. Some account should be taken of the area of the State, and if that be done I claim that centralisation is a far greater evil in Western Australia than in any State of the Commonwealth. The Liberals have been consistent and persistent champions of centralisation, and if they alter in any way their policy in that respect it will be due to the influence of the Country party. We see the influence of the capital of this State almost every session. Take the Traffic Bill which was before Parliament last session. There was only one public body in this State that was opposed to that measure. All the municipalities and roads boards of the State were desirous that the Bill should be passed, but merely because the Perth City Council were opposed to the Bill, this House rejected it and the measure met with the opposition of the Liberals. Take the attitude of the Liberals concerning another measure which was before the House last session—the Electoral Districts Bill. In order to deal with the evil of centralisation the chief essential in the distribution of the electorates should be the question of distance from the capital. That is of primary importance in any Redistribution of Seats Bill which might be framed. Those who are far removed from the seat of Government should undoubtedly have more political power than those who are under the shadow of Parliament House. When that Bill was brought forward, providing as it did for the appointment of an independent commission to divide the electorates, what was done by the champion of Liberalism in this House, Mr. Colebatch? He proposed an amendment and was successful in carrying it, by which an elector within a few hours' journey of Perth, an elector in the agricultural districts, would be given considerably greater power than an elector on the Golden Mile which is 400 miles from the capital. That was undoubtedly a move which tended to strengthen the influence of the capital,

and it is only in accordance with the speech that he made some time ago in this House before the Country party came forward with their championship of centralisation. Mr. Colebatch then strongly championed centralisation, only he called it concentration. I would ask the supporters of the Country party, those who have any doubt concerning the attitude of Mr. Colebatch on that particular question, to look up *Hansard* and see how strongly that hon. member favoured the policy of concentration.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Will you also tell hon. members that that Electoral Bill proposed to take seats from the country and give them to Perth.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I propose to tell hon. members that if that Bill had passed in the form in which it was introduced by the Government, it would have been far better, in the interests of decentralisation, than the proposal of the hon. member. The hon. member's proposal was unquestionably one tending to help those in the near vicinity of Perth, and especially those who would vote for members of his own party to the disadvantage of those who lived 400 miles from the seat of Government. If further evidence be necessary as to the attitude of the Liberals towards the question of centralisation, one need only mention their consistent and persistent attitude concerning the Esperance railway. What does Mr. Colebatch fear regarding the Esperance railway? It is quite evident that he fears that if the Bill for the construction of a railway from Esperance northward be carried, it will mean ultimately the extension of that line to Norseman, and that would mean the opening up of the Esperance port. That is unquestionably what the hon. member fears. No matter what is done regarding Esperance, the hon. gentleman changes his ground and alters his attitude towards it. Now he talks favourably of the line from Esperance to Norseman, and points out that the Esperance northward railway is quite a different proposition, inasmuch as it may be regarded as an agricultural one. What is the history of that line? Two attempts have been made to pass the Norseman-Esperance Railway Bill

through this Parliament. Both the attempts were defeated in the Legislative Council. When the Norseman-Esperance Railway Bill was brought forward Mr. Colebatch voted against it; now he speaks in favour of it. Having failed to carry the Norseman-Esperance Railway Bill, the Government brought forward the Esperance Northward Railway Bill. What does Mr. Colebatch say when the latter measure is brought forward? "Oh, this is not a proposition in favour of decentralisation; it is not a proposition to open up the port of Esperance for the people of the gold-fields; it is purely an agricultural railway and because it is such I am not going to vote for it."

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: That is not what I said.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: So no matter what Bill is brought forward to serve the Esperance district, Mr. Colebatch is so much afraid it may interfere with the pet policy of his own party—the policy of centralisation—that he finds fresh arguments against it. He quotes the yields of the district and gives them as conclusive proof that the land in that part of the State is not worthy of a railway. Mr. Colebatch has never seen the land. There is not a single public man who, having visited the district, has spoken against it, and every official report dealing with that part of the State has been of a favourable nature. There is not a single statement in any official report that can be regarded as being unfavourable to the Esperance lands. All who have visited the country have spoken well of it. Mr. Colebatch trots forward the small yields of the last two years, but if he knew anything about that country, and if he were familiar with the system of farming adopted by the settlers there and how imperfectly some of them treat their ground, he would be astonished at their getting even a bushel to the acre. I was in that district with the Colonial Secretary, and speaking to a number of settlers at Seadon, that Minister told them they had no hope of getting crops because of the way in which they were endeavouring to farm. The ground is only scratched, and sometimes more mallee roots than soil can be

seen on the surface. The people there, however, are bona fide settlers, working hard and battling to establish homes for themselves and their families. They are far removed from a railway or a telegraph line; they have a sand patch to the south of them, which is almost impassable, while to the north there is what is known as "The glue-pot," which is equally difficult to get through. These are the men who are making a terrific fight to succeed, and Mr. Colebatch quotes figures in order to decry for his own purposes the value of the land, in spite of what has been said of it by men who have been sent there to report upon it, including officers sent there, not by this Government, but by the previous Government, which was hostile to the construction of the line. If Mr. Colebatch wanted to quote accurate returns concerning that district he might have referred to a farm such as Grasspatch, a farm which has been worked for many years. Farming has been carried on there on proper lines. The ground is fallowed, and proper fertilisers are used. The owners of this property have made a good start, having been there for many years, and if Mr. Colebatch had taken the trouble to make some inquiries about this place he would have been able to tell quite a different story. He would have found that the average yield there is never less than 15 bushels to the acre, and the hay crop has been as much as 2½ tons to the acre. Let him communicate with Mr. Thompson or with any of the settlers who are there, and who know the value of the land; let him write to Mr. Richardson who also did a great deal there, or to some of the other settlers who properly treated their land, and he will find that the yield is certainly not less than those of other districts considered to be good districts, despite the fact that during the last two or three years the rainfall has not been up to the average. The fact is that Mr. Colebatch and his party seem to have an almost fanatical desire to decry the lands south of Norseman. I wish to say regarding the hostile attitude of the Liberal party towards those particular lands, that there are a few notable exceptions among the Liberals. We have

