

Mr. George : Coy did not have much money, did he ?

Mr. FOLEY : I do not know where the money came from, and whether he had it or not the money was put up by Coy. All this, however, is beside the question. What I wish to say in conclusion is that the Minister for Mines is bringing mining questions before the House during the present session and it is his intention also to deal with the matter of pulmonary diseases in miners—a question which is going to be one of the most urgent the State will have to deal with. There is not in any other industry in this State or in any other State such a high death-rate as in the mining industry. There is no other disease which carries off such a great number of men at a useful age as is the case in the mining industry, and we find that something will have to be done, and I believe that the present Minister for Mines and members, before the session closes, will do something to relieve not only those who are affected by working on the mines, but the wives and families of those who have died at an age, which should have been the best period of their lives. When the matter does come forward I trust that members will discuss it, forgetting on which side of the House they are sitting, and will deal with it only from the one view-point—that Western Australia at the present time is losing some of her best and brightest men by a disease which can be prevented if the State will only take the necessary action.

On motion by Mr. Thomas debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.7 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th July, 1912.

	PAGE
Papers presented	241
Address-in-reply, fifth day, amendment	241

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY : 1, Education Department—(a) Report upon Continuation Schools and the question of compulsory attendance, (b) Report upon educational organisation, (c) Amendments to regulations.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply and on the amendment by the Hon. M. L. Moss—"That all the words after 'Sovereign' be struck out with a view of inserting the following words: 'and to protest against the expenditure incurred by your Excellency's Ministers without an Act of appropriation, such procedure being derogatory to the privileges of Parliament and subversive of the Constitution, while in addition thereto the proposal contained in your Excellency's Speech, implying that a ratification by the Legislative Assembly of such unauthorised expenditure is sufficient in law, ignores the constitutional rights of the Legislative Council.'"

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (North-East) : In company with the members who have already spoken I wish to extend a welcome to the new members of the House. If one is to judge by their first utterances I think we have received some very praiseworthy additions in these new members. While congratulating and extending a welcome to those new members we must not altogether lose sight of the old members who are no longer with us. I refer particularly to Captain Laurie, who was a very useful member of the House for

a number of years. I regret that his business takes his attention so much that he can no longer spare any of his valuable time to continue as a member of the House. I am also very pleased to see old members returned, some of whom have come through a very strenuous campaign, as for instance, Mr. Sommers, Mr. Cullen, and others who have been with us so long; I am pleased to see them back again, for their experience is worth a great deal to the country.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Then there are Sir Winthrop Hackett and Mr. Connor.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am not forgetting Mr. Connor and Sir Winthrop Hackett, but I specially referred to Mr. Sommers and Mr. Cullen as they have come from the battle with shining colours, whereas Sir Winthrop Hackett and Mr. Connor were returned unopposed. We have before us a very long Speech. In looking at it I find—

The PRESIDENT: The question is more particularly the amendment.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Quite so; I am coming to that. In looking at the Speech to which this amendment relates one is struck by its length, and by the idea that it has been sought to make the Speech even longer than is necessary. Take the paragraph referring to mining: it makes mention of new goldfields which have been opened up at Ora Banda and Mount Jackson. It is news to me that new fields have been opened up at these places, because I was on the Eastern Goldfields before Kalgoorlie was discovered and, if my recollection serves me aright, Mount Jackson was discovered before Hannans or Kalgoorlie. And I have a lively recollection that as Minister for Mines my old colleague, Mr. Gregory, was nursing Ora Banda for the last ten or twelve years. So it will be seen that is not a very wonderful discovery the Ministry have made in finding out that Ora Banda and Mount Jackson exist.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: Ora Banda is as old as Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They have been re-discovered.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No doubt the hon. member could re-discover a lot if he went sufficiently about the goldfields. When the present Government came into power we heard a great deal of what they intended to do for mining. They have been in office for some nine months now, and as one with considerable interests on the goldfields and representing a mining province, I must say that I am extremely disappointed at the very little that has been done, and the apparently little thought given to the goldfields. Of my late colleague, Mr. Gregory, it was said at the time that he could have done a great deal more for the goldfields. I remember Mr. Moss, myself, and others agreeing in our speeches that if Mr. Collier, the present Minister for Mines, could do anything more than had been done in the past to help the goldfields we would readily assist him, but that we failed to see what more could be done than had been done by Mr. Gregory. That truth, it would seem, has come home to the Government, because after nine months in office nothing new has been done to assist the goldmining industry. We come now to another part of the Speech, and if it were not so serious a matter I would say it was rather amusing. The paragraph I refer to reads thus—