prominent Liberals in this House who have given generous support to the proposed Esperance line, Liberals such as Sir Winthrop Hackett, Mr. McLarty, Mr. Kingsmill, Mr. Piesse, and Mr. C. McKenzie and others who have voted for the line. But the fact remains that the Liberals in the Legislative Assembly have been absolutely unanimous in their hostility towards the Esperance railway. The gentlemen who in this House vote for the line say they are non-party men; those known to be strong party men, such as Mr. Colebatch, are always noted for their extreme hostility to this particular railway. If when any member referred to the agricultural possibilities of any portion of the western part of the State, a goldfields member were to venture to express the opinion that some portion of the land referred to was not as good as represented, what would be the answer? There would be at once a howl sent up that the man who said anything against the lands of the western portion of the State was disloyal to Western Australia. I can remember Mr. Sommers getting up and expressing great indignation because a senator had the temerity to say that some portion of the land of Western Australia was not as good as it was represented to be. Men who express doubt of that sort are denounced in all the moods and tenses as being disloyal to the State; but anybody who suggests that the land south of Norseman is suitable for agriculture is treated almost as if he were disloyal to the State. It seems to be part of the loyalty to the State which those so-called loyalists exhibit to decry on every possible occasion the land south of Norseman. That is hardly a fair attitude to adopt. Official reports have been issued and laid on the Table, and have subsequently been circulated far and wide, reports stating that there is a new province awaiting settlers, "a rich and fertile province crying aloud for settlement." Those are the exact words of a Government officer who reported on that particular district. Yet Mr. Colebatch disputes all that.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Not at all.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: That hon. member comes along seeking to decry the land of that particular part of the State, trying to throw a damper on men whose only crime is to endeavour to make homes for themselves and their families south of Norseman. Throughout the whole of the goldfields there are large numbers of men eager to go on the Esperance land. They have seen it, and they believe it is good land. The goldfields men are men of enterprise and energy, and if given an opportunity they will make a prosperous province of that part of the State, a province which the rest of Western Australia will be proud of. But this House, in pursuance of a policy which I trust hon. members will pardon me for saying is characteristic of the House, has persistently opposed the railway. It is in accordance with the policy which most hon. members persistently pursue, and which to my mind is injurious to the industrial and commercial development of the State. Whenever an agricultural railway is brought forward goldfields members readily vote for it. Agricultural members come forward and say a railway is wanted, and we accept the reports issued, accept what the Government say on that particular project, and we are ready and glad to vote for it. Indeed, on many occasions when members have come forward and said the land was good enough, and ought to be served with a railway, we have voted for it without waiting for any reports, being only too delighted to hear of the good land being settled. It would be difficult, nay, impossible, to relate a single instance of a goldfields member opposing an agricultural railway. But whenever this Esperance line is brought forward there is almost fanatical opposition to it, and one would imagine that those supporting it were enemies of the State. I do hope the influence of the Country party with the Liberals in this and many other matters will be such that we shall see justice done to the people. To my mind, the Country party will have a most beneficial influence on the affairs of the State. It seems likely that they will either absorb the Liberals or, judging by Mr. Colebatch's speech, that the

Liberals will adopt the whole of the Country party's policy. Now that the Country party seems to be growing in strength Mr. Colebatch stands up and says that the policies of the two parties are identical. That shows the trend of public opinion and the desire of certain prominent men to get in out of the wet. At the last elections the Labour party were returned with an overwhelming majority. Who won that victory for the Labour party? It was the Liberals, the maladministration and the extraordinary legislation of the last Liberal Government, a Government that brought down a Redistribution of Seats Bill which one finds a difficulty in talking about and at the same time keeping calm. That Bill was such a monstrous outrage on fair play that thousands of former Liberals rushed to support the Labour party, or indeed any other party, rather than return to power a Government capable of the Ministerial salary grab and the Redistribution of Seats Bill. So long as the Liberals remain a dominant factor in this State there is not much chance of the Labour party occupying any other position than the Government benches, and with a very big majority too.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: They stuck to the salary grab, did they not?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Yes, but the present Government did not come into office pledged to reduce Ministerial salaries and then—

Hon. W. Patrick: Yes, they did.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: They were not pledged. What happened was this: The Liberals came in pledged to reduce Ministerial salaries, but instead of doing that, when they got into office, they increased them.

Hon. W. Patrick: And the other party were going to cut off the increase.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Mr. Colebatch referred very lightly to what is the most important question before the country to-day, namely, the relationship existing between the two Houses of Parliament. Whether a man be a sympathiser with the Country party, with the Liberal party or with the Labour party, he must agree that where two Houses are diametrically

opposed to one another in politics the position is extremely unsatisfactory. When I came into the House in 1908 the amount of criticism to which the Bills of the then Liberal Government were subjected was almost nil. I saw evidences of hasty legislation which certainly surprised me. I remember when the Moore Government, and also the Wilson Government, were in power, we in this House were told that the Governor would be down at 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock, as the case might be, to prorogue Parliament, and that in the meantime half a dozen important Bills were to be brought in. We were told that those Bills had to be passed. Anybody who ventured to offer anything in the nature of opposition to the passage of those Bills—although there was scarcely a moment in which to consider them—was regarded as an outlaw, and altogether unworthy to be a member of the House. A few members, like the late Mr. Sholl, were constantly protesting. Anyone who looks up *Hansard* will see how over and over again the late Mr. Sholl protested against the hasty way in which Bills were passed through the House, bulky Bills which we had scarcely time to glance at; and they were passed without a single line being altered. That was the state of things that obtained when the Moore and the Wilson Governments were in power. During the whole time the Wilson Government were in power this House was not responsible for the loss of one single Bill.

Hon. E. M. Clarke: We threw out the Land and Income Tax Bill.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: When the present Government came into power in 1911 a very remarkable change took place. All the members woke up into a condition of activity. They began to criticise the Bills that came forward, began to amend them, to reject many of them and to obstruct legislation in every possible way. Mr. Colebatch has pointed out that 32 Bills have been rejected by this House.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: They are not my figures; they are Mr. Cornell's.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I went through the list myself, and I can say that this House has been responsible for the loss



of over 30 Bills brought down by the present Government, most important Bills embodying the policy of the Government. The Bills that we passed were mostly Bills of a non-contentious nature, Supply Bills and Bills that could not possibly be blocked. The one or two important Bills that got through, like the Arbitration Bill and the Workers' Compensation Bill, did not embody altogether the policy of the Government. They were mutilated in this House. I consider the Arbitration Bill was very seriously injured in its passage through this House and its utility greatly impaired, as has been evidenced by the many industrial troubles which have since arisen. The Bills that were rejected during that time embodied the policy which the Government were sent to Parliament by such a large majority to carry out. Take the Mines Regulation Bill, which was rejected. Mr. Colebatch dwelt with satisfaction on what the Government are doing for the unfortunate men suffering from phthisis as a result of working in the mines. I wish Mr. Colebatch had taken that into account when the Mines Regulation Bill was before the House. I see a great deal of the effects of working in those mines. A great many men I know are now dying from consumption contracted in the mines. The Mines Regulation Bill was an endeavour to lessen that great toll which the industry is making on human life. The hon. Mr. Colebatch and other hon. members in this House persistently opposed that Bill and would not allow any single shred of the slightest utility to pass, because certain men considered that if the measure were passed it might involve the mines in a little extra expense. These mines are paying an enormous amount in dividends. Only last year the increase in the amount paid in dividends was £96,000. Surely if it does mean a little extra expenditure, something ought to be done by the mines in order to relieve the existing condition of affairs. What was asked for in that Bill? Among the things asked for was better inspection of the mines; better means of ensuring that the mines were properly ventilated; the abolition of the night shift, which, according to all authorities, is so

injurious to the health of the men; the abolition of contract with all its injurious speeding up work; these and other reforms of the kind were asked for, but the House absolutely set its face against considering them. There are six new members in this House and I would plead with them on the grounds of humanity when this Bill is brought before the Chamber again—I am sorry it will not be re-introduced this session, but probably the Government consider that it would be hopeless to get it through—to go up to the goldfields and to go amongst the men as I have done constantly and observe the number affected, to meet the number who are maimed by accidents or dying from consumption, and if they do so they will surely agree that something ought to be done for these men. It was cruel and unjust for hon. members to reject that measure, and if they knew the number of men affected, they would be very well ashamed of themselves for their action. The new members in the House should inquire for themselves regarding the true condition of things, and if they do so, I can hardly believe that the Bill will be again rejected. This is one of the measures which has been twice rejected by this Chamber.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: We did not reject it.

Hon J. W. KIRWAN: The hon. member is trying to shield himself by playing on words. What happened? It was a consolidating Bill embodying all the previous legislation and this Chamber rejected every new feature of the measure, and now the hon. member comes and plays on words and tries to save himself from the indignation of the public who know the truth by saying that it was not rejected. This is an attempt to cast dust in the eyes of the public. It is a shame and a scandal that this House treated the Bill as it did. The Bill does not affect me personally. I am not a miner, but I live among miners. I see cases of this sort every day. Hon. members listened to men who do not represent the goldfields, and would not listen to the pleadings of men who come from the goldfields, and who claim to, and do

represent all classes on the fields. Other Bills rejected were the Irrigation Bill, Public Works Committee Bill, three times, Electoral Districts Bill, and the Initiative and Referendum Bill. The whole of these measures embodied the policy of the present Government who had been returned by the people to give effect to it. It is useless for the people to put a Government into power if the House representative of only one-third of the electors rejects the proposals embodied in the policy of that Government. This difficulty between the two Houses is not peculiar to Western Australia. There have been similar difficulties in many other parts of the world, and in most places these difficulties have been solved and surely this difficulty in Western Australia can be solved. The difficulty existed in Canada, and it has been solved by a new measure to increase the number of nominees in the Senate. The difficulty exists in New South Wales, but in that State there is a nominee House and the Government have the power to swamp it.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about South Australia?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Yes, there are various other places where the difficulty has arisen.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Tell us about South Australia.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The difficulty has been faced and solved in the old country, and the constitutional difficulties which faced the British Government were much greater than those which confront the Government of Western Australia. The hon. Mr. Colebatch stated that the difficulty in the old country had not been solved, and his reference to the Liberal party in the British Isles shows how much out of touch are the so-called Liberals of this State with the Liberals of the old country—Liberals worthy of the name. It shows how they are endeavouring to mislead the people of Western Australia by representing themselves as Liberals, as men who are in accord with those men who are doing such a tremendous amount of good work for the people of the British Isles, men like Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, and other members of the Ministry. The Commonwealth also experienced

the difficulty, but it has been solved. In the case of the Commonwealth the Governor General regarded the differences existing between the two Houses as being so grave that because one Bill was not passed by the Senate, he granted a dissolution of both Houses. The *London Times* referred to that Bill as a potty measure. However, the Governor General considered the position sufficiently grave to justify a double dissolution. In the case of Western Australia, there are more than 30 Bills of relatively greater importance than the small measure on which the Governor General acted, which have been rejected by the Council and yet, unfortunately, the Constitution does not provide for any system of meeting the difficulties which have arisen. The Federal Government, too, were carrying on on the casting vote of the Speaker, so that the Bill which was sent from the House of Representatives to the Senate merely had a majority given to it by the vote of the Speaker. But what was the position in regard to the 30 Bills which were sent from the Legislative Assembly to this Chamber. The position of parties in another place shows that there are 33 supporters of the Government and 17 supporters of the Opposition. This Chamber sided with the members of the Opposition, and rejected Bills which had been passed in another place by such an overwhelming majority. Although the constitutional difficulties in the way of solving this question are from the point of view of the Government very considerable, I think that the Government or the people should not despair of solving them in the near future. If the people are determined that the existing condition of things shall no longer exist, means must and shall be found to alter the position. The Veto Bill which the Government intend to bring forward will probably be rejected by this House. If so, I sincerely trust that the Government will see their way to submit to a referendum the question whether the people or the Legislative Council shall rule Western Australia. The Veto Bill ought to be put to the people for an opinion as to whether or not they accept it. It ought to be put to them by a Ministerial