There is reason for congratulation in that difficulties which have convulsed other communities have been overcome during my Advisers' term of office in this State without serious disorganisation or injury to the component parts of the community.

That is rather startling, because we were not aware that this industrial peace did exist here. The Speech goes on to say—

You will be asked to again consider a Bill providing for a court of industrial arbitration free from legal technicalities and difficulties of procedure.

If that first paragraph is right, where is the need for the second one; for, if industrial peace reigns under the existing legislation, why is it necessary to enact further legislation in the same direction in order to insure industrial peace? But we know that such is not the case. Industrial peace has not reigned here in any

greater degree than it has in any other State, notwithstanding anything contained in the Speech. Now, if the Honorary Minister will bring down a Bill which in a reasonable way will make provision for both sides obeying the awards of the court he will do something which will have the support of every member of the House. The present Arbitration Act is simply flouted when it suits one side to flout it. That has been the case during the period under review in the Speech. Mr. Cornell, in speaking the other evening, referred to the Brisbane strike, and to the criticisms that had been levelled at the Federal Government for not sending the militia to Brisbane when asked by the Premier of Queensland to do so in the interests of law and order. Mr. Cornell asserted there was no need for the troops to be sent there. I went to Brisbane shortly after the strike, and I now know there was every need to send the militia to that city to preserve law and order. The militia were not requisitioned to create bloodshed. Let me say I have never known an instance in Australia where bloodshed has ensued on the militia being called out; indeed quite the opposite has obtained. It was to prevent bloodshed that the militia were asked for. There would have been very serious consequences indeed in Brisbane if a number of citizens had not risen to the occasion and acted as special constables to preserve law and order. There was a reign of terror existing in the place, and the situation was only saved by those hundreds of men who volunteered to serve as special constables. The state of things in Brisbane was this: they declared a general strike, and even a loaf of bread could not be supplied to the public and other hospitals without an order from the Trades Hall. This was the position which had been reached when the troops were asked for. I was shown a place where a little bakery had to be surrounded by special constables in order that the baker might be allowed to bake his bread while the people waited around to take it straight from the oven to feed their families. Yet we are told there was no need for the military, and indeed it was insisted upon by Senator Pearce, the Min-

ister for Defence, that there was no occasion to call out the military over the upsetting of a few pots of beer. That same gentleman, the Minister for Defence, and indeed other Ministers, seem to have a very erroneous idea as to the duty of a Minister of the Crown. When speaking here on this very question of strikes in March last Senator Pearce said, "Mr. Denham sent to our Government for troops to preserve law and order, but we knew Mr. Denham and his crowd, and we did not send troops. You trades unionists have put us where we are. Why should we send out the troops against you in an industrial trouble. In my opinion there never was any need for the troops to be sent to Brisbane, and in my opinion there never will be a time when it is necessary to send troops out in an industrial trouble." That is how the Minister for Defence spoke here in Perth. If that is not inciting men to violence during the course of an industrial trouble, I do not know what is, and it is clear that the Fisher Government will not take any action to preserve law and order during a strike. Again I say if there is an Arbitration Act introduced that will control both sides, then it will have my hearty support, and, I venture to say, the hearty support of a majority of the members of this House, but we do not want a repetition of the present Act. In speaking to the amendment moved by the hon. member, Mr. Moss, it is needless to say it will have my hearty support. I do not see how any member of this House, any self-respecting member, any member who has the interest of this House at heart, can do other than vote for that necessary amendment. I will go further and say that every member of this House who has the principle of constitutional Government at heart, and who believes that Parliament, and Parliament only, should control the country, and not the Executive, should vote for that amendment. Now the Government by their action have set the Executive over Parliament. They have gone against principles regarding which we have heard a great deal from them, principles which have been secured and maintained only after a great amount of trouble and blood-