act. At the next elections the electors ought to be asked one question and one only, and that is whether or not the people or the Legislative Council shall rule Western Australia. Under existing conditions the Legislative Council are unquestionably the rulers of this State. There is no doubt whatsoever upon that point. Their actions have shown that under existing conditions the Labour party might secure office, but they can never secure power. The position is that there is one of the great parties of the State, and no matter with how large a majority its representatives may be returned to the popular Chamber, that party can never secure power while this House remains constituted as it is at present. I do not want to dwell upon that position. I am one who believes that the people are worthy of trust and ought to be trusted. It is useless for them to return a Government to power if the representatives of one-third of the people can block their wishes. Occasionally it is said that this House is a non-party House. A majority of hon. members like to be considered non-party men. They are usually very glad to accept the nominations of the Liberal party or the Country party or the Labour party as the case might be, but as soon as members other than Labour representatives come into this House, they, in spite of the fact that they have been the nominees of the Country party or the Liberal party, always claim to be non-party men. I do not think anyone can reasonably dispute my statement that, whatever hon. members may be, one thing is certain that the great bulk of the members of this House are anti-Labour party men. They may not call themselves Liberals; to my mind most of them are extreme conservatives, so conservative that they would almost dissociate themselves from the Liberal party, but they are bitter extreme and almost fanatical in their opposition to the Labour party. Anything coming from the Labour party is bad, and while the present position obtains, the government of Western Australia by the people is impossible. The people do not rule. I hope this will be the one and the

vital question at the coming elections. I trust that the referendum will make it the vital question and that the people will be asked to say whether they ought to rule. be asked to say whether they will rule. The Velo Bill cannot be stigmatised as a radical or extreme measure. A measure which is good enough for the British Parliament—the mother of Parliaments—is surely good enough for Western Australia. This is the vital issue before Western Australia at the present time and it must be the issue of the elections. Speaking generally, no Government can be said to be perfect. No such Government has ever existed, and there never will be a perfect Government. The hon. Mr. Colebatch has referred to some of the faults or supposed faults of the present Government. Other hon. members, no doubt, will bring forward other complaints as to the administration of the present Government, but so far as I am concerned although there may be details on which I do not agree with the Government—and members of the Ministry themselves are sometimes in doubt regarding details—taking all in all, the present Government have more at heart the true interests of the people of Western Australia than any Government who have ever been in power in this State. I regret exceedingly that the Government has been blocked and thwarted in this desire to do further good by the actions of this Chamber, and I trust that at the coming State elections the people will express themselves in no uncertain way as to the attitude of this House in regard to the legislation of the Ministry.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North): After having heard and listened attentively to three goldfields members who have spoken on the Address-in-reply, I am almost inclined to think that I have taken the wrong turning, or turned up at the wrong place. When I decided to nominate for a seat in this Council, on the hustings I declared that I was seeking to be elected to a non-party House, a House where each and every section of the community would receive equity and justice, and the whole of the community be thoroughly represented. That was certainly the oh-

ject I had in view when deciding to nominate for a seat in this House, and pending any intention, for the time being at all events, of seeking a seat in another place. Irrespective of what may be said by the three goldfields members who have spoken, or what may be said by any other member of this Chamber, the policy I propose to adopt in this Chamber is that of honestly and fearlessly endeavouring to represent each and every section of the community. I shall look to all parts of the Chamber for good, and I shall be prepared to support anything I consider is for the good of the community—the whole community. I shall look to all parts of the Chamber for good, and be prepared to support what in my opinion is good for the country, irrespective of whether it is proposed by what is said to be the Labour party, the Country party, or the Liberal party. I propose, if possible, to take up the attitude that I know no party, and I shall support anything that appears to me to be in the interests of the whole community. The attitude of, I hardly like to say the defeated party, is somewhat difficult to understand. By "defeated party" I refer to the Labour party, the party that claims to be the Labour party in this Council at all events. When we remember that one-third of the Council have been before the electors, I think we will agree that the result has been that, so far as those qualified to vote for this Council at all events, the electors so qualified, these have shown that they are absolutely opposed to that party. The members of the Labour party in the Council are very few in number. I regret all the more, therefore, the attitude of the Hon. Mr. Cornell, the threatening attitude of that hon. gentleman, as to what they, with their limited numbers, propose to do. This is the party that claims that the majority should rule. However much the hon. Mr. Cornell may dislike the position, he must remember that he and his party are in the minority in this House. If he wishes to succeed in the aims and objects he has in view he must endeavour to work on fair lines and in harmony with the other members and convince me and others from logical

and sound argument that his contention is correct, and must not adopt the threatening attitude that he did in seconding the Address-in-reply. So far as I am concerned, if any section of the community attempted to dominate this Chamber, or introduce legislation with that object in view, they would receive little consideration from me. We know at the present time that there is one section of the community that is endeavouring to dominate the industries of this country, in fact to dominate everything in which they are employed, or with which they come into contact. If the efforts of outsiders are attempted to be reflected in this Chamber, and if one section of the community is to endeavour to dominate, and endeavours to introduce legislation to give them the position which they consider they are entitled to, they will not receive much consideration at my hands. The Esperance railway has played a very important part in the debate. So far, the three goldfields members have referred to it, and the hon. Mr. Colebatch has also referred to that railway. The latter gentleman has given statistics this afternoon to prove conclusively that for the time being at all events the Esperance railway could not be considered an agricultural railway. There is one other aspect of the question with which I would like to deal, and that is the proposal to construct a railway from Esperance Northwards. This means that we would be setting up separate systems of railways altogether in the southern portion of this State.

Member: We have already a separate system there.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: And that system is proposed to be enlarged. Personally, I think it is a mistake to set up these separate systems, altogether apart from the main service. You cut off your rolling stock and you cut off your staff. It is only periodically that the trains can be run on these off-shoots, or rather these separate services. The rolling stock for nine-tenths of the time is not being used and the staff for nine-tenths of the time is unemployed. We had one instance of this in the Port Hedland-Marble Bar rail-

way. There you have a railway, one that is most expensive to run and which the time table provides shall run only once a fortnight, though I think there is actually a weekly service. Now, the rolling stock on that railway might be lying idle for about 26 days in the month. How the men are employed upon the other days of the month, or how many men are so employed I am at a loss to state. If this Esperance railway were an extension from the main service, and towards Esperance, with the ultimate object of reaching Esperance, there would, perhaps be something to recommend it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Would the hon. member vote for it in that case?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I would certainly take the trouble to inspect the country and give an honest decision before casting a vote one way or the other. What I am protesting against now is the setting up of separate services in different parts of the State. I claim that the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway should be connected with Meekatharra, as being the only way out of the difficulty. Certainly the distance is 400 miles, but it means the connecting up of the North with the South, and it will be a very improved method of connecting the pastoral industries of the North with the southern portion of the State, and in bringing about what the Government claim to have so near their hearts, that is the cheapening of the meat supply of the metropolitan area. Instead of constructing the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line, and duplicating the line which now exists—because the Murchison goldfields and all that portion of the State is connected up with the metropolitan railway by the Midland railway, which runs a good service, and which company constructed the line at a time when the then Government could not construct it, which also was bound by the Government schedules, and could not charge more than those schedules indicated either for passengers or for traffic, and was in other words bound by the conditions under which it was compelled to run the line practically as a Government line—if, I repeat, instead of constructing the Wongan Hills railway,

which was built as an agricultural railway, but which I regret to say cannot succeed as such, the Government had begun, say, at Meekatharra and pushed the line up towards Marble Bar, or brought the Marble Bar line down to connect up with Meekatharra, an important step would have been taken to connect that isolated service of the North with the service of the South. I claim that a mistake has been made in establishing one isolated section of the railway service in the North. I claim that the only solution of that difficulty would be to connect it up with the main service, the Murchison and Meekatharra terminus. I should certainly think that, having been convinced of the mistake which has been made in that instance, I would ponder well and seriously before I supported the proposal to set up another separate service.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What are you going to do with the settlers who were put on the land by the late Government? What would the hon. member do with these?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The late Government put a good many people on the land, not only in the Esperance district but in many other parts of the State, and put them into places where they had no hope of ever succeeding, and where they ought not to have been allowed to go.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They accepted the money from them.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am not responsible for the late Government. I am only trying to avoid the mistakes of the past. If the Government had put settlers where they ought not to have been put, do not let us continue to make a similar mistake. If the past Government had set up an isolated railway service, do not let us follow in their footsteps and set up another such service.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Are we to allow the settlers to starve, or are we to keep faith with them?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I notice, in perusing the Speech of His Excellency that very little reference was made, or no reference at all, to the important item of cheap meat supplies for the populated centres of the State.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: That is a sore subject.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: A year or two ago this played a very important part.

The Colonial Secretary: I think you will find some reference to the matter.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am looking for it. It is hard to find. Two or three years ago this question of a cheap meat supply played a very important part in politics. The best I can find in the Speech is that "plans are now matured by which the stock-raising industry in our northern districts will receive encouragement, without endangering the interests of the consumers of the State." I have read that about a dozen times, and I am still at a loss to understand what they are driving at. That is what emanated from the Labour Government in this State. I should like to draw attention to what the Liberal Government in the Federal Parliament have been doing in connection with this selfsame matter. We read in yesterday morning's paper—

This morning the Minister for External Affairs (Mr. Glynn) received a telegram stating that an agreement for the erection of freezing works in the Northern Territory had been signed by the attorneys for Vestey Bros.

That is for Port Darwin, the next port to our port, Wyndham; and if we are not careful we will lose Wyndham as a port. That is my point.

The Minister stated that negotiations in connection with the freezing works had been going on at intervals for the past six or seven months. Applications from other firms had been received, but that of Vestey Brothers, who are the largest shareholders in the Union Cool Storage Company of the United Kingdom, had, after a great deal of consideration, resulted in an agreement being arrived at. He (the Minister) had, in the course of negotiations, several interviews with representatives of Vestey Brothers, and their solicitors, but eventually Sir William Vestey came to the Commonwealth and personally conducted matters under the agreement. The Minister added that Vestey Brothers, or any company to be formed to erect the freezing works, must spend a

minimum of £100,000, but the rough estimates of expenditure showed that the cost of the works would run into at least £200,000. It was provided that in any company formed the major portion of the capital must be held by British shareholders. There were provisions for the use of the works on reasonable terms by cattle owners other than those connected with the company, which was also bound to afford facilities for the shipping of other owners' cattle. The works would be erected in the vicinity of Port Darwin, probably within three or four miles of the harbour.

Later, there is another statement by the Minister to the effect that there is to be no monopoly.

"There is to be no monopoly," said the Minister for External Affairs (Mr. Glynn) to-day, referring to the agreement made with Vestey Brothers for the erection of freezing works near Port Darwin in the Northern Territory. The Minister explained that the agreement provided that at least one-third of the freezing space should be available for cattle owners other than those connected with the company, and this would be ample for the requirements. The rates to be charged had to be arranged, and if no agreement could be arrived at the matter was to go to arbitration before a Judge of the High Court or the Federal Arbitration Court.

Now, that is what the Liberal Government in the Federal Parliament have arranged in connection with the beef supplies of the Northern Territory of South Australia. Our Labour Government, who have been battling for the past three years with the subject, have arrived at this point, that "plans are now being matured by which the stock raising industry in our northern districts will receive encouragement without endangering the interests of consumers within the State." As one who has had a very large experience in connection with this particular class of trade, I want to say that we can never expect to have cheap meat supplies in the southern portion of this State until we establish freezing works on the north-

west coast of Western Australia; and as the Kimberleys can be classed, I think, amongst the best cattle country in the world, and as Wyndham is the most isolated port of all, and especially in view of the developments that have taken place in the Northern Territory of South Australia, I certainly think it is the duty of the Government to declare here and now that they propose to establish chilling works at Wyndham, and subsequently at the other ports along the coast where quantities of stock are available for slaughter and shipment south. Until the Government do this there is no possible hope whatever, to my mind, of cheapening meat supplies in the South. While this port of Wyndham may be considered to be a port of minor importance, I will say that in a small community such as we are in Western Australia we cannot afford to lose any industry, and cannot afford to lose any of our ports; and unless something is done by the Western Australian Government to secure freezing works at Wyndham, the whole of the East Kimberley cattle, which rightly belong to Western Australia, and the trade connected with which rightly belongs to Western Australia, will drift into the Northern Territory of South Australia; the cattle will be dealt with at Port Darwin, and the port of Wyndham will become a dead letter on the map of the northern portion of Western Australia. At all events, common justice and common humanity, I think, demand that the present obsolete and cruel method of shipping cattle from the North to the South should be abolished at the earliest possible moment. Not only is the method obsolete and cruel, but the continual waste that goes on from the time those cattle are shipped at Wyndham until they reach the centres of distribution in the South is positively alarming. I do not know whether hon. members have ever taken the trouble to go into figures in connection with this matter, but just for the purpose of illustration let me quote one particular ship in the trade at the present time. No less than nine steamers are engaged on the north-western coast, principally in carrying cattle to the southern portion. Take the "Kwinana," at the