shed—those of Responsible Government. They seek to hand the government over to the Executive above the head of Parliament. In that respect there is a matter I should like to mention, and that is the answer given by the leader of the House to Mr. Moss, concerning the Savings Bank accounts. I think it is due to this House, when an hon. member asks for certain information on such a question of administration, that that information should be readily given. It is one of the privileges of this House that that information should be readily given, but what do we find? The Government are sitting down doing nothing. They may be doing worse than nothing. For all we know, they are playing into the hands of the Federal Government, and handing over these four millions of money which are now contained in the Savings Bank, and which are so essential to the well-being of the State. The hon. member asked the leader of the House a question nine months ago as to what was the intention in regard to carrying on the Savings Bank. It was a very proper question, I consider, in view of what we have seen in the papers recently regarding what is being done in New South Wales and Victoria. The answer given to Mr. Moss by the leader of the House on that occasion was that the matter was under consideration. That was last session. On one of the first days of this session the hon. member repeated the question and received the same answer. He was still told after nine months that the matter was under consideration. I say the hon. member and the House are being refused information to which they are justly entitled. To say the least, it is not very courteous on the part of the leader of the House not to give the information asked for. Mr. Moss would be quite justified in asking this House to take a very determined stand on a question of that kind because there should be no secrecy about the matter and no reason why that information should not have been readily given. Speaking on this amendment, we have been told by previous speakers that it is the duty of the leader of the House to defend the privileges of the House. It most certainly is. So far as the Government is con-

cerned, he is the member of the Upper House who sits in the Cabinet, and we look to him as leader of this House to protect our privileges. I regret very much that he has failed in this direction on the present occasion: otherwise that portion of the speech referred to in the amendment would never have gone into the speech. True, the Minister may not have noticed it; he has not said so. He tried to defend it, and that defence, let me say, was miserably weak. What did that defence consist of? It simply consisted of this: he said that the Treasurer had an advance voted to him by Parliament of £250,000. Section 1 of the Appropriation Act reads—

There shall and may be issued and applied for or towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending 30th day of June, 1911, the following sums, that is to say: from the Consolidated Revenue Fund the sum of £1,673,377, on account of the Estimates passed by Parliament, and £250,000 for advances to the Treasurer.

Now the hon. member says this £250,000 was granted and was an open cheque for one-quarter of a million, and so long as the Government restrict their expenditure to that quarter of a million, they are on legal grounds. In other words, the Minister's defence is that we gave the Treasurer a cheque for £250,000, and so long as he restricts his expenditure to that amount he is on legal grounds. According to that line of reasoning, the Treasurer could deal it out to the Trades Hall in greater amounts than he has, and could deal it out in any way he thought right. The Minister must know that that Treasurer's advance is necessary. It is in every set of estimates that has been passed in this and in every other country. It is necessary because it is impossible to say 12 months ahead whether some of the votes will not be exceeded; but it does not require any telling on my part—hon. members know full well—that this is simply to cover any excesses that may be necessary. It most certainly is not to cover some unauthorised expenditure on some work, the principle of which has never been authorised. That defence, as