present time carrying 800 bullocks from Wyndham to Fremantle every three weeks. Records have been kept for years past of the loss on each bullock from the time the cattle leave the station at Wyndham until they reach the abattoirs at Fremantle, and we find it amounts to at least 100lbs. per bullock. Now, if you take 800 bullocks in one shipment the loss of beef—not of bone and sinew, but of flesh; it is the flesh that disappears—there is 80,000lbs. of beef lost between Wyndham and Fremantle. The cash value of the beef lost is at least sixpence per pound. As a matter of fact, the price of the meat to-day is sevenpence or eightpence per pound with the bone. So you have on one shipment a loss of 80,000lbs., which at the lowest value that you can put it would be sixpence per pound. There you have a loss of £2,000 in the value of the shipment between the port of shipment and the port of discharge. In addition, there is the cost of fodder and of attendance, which is calculated at 15s. per head. There you have another £600. In addition to the waste of beef there is £600 for fodder and attendance, making a loss of £2,600 on each shipment. There are nine boats engaged in the trade at the present time, and on each boat this continued waste goes on. And who is paying for it? Why, the public; no one else. The public must pay. Apart from anything else, apart from any other consideration, apart from any monopoly that may be said to exist or to have existed, it has to be borne in mind that every time the "Kwinana" comes into Fremantle she arrives with 80,000lbs. of meat short of the quantity shipped. That is helping to shorten supplies; and shortness of supplies has a tendency, naturally, to put up the price. In addition to this, there is the mortality that occurs during the voyage down, and there is the waste that goes on after the cattle are landed, and the feed that they must have after landing and pending killing, which is all adding to the cost and all helping to provide a dear supply instead of a cheap supply. The only solution of the difficulty is to chill the meat at Wyndham, Wyndham being the farthest away and the most isolated

port on the coast. Let us do as is done in other parts of the world, deliver the full weight under cheap and normal conditions and thus ensure to the public a good, wholesome, and cheap supply of fresh meat. I notice, in perusing the Speech, that there is no reference made to the State steamships.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Another sore subject.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have had some experience and I think it is pretty generally known that I have been a staunch supporter of the policy of State steamships on the North-West coast. I admit that in the early stages the administration was positively alarming. I admit also that the administration to-day is much improved. But whilst I endorsed the policy from the outset, I certainly criticised the administration very severely. I had the one object in view. I was perfectly satisfied that if the administration was allowed to continue as it was then, much as I desired to endorse the policy when the Government first started out on it, the whole thing must result in hopeless failure. I criticised the administration whilst endorsing the policy, and I think the Government will admit that my best efforts have been directed towards endeavouring to keep that State Steamship Service afloat. My utmost efforts have been directed towards that object. My action was misunderstood at the first, I think; but by persistency and consistency, I believe, I have proved, even to the members of the Labour Government, that the welfare of that State Steamship Service has a dear place in my heart at all events, and that my advice and assistance were tendered with the object of keeping the service afloat. I will admit that it has been a very difficult matter to keep the service afloat, or keep it anything like within the bounds of reason; first, I may say, because of the management not having been what it might have been, and secondly because of the unsuitableness of one of these particular steamers for the trade. No doubt, so far as the "Kwinana" is concerned, she is an excellent cattle boat if handled properly. Fortunately, the Government are learn-

ing their business, but it is only now that they have discovered that the real cause of the heavy mortality which attended the first two shipments this season, was that the steamer was overloaded. After carrying the first two shipments and losing about one-third of each consignment, the Government suddenly discovered that the carrying capacity of the steamer was 740 bullocks, and not 850. The alarming losses sustained in connection with the "Kwinana" have scared the small people from patronising her. Moreover, there was the erratic manner in which these steamers were run during the early stages. They ran to no time-table, but just how, when, and where they chose; and this alarmed the smaller shippers on the north-west coast. The erratic manner in which the steamers were run at the outset, and the heavy losses in recent months, frightened the smaller people, to cater for whom the steamers were purchased. I supported the policy of State steamers because I have known for the past twenty odd years the difficulty the smaller people on the north-west coast have had in getting their stock to market. I do not blame the two shipping companies concerned. I would probably do the same as they did if I were in their position. They did not attempt to cater for the smaller people on the north-west coast. One cannot blame them for it. They had the larger people prepared to take the whole of the space for the whole of the season; and as business men the shipping companies accepted the offers of the bigger people for the whole of the boats for the whole of the season, and did not cater for the smaller shippers. The smaller people certainly have been at a disadvantage for a number of years; and knowing the disadvantages under which they have laboured I, from the outset, supported the policy of assisting them. Unfortunately, however, the administration of the State Steamship Service has defeated the objects which that service had in view, namely, that they practically scared the small shippers. I think I am correct in saying that at the present time the "Western Australia" is carrying for one big owner only, and the



"Kwinana" is carrying for two owners or three, including the Government. That is the position existing at the present time, but I claim even now that the policy is the right one if the service is properly administered, and I can only hope that if the Government intend to continue to carry it on along the North-West coast, they will get a more suitable steamer than the "Western Australia" and that so far as the "Kwinana" is concerned they will see that that vessel is run on modern lines with a staff who understand the proper handling of cattle. I support the policy of steamers on the North-West coast because there are Crown tenants in that portion of the State who, for the past 25 or 30 years, have been battling as producers under adverse climatic conditions, and who have been separated entirely from the consumers in the south. We cannot give them railways to enable them to bring their produce to market; we cannot give them the facilities which we extend to the producers in the south, and the least we can do, so far as the smaller people are concerned, is to provide them with steamship facilities which will enable them to put their produce on the market under fair and reasonable conditions. A man will select land in the southern areas, and before he starts to grow wheat he wants a railway to ensure the wheat which he grows being taken to the market, but the people in the North-West, who have been working under difficulties for many years past, difficulties which few in the lower latitudes know anything about, cannot secure these facilities, and the State should go to their assistance by providing steamers to enable them to send their stock to market, at any rate until freezing works are established. The administration of the steamship service, however, should be such that the small men who have not too much to lose, should not be afraid of availing themselves of the service as is the case at the present time. While endorsing the policy of State steamers as a shareholder in the concern, apart from being a member of the Legislature, I would suggest that hon. members should be taken into the confidence of the Government and be told ex-

actly what is happening. I hope that the Colonial Secretary, who is in charge of the department, will at the earliest possible opportunity place such figures and facts before hon. members which will show exactly how we stand.