I said, is miserably weak, and I do not think the leader of the House could have been serious when he put it forth. Another reason in defence given by the hon. member against this amendment was that there was nothing unusual about buying the steamers, and that former Governments had embarked on similar things in the past. He instanced a butcher's shop at Rottneest, a bakery at Rottneest, and the aborigine station at Kimberley. I think most of the hon. members have some knowledge of Rottneest. It is now open as a pleasure resort, but a little time ago it was a penal settlement. People from time to time had received permits to go there, and in order to oblige them the Gaols Department supplied them with mutton so that they could go camping or fishing, and they were supplied with bread in the same way. Is it a reasonable thing to say that the Government established a butchery and bakery, simply because they sold to some tourists from the Prisons Department some bread and meat. I think the hon. member might have put his tongue in his cheek when he said that. Of course the hon. member must be loyal to his colleagues. He cannot come here and condemn their policy, and the only conclusion we can come to is that he was hard pressed when he put forth such a defence as he has to the amendment. Now coming to the aborigine station that he said was purchased by the Government without authority, the Minister stated that it was charged to the Treasurer's advance as an excess on the aborigines' vote. I admit that statement is true up to that point. It was purchased in the recess, and it was charged in the Treasurer's advance as an excess on the aborigines' vote, but that station was purchased, not for the purpose of trading, but for the purpose of feeding the aborigines. Now the system that was in force prior to this was that cattle were bought from squatters in the north-west and fed to the aborigines, but there was something more than that. For a number of years the administration in the Police and Gaols Department in the north-west of this State had cost enormous sums of money, principally through the aborigines. There was a system in

force which allowed the police to supply indigent natives, and also prisoners, with their own provisions, and charge the department for them. That system I put an end to. I also came to the conclusion that it was a farce to imprison these natives for spearing cattle. Instead of that I proposed, and it was endorsed by the Government, to buy a station, not for the purpose of trading, but for the purpose of feeding the aborigines; instead of buying one beast at a time, we purchased the station.

The Colonial Secretary: Did not you trade?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No, I will come to that directly. We purchased the station for the dual purpose of feeding them and for the betterment of the aborigines. After several years' experience I became convinced that crowding the gaols in the north-west was not reducing crime in the way of cattle spearing on the part of aborigines one iota, and I put a stop to the wholesale imprisonment of natives. It occurred to me that if they were given their own home, allowed plenty of meat, allowed to come and go when they liked, they would not then spear the cattle belonging to owners up there. It had this result, that it reduced the gaol vote (I am speaking from memory) by about £4,000 a year. Speaking from memory again, the police vote in the beginning of my term of office was about £125,000 per annum. The year before I left I had reduced that to £115,000, and besides that the police had received increased pay, and allowances amounting to some £3,000. Notwithstanding that increase, there was a decrease in the police vote of £9,000, and a decrease in the gaols vote of £4,000, not entirely but very largely brought about by the altered system of treating the natives in the North-West, and the establishment of these stations was principally responsible for it.

Hon. F. Connor: Was the equipment of the force affected?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Not at all, and it prevented trading on the part of police constables, who were making fortunes at times, at the expense of the country, and also prevented the unnecessary imprisonment of aborigines. It was also

an extension of the Aborigines Department, simply the establishment of a dépôt to feed them, and the buying of a station in one fell swoop, instead of buying a few head of cattle at a time. This station is called Moola Bulla, which signifies in the native vocabulary "Meat plenty." The leader of the House asked by way of interjection a little while back whether we traded; we did trade to this extent, that the station was bought on a bang-tail muster, the stock being paid for at the rate of 29s. 9d. per head, the calves being given in, and the working horses and plant also. It was bought very cheaply, and in going through the papers, for the purpose of reading the different reports, I came to the conclusion that there were more cattle in Kimberley than there was a demand for in the markets. This property consisted of three small stations, with 12,000 head of cattle, and they had not sold a beast for four or five years; consequently there was an accumulation of some 800 fat bullocks, and as these bullocks, because they were getting too old, could not be used by the natives, we chartered a ship and brought down 500 and sold them in the market. That was the extent of our trading; it was simply to get rid of the surplus stock. You might as well say, as the leader of the House does to-day, that you authorise expenditure for a lot of material say for the gaols, and there is more than can be used, and then if this material is sold outside, as is often done, it must be regarded as trading; it is simply getting rid of surplus stock, and it is on all fours with what we did at Kimberley. I do not think in that, the leader of the House was any more convincing than he was in regard to the £250,000 Treasurer's Advance, and, in that respect, the leader of the House complained bitterly that, while certain members who professed liberal opinions stated that the Labour party sought to make this a party House, the Liberals, on their part, did not seek to do anything of the kind, and the hon. member instanced his own electorate where he was opposed by my late colleague, the late Premier, Mr. Wilson, and added that on no former occasion was he ever opposed when going up for re-election. I said, by