The Colonial Secretary: I will do so to-morrow.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We should have information, not only in connection with the steamship service, but another very important trading concern, which was inaugurated in connection with the steamship service, namely, the Government meat shops. In connection with the establishment of the Government meat shops in the metropolitan area, I may say that I have been entirely opposed to that project from the onset. I claim it was the duty of the Government to connect the producer in the North with the consumer in the South, and having done that the responsibility of the Government ceased. The producer should dispose of his stock when and where he thought fit, but the Government in their wisdom went a step further and established retail butchers' shops in the metropolitan area. The Government will have to admit, sooner or later, that they are selling meat at a distinct loss to the State. Some 1,000 or 1,500 people in the metropolitan area are getting cheap meat at the expense of all the people in the State. This in itself is an injustice, and it is a condition of affairs which should not exist. The establishment of the butchers' shops has had only one effect. The Government have come into direct conflict with the small butchers who are endeavouring to get an honest living in the community. They are the only people who at the present time are feeling the pinch. Those who have been connected with the trade know that the retail butchering business of Western Australia is now in the hands of small men who go to the auction sales every week. At those auctions they meet the Government buyer who is bidding against them. The result of the Government retail trading is that the small butcher at the end of the week has not been able to conduct his business at a profit, and if he attends the sale in the

next week his bid is not taken because he has not been able to pay for his previous week's supply. The Government are in the happy position that if their shops are not paying they can draw on the Treasury, and, of course, add to the deficit and that, I think, is what is happening.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It is not honest.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The House is entitled to all the figures in connection with every branch of the industry. The figures in connection with the meat shops themselves are of no use. We must have the details in regard to all the trading concerns. The butchering business, I understand, is conducted in connection with the Yandanooka estate which was purchased by the Government for closer settlement at a cost, I think, of £149,000. The interest on that amount should certainly be charged against the butchering business of the Western Australian Government. There is another matter of great importance. We know that a number of the cattle which are brought down deteriorate to a considerable extent, and that many are not fit for slaughter. If we take a shipment of, say, 600 bullocks, and the average value of them at Fremantle is £9 per head, we may say that half of them for butchering purposes are worth £12 per head, and the other half for store purposes are worth £6 per head. It would be a fair thing to charge the butchers' shops £12, and Yandanooka Estate for the stores £6, thus making the average £9. If you are going to charge the butchers' shops £9 per head for the best, and the cattle sent to Yandanooka, which may be the worst, £9 also, you are covering up a loss of £3, a loss which will never be detected until the Auditor General goes out and counts the stock at Yandanooka, and satisfies himself through an expert as to the value. That is a condition of affairs that can exist, but should not be allowed to exist, and a heavy loss can be incurred without the public knowing anything at all about it until perhaps some years afterwards. Unless we begin at the beginning and follow business methods as

an ordinary business firm would do, we will inevitably find ourselves in the position I have described. I appeal to the Colonial Secretary when he is placing the figures before the House to disclose everything in connection with the transactions regarding the meat industry of Western Australia. With regard to the purchase of cattle from The Bovril Estates, I understand that some 2,000 bullocks were secured by the Government from that company, but so far as I know only one shipment of 700 has been brought down. I do not know what has happened to the other 1,300, but I do know that some of the 700 were sold down here at ridiculous prices, and I am pretty well certain that if the figures which we are entitled to are presented to the House, they will be found at variance with those which were given by the Minister for Lands, and which were published in the Press a few mornings ago. In regard to the providing of facilities for existing pastoralists in the North I think it is the clear duty of the Government to make every effort to extend the industry as much as possible. We are threatened in Western Australia, as well as in other parts of Australia with a shortage in the meat supply. The only way in which we can encourage people to go into the northern parts of the State is to show that it is possible to make the pastoral industry profitable. There are thousands of acres in the Kimberleys eminently suitable for cattle raising, but there are difficulties in the way which demand consideration. One of these is that all the existing leases expire in 1928, so that they have only 14 years to run. Anyone without any knowledge of the business would think that 14 years was a long enough lease, but it should be borne in mind that the people who embark on these ventures have to go into the back blocks with their lives in their hands, and that it takes at least 10 years before they can establish a station which is of any use to them. Therefore, there remain but four years in which to look for profit. The expiration of the leases in 1928 is a matter which I am positively certain is pre-

venting a number of people from taking up areas in the Kimberley district. The land is there, but the financial institutions which know the business pretty well declare on an application being made for an advance that 14 years is barely more than sufficient for a person to establish himself, and they are dubious about granting an advance. If the Government will extend the leases they will immediately find that huge areas will be taken up, and if they provide facilities for putting the stock on the market, the pastoral industry can be made profitable, and if freezing works are established there will without doubt be a cheap supply of meat for the metropolitan area. I know of no other way in which that can be accomplished. Reference has been made to the jetties and water supplies of the North. I am pleased to know that these services are receiving the attention of the Government, but I am doubtful whether the Government have accomplished all that they claim to have done in this respect. I was in Roebourne in the middle of last summer, when I learnt on the best of authority that they had had no water in the township for the preceding four days. I know we were unable to have a bath there.. This scarcely fits in with the reference in His Excellency's Speech to the extension and improvement of water supplies. Certainly some of the jetties up there are in fair order, but, on the other hand, others are absolutely neglected. For instance, at Onslow there is no jetty accommodation which a ship can get near. All the traffic at that place is done by lighters. I understand a previous Government did put up a jetty there, but it was in the wrong place and, consequently, disappeared in the first storm. Another difficulty is that two important sections of the people there cannot agree as to the right place for a jetty. I think it is the duty of the Government to send up an expert officer to decide the best site, and, having received his report, to erect the jetty at the place recommended. I have mentioned Onslow jetty for the reason that there have been highly important mining developments in that locality, principally in the lead mines. Hon. mem-