way of interjection, and I repeat it now, that I had a similar experience. I was opposed by a Labour man.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: You were not.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: When it was seen that the chances of that man, at Mr. Ardagh's end, were small, he was not taken in hand so well, but, at the other end, the members for Mt. Margaret and Leonora assisted him in the election, and I think therefore that I am justified in saying that the candidate was supported by the Labour party.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): He was not a Labour candidate.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Whether he was a Labour candidate or not, he was branded as such, or at any rate he was unofficially a Labour candidate; therefore, I do not think that the leader of the House has any right to complain in that direction. I have a lively recollection also of Mr. Drew, a member of this House, who joined a former Labour Government, viz., the Daglish Government. Mr. Drew declared then that he was not a Labour man, and he refused to agree to a lot of the principles of that party, and he went into that Ministry, as he was then, free of the Labour party altogether. He served a term in the Ministry while it lasted, and then continued as a member of this House, and he went up for election shortly after; he was elected as a non-Labour man, but, before he came out for re-election, he joined the Labour party by signing their platform.

The Colonial Secretary: Not at all.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If the hon. member was opposed by the leader of the Labour party on the previous occasion, I think he had a good deal to be thankful for that he was not opposed on his re-election after having joined a Ministry. If members of the Liberal party acted in the same way as Mr. Drew did, I venture to say they would be called some severer names than those I have used to-day in referring to Mr. Drew's attitude.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): The Liberals never use such words.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The leader of the House, in replying to the amendment, also spoke of the grant to the

Trades Hall and said that similar grants had been made by former Governments not only in this but in the other States. The hon. member must know that the trades halls in the years to which he refers were not political organisations as they are to-day. I have a recollection of not many years ago when there were a great number of unionists on the Eastern Goldfields and the unions objected very strongly to their funds being used for political purposes; they were, they contended, trades unions pure and simple; they did not want to be pledged Labour supporters; but the Trades Hall to-day is a political labour council.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): You are entirely erroneous there.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am not, and if my memory serves me correctly the hon. member some eight or nine years ago agreed with these people who objected to their funds being used for political purposes. There is all the difference in the world between the trades unions to which I have referred and the Trades Hall of the present day; to-day it is a political labour council, and it is just as improper for the Government to grant that body £1,000 and to buy their land from them as it would be for the Government to make a grant to the Liberal League, or any other political organisation.

Hon. M. L. Moss: The Premier does not see anything wrong in making a grant to the Liberal League.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is an admission then that it is a political league. I do not agree that it is right that a grant should be made to the Liberal League any more than to the other. Then there is another extraordinary thing; the Trades Hall hold some land in Hay-street, not a quarter of a mile from here, which the Government kindly said that they would purchase at valuation. The Government did not want the land because it is so situated that it would be of no use, but, if the land is worth the money, why did not the Trades Hall sell it? Why did the Government buy it at valuation? It seems to me that it is only another way of giving them money.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): What criticism would you have offered to the Trades Hall if they had sold that land in Hay-street?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If they did not want to build their Trades Hall there, they would have been justified in selling it and using the money for Trades Hall purposes. Apparently, the land is not worth the money that is going to be given for it, otherwise they would have gone into the open market and sold it. What was the object of getting the Government to buy the land that the Trades Hall did not want? The Honorary Minister thinks there would have been grave objection raised if they had sold this land to a private individual, but what does it matter whether they sell it to a private individual or sell it to the Government? It is in the same category as other matters which have been referred to; it is a grave abuse of the power of the Executive in purchasing land which is not wanted, in order to suit the political labour council. We are also told about the immense good that is going to be done with the socialistic enterprises that are to be undertaken. We were told by Mr. Davis that we would have cheap bricks, which would be sold at 19s. 6d. per thousand.

Hon. F. Davis: I did not say that; I never quoted figures.

Hon. E. McLarty: It was the mover of the Address who made that statement.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: I said 19s. 10d. in New South Wales.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is rather an unfortunate admission for Mr. Ardagh to make, because I have recently been in Sydney, and while there I went to the trouble of making inquiries. The brickworks there have cost an immense sum of money to date, and very few bricks indeed have been turned out, and those that have been turned out are of very inferior quality. I remember seeing in the Press that the Minister for Works (Mr. Griffiths) complained that someone must have gone to the kiln and put something in it; some thief in the night, perhaps, threw something in it, and that probably accounted for the heap of useless brickbats which had been turned

out, and which had cost the Government thousands of pounds. The Government in that State also established lime kilns, and spent £6,000 in doing so, and up to date they have produced one bag of lime, and so will it be with all the socialistic enterprises. The Government have no right to enter on these without the approval of Parliament, and I maintain we will be thoroughly justified in passing this amendment, even if it be because the Government have decided to enter into works without the approval of Parliament. We found recently in South Australia the Upper House refused supplies to allow the Government to start a wood-yard; the Government went to the country, and we know with what result. That probably would be the proper course to take here. However, the hon. member has elected to take a milder course, and as I said before, I am quite willing to support him in that. Now, we have the Government going into the fish trade, and, as Mr. Connor said, they have got to get the fish. They are also going to engage in the supply of milk, and I say that the nationalisation of the milk supply is a libel on the pure foods legislation of this State. We are told that the Government have taken over the milk supply because they want to ensure the supply of pure milk to the people, but there is ample provision in the Public Health Act, not only to ensure the supply of pure milk, but also to ensure purity in every kind of food. There is no better provision in any State in Australasia for the protection of the food supplies than is contained in that Act. That is why Parliament passed it. The Legislature gave all the powers then asked for by the Government of the day for the protection of food, and full provision is made for a pure milk supply. Yet, we find the Government undertaking this socialistic scheme of State milk carts and fish carts. In that respect, the Government and the party to which they belong treat the most important factor of the whole thing in a very light and airy fashion. Where is the money to come from for all these undertakings, to say nothing at all of the absolutely wrong principle of the thing? I was a member of the last Government for five or six

years, and I very well remember the strenuous time we had year after year in endeavouring to make the finances of the State balance. We went into power at a time when there was a big deficit, and when, through the cessation of the sliding scale, there was a falling off in our revenue from customs duties, and we had to do the unpopular thing of imposing taxation and cutting down expenses in every department. Let me say that no one realises the amount of work, and very unpleasant work at times, which such a duty entails, unless they have gone through it as we had to do. However, after five years of strenuous work, we had the satisfaction during our last year of office of wiping off the accumulated deficit and leaving a small credit balance, about £13,000, at the end of the financial year 1910-11. It is true that in the three following months we went to the bad slightly, but that cannot be regarded as serious, because one cannot take much notice of the result of one month or even three months; they may be months in which very little revenue comes in and the expenditure is great. It is, therefore, not fair to say that we left a deficit, yet, the Premier, when speaking recently, said that the present Government had had to meet debts amounting to £50,000 which had been left by us, and which should have been charged to the preceding financial year. Now, there is always a certain amount of money which has not been charged up when the year closes, and every year there is an amount brought forward. This year the amount was estimated at £34,000, but it exceeded that amount and went to £50,000. It could have been charged to the year 1910-11, but that year had to carry the amount brought forward from the preceding year, and so on; so that the carry-over in one year balances the carry-over in another year, but on this occasion the Auditor General drew attention to the matter. That is the whole history of the £50,000 expenditure which the late Premier, Mr. Wilson, is alleged to have hidden. There was no hiding of the expenditure at all; it was just the ordinary practice. In regard to the cattle boats, I do not think it is necessary for me to say much. I