bers would scarcely believe the richness of the deposits, there being at least 75 per cent. of lead in the crude ore. The output of these mines has to be carried out to the ship by lighters, and this at one of the oldest townships in the North. I appeal to the Government not to continue to overlook Onslow. I notice that reference is made in the Speech to the harbour improvements at Fremantle. This particular reference is, I think, not altogether in accordance with facts. Personally I consider it is a public scandal the way in which the extension of the Fremantle harbour has been neglected. I find that one of the members for Fremantle in another place is moving for a Royal Commission in regard to this question. I think that is only a party move, and not in the interests of Fremantle, throwing dust in the eyes of the Fremantle, namely to remove the bridges and extend the harbour up the river, abandoning the proposal for an outside harbour. We have expert officers capable of deciding this question, but I am afraid we will get no pronouncement until after the general elections, although the Government know well enough that the right thing to do is to extend the harbour up the river and get to work straight away, making provision for the export trade that must follow. The proposal to appoint a Royal Commission is only throwing dust in the eyes of the Fremantle electors. As I have said, the only reasonable thing to do is to remove both the bridges, resume the whole of North Fremantle—they have been resuming it a piece at a time for years past—and send the railway up the south side of the river by what is known as the "secret purchase" route to Preston point, throw a bridge across the river at that point and connect with the railway service at Cottesloe Beach. Under this scheme no harm would be done to anyone. The whole of the land at North Fremantle would be required for export purposes. Anyone viewing the matter from a common-sense standpoint will see that the harbour must go up the river. When I say the Government should resume the whole of North Fremantle, I mean the residential portion. Instead of

elevating the wheat at the western end, it could be gravitated over the cliffs at Rocky Bay, thus making the handling as cheap as any in any other State of the Commonwealth. The Speech contains a reference to constitutional reform. If constitutional reform means the extension of the franchise of this House, then it will not receive much, if any, consideration at my hands. In fact my electors have declared against any extension of the franchise for this House. They claim that in the past the Council has been too liberal in extending the franchise. As an instance of their objection to any further extension of the franchise, I may say that at Broome, where nearly all are pearlers, and a great many live in their boats, Mr. Connolly, one of my opponents at the recent elections, promised that if returned he would give every holder of a pearling license a vote for the Legislative Council. I declared against that, and much to my surprise I received an overwhelming majority of votes in Broome, I think merely because I declared there, as well as in other places, that in my opinion there should be no further extension of the franchise of the Legislative Council. I claim that everyone who has any responsibilities or any stake in the country is already entitled to vote for the Legislative Council; and it is the man with the stake in the country who has to foot the bill sooner or later. Thus, whilst we may agree with the principle of the popular franchise for another place, we have to remember that it is the people with a stake in the country who are entitled to a final vote in the legislation of the country. It is all very well for the representatives of adult suffrage in another Chamber to pass all kinds of legislation and send it up here for review, but we must recollect that numbers of their electors are here to-day and gone to-morrow, and therefore are not entitled to a final say in the legislation. As to the initiative and referendum, I do not quite know what the Government are aiming at there. I understand it means that this Council is to delegate its functions to an outside body; in other words, that the man in the street who shouts loudest and makes the most noise will have the great-

est say in the legislation. If it is to aid a dominating section outside which desires to force legislation on this Chamber and upon the country, legislation which is in the interests of one section only, then I am against the initiative and referendum. I was interested in the remarks of Mr. Kirwan when dealing with the finances of the State. He appeared to consider that a deficit of half a million was a mere bagatelle which did not concern him in the least, and should not concern any of us. I am pleased to note that the Premier, though admitted to be extravagant in many things, and to look at things from a free and easy standpoint, takes an altogether different view of the financial position from that which Mr. Kirwan holds. I am pleased to say that, judging from the statistical returns, the Premier has made an honest effort to carry out what he forecasted in November last. In November, when he found that the deficit was somewhere in the vicinity of half a million, this is what he said—

I am determined at all costs from this time forward that the expenditure shall at least balance the revenue.

He took a serious view of the position six months ago, and Mr. Kirwan, six months later, treats the subject in a very light manner, a manner which I think should not be adopted for the treatment of so serious a state of affairs.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I said I hoped the deficit would be decreased.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We have to remember that it is the same with the State as with the individual. A man who is earning £400 and spending £500 must realise that sooner or later he will be confronted with difficulties, and any State Treasurer who finds a continual drift in the finances from bad to worse must know that before long he will be up against a very awkward proposition. The individual who earns £400 and spends £500 will be faced with bankruptcy, and we do not desire that such a condition of affairs should be realised in regard to the finances of the State. I hope I have not wearied hon. members in the course of my remarks. Until I addressed my constituents recently, I had not made a pub-

lie speech for about eight years. I thank hon. members for the kind hearing they have given me and would like to say, in conclusion, that hon. members will find, although I might not express myself too clearly, I will try to live up to the standard of political morality which is the declared duty of every member of this Chamber. I will honestly endeavour to represent all sections of the community. I shall look for and expect good from all quarters of the Chamber, and if I have any suggestion which I think will be in the interests of the country, I will claim the indulgence of hon. members' attention: I will claim their support and I feel sure I will receive it if I bring forward anything which, in my opinion and theirs, will be for the welfare of the community, but I desire it to be distinctly understood that I am not here, and I think no member should be here to represent any one particular body.

On motion by Hon. H. Carson debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.19 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 2nd July, 1914.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION — POLICE MAGISTRATE'S RETIREMENT. MR. ROE.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, In connection with the retirement of Mr. A. S. Roe from the office of Police Magistrate, was such retirement made at the desire of Mr. Roe? 2, If not, was such retirement recom-

mended by the Public Service Commissioner in accordance with Section 66 of the Public Service Act? 3, If so, what was the date of such recommendation, and on what grounds was it based? 4, What amount of pension will Mr. Roe receive?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, Yes. 3, 20th May, 1914. On the grounds of having attained the age of 60 years. 4, Mr. Roe not having as yet made a claim on the prescribed form or the matter having been reported on as prescribed by Regulation 153, the question of pension has not yet been submitted to the Governor-in-Council for decision under Section 1 of the Superannuation Act, 1871.

### QUESTION: LOCAL COURT MAGISTRATE'S RETIREMENT. MR. COWAN.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, In connection with the retirement of Mr. James Cowan from the office of Local Court Magistrate of Perth, did the Public Service Commissioner refuse to certify that in the interests of the Public Service it was desirable that Mr. Cowan should continue in the performance of his duties? 2, If so, on what grounds? 3, What amount of pension will Mr. Cowan receive?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, No. Mr. Cowan is at present continued in his office by direction of the Governor-in-Council as required under Section 68 of the Public Service Act. 2, See answer to question No. 1. 3, Mr. Cowan not having as yet made a claim on the prescribed form, or the matter having been reported on as prescribed by Regulation 153, the question of pension has not yet been submitted to the Governor in Council for decision under Section 1 of "The Superannuation Act, 1871."

### QUESTION—GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the recently issued regula-