have already spoken on the principle involved in the Government buying the vessels without Parliamentary authority, and I quite agree with Mr. Colebatch that the Government have commenced at the wrong end. They have bought the boats and now they have commenced to consider what they are going to do with them. It has been amply proved by Mr. Connor, who we all realise knows a good deal about this subject, that the high cost of meat is not caused in bringing the stock from Kimberley. We have it on his authority that $3\frac{1}{4}$ d. on the hoof is a high price, that very often the price goes down to $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. and that it averages only about $2\frac{3}{4}$ d. We have also heard it from the leader of the House that the average cost is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. That seems to me a bad admission from the point of view of the Colonial Secretary, for he admits that beef can be, and is, landed here and sold on the hoof by the carcase at an average price of $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound.

The Colonial Secretary: I did not say it had been sold.

Hon. F. Connor: I say that it was sold at that price yesterday.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The Colonial Secretary said that the bullocks cost from £3 5s. to £3 10s. in Kimberley, that the cost of bringing them down is about £4, making the value of the beasts at Fremantle £7 5s. per head; the average weight of a bullock is 650 pounds, and, deducting abattoir charges from the value of the fifth quarter, the meat could be sold on the hoofs at $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound, according to the Minister's figures.

The Colonial Secretary: No, I said they should be sold and could be sold at that price.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We have it in the figures quoted by Mr. Connor that beef is sold at $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pound.

Hon. F. Davis: Who buys the cattle at that price?

Hon. C. Sommers: Some of your friends.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am not arguing that meat is not too dear, but the admission of the leader of the House and the figures quoted by Mr. Connor prove that the Government rushed into

this deal in an unbusiness-like way; they bought the boats and now they find that the meat costs only $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. on the markets, and that the boats are not going to alter prices very much except to the squatters, who will be the only ones to benefit.

Hon. F. Connor: My figures showed that for three years the average was $2\frac{3}{4}$ d. per pound on the hoof.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There is not much difference in the figures. The Colonial Secretary says that the meat can be sold for $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., and Mr. Connor shows that it has averaged $2\frac{3}{4}$ d. for three years. The Government have gone into this matter without any thought at all. Undoubtedly the proper course they should have taken was to have proceeded with the freezing works. The present Government must know that the establishment of freezing works and the bringing down of chilled meat constituted the proper system but, having blackguarded the late Government for this proposal, they are obliged now to turn to some other way of dealing with the meat question. We are told in the Speech that there are a number of railways to be built—the Norseman-Esperance railway, the Margaret River railway, the Bolgart extension, the Mount Marshall railway, the Yilliminning-Kondinin extension, and others. It does seem a waste of time that the Government should be telling us these lines are to be built, and it is a greater waste of time to bring forward Bills for their construction. In the session before last the late Government brought forward and passed some 600 miles of agricultural railways, and I doubt whether many of them have been even started up to date. We have heard the Minister for Works inform a deputation that the Government can only build 200 miles of railway per annum by day labour, and that they will do nothing except by day labour. Consequently, we are restricted to the building of 200 miles of railway a year. The late Government left the present Ministers with a legacy of 600 miles of railway to build, and that represents three years' work at the present rate of building. Parliament also passed a number of new railways last session, and now the Govern-

ment propose to ask members to pass a further number. This is decidedly misleading to the people. It would be infinitely fairer if the Government had not introduced these lines, because when they introduce a Bill for the construction of a line the people naturally suppose that they are going to get it within twelve months or some reasonable time; but, according to the Minister for Works, not one of the lines mentioned in the Governor's Speech can be touched for four years at least. Yet we are asked to play at the business of building railways by passing a further number of new lines this session. That brings me to another matter—the building of the trans-continental railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. This seems to be, in the eyes of the present Government, an extremely urgent matter. We were told yesterday, and I quite believe it, that this line will probably cost from one to one and a-half millions of money, and Mr. Connor estimated the total expenditure involved in the various Government proposals at about £11,000,000, without allowing anything for Esperance. Now I know, and other members know, that there is no great urgency for this line in the present state of our finances. The sum of money which it requires would build 700 miles of agricultural railways, but by the building of this broad-gauge line to Kalgoorlie we will not open one mile of new country. It will be built side by side with the existing railway. Probably for some years to come we shall have not more than two or three trains per week running over it. I remember that in Queensland they have changed trains at the border, which is only 250 miles from Brisbane, twice a day for the last 30 years, and they have changed trains three or four times a day at Albury for a longer period than that. Yet we are going to rush into an expenditure of £1,500,000 simply to save perhaps an hour or two hours in a journey two or three times a week, and to save a few people from changing trains at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Was there not some understanding between the late Government and the Commonwealth Government?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I know of no understanding. There was an understanding before Federation that this Trans-continental railway would be the first Federal work undertaken, but it was only dragged from them at the point of the bayonet after twelve years. If there was an understanding, of course it must be carried out.

The Colonial Secretary: Was there not an Act of Parliament?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There was an Act of the Federal Parliament to build a line from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie.

The Colonial Secretary: But from Fremantle?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Not at all. There is another point. We hear nothing of the line being duplicated from Port Augusta to the point of contact with the broad-gauge section of the South Australian railways, and why should we undertake the broad-gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie until we have some assurance that South Australia is going to do the same?

Hon. W. Patrick: They have three gauges.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That is so, and nothing is said by the South Australian people about altering their gauge to make a uniform gauge from Port Augusta to Adelaide; yet we are going to rush into this expenditure of £1,500,000 simply for the convenience of a few dozens of people per week who might have to change trains at Kalgoorlie. If we look at it from a parochial point of view we would be very much better off by compelling them to change at Kalgoorlie as they do at Albury, then they would be forced to look round and they would find out that such a place as Kalgoorlie exists which otherwise they would not do if they passed it. Of course if there is a definite understanding most certainly it should be carried out, but I still say there is no need to rush and build a railway from Kalgoorlie to the coast. In our present state of finances we should let it wait until we can do the necessary work to give relief to the farmers who have gone out in the belief that they are to have railways. We should do this rather

than go in for a huge expenditure that will serve such little purpose. Of course it is very nice to have this line, but it is one of those luxuries that can wait for awhile. A good deal has been said in connection with the purchase of the Perth tramways. I agree with Mr. Colebatch when he says that the question of municipalisation versus nationalisation has been argued from the personnel of the existing Perth City Council, and I agree that this is beside the question. If municipalisation is the right thing the personnel of the Perth City Council should not be taken into consideration at all because we know that it changes every year. However, at the present moment possibly nationalisation would be better than municipalisation on these terms. I have no objection to nationalisation in that respect at all, but I do say that the rights the Perth City Council now possess should be preserved, and I shall insist on it so far as I am concerned. If the Government buy from the Perth Tramway Company they should not place the Perth City Council in any worse position than if the company continued to own the trams. Certain concessions were given to the Perth Tramway Company to lay down those trams, in return for which the company agreed to pay the Perth municipal council three per cent. on the gross takings. Now we are informed by the head of the Government that for 15 years the 3 per cent. will be paid to the Perth City Council in lieu of rates, and, as far as the statement goes, at the end of 15 years the corporation is to get nothing further; but there was something further in the agreement between the Perth Tramway Company and the Perth City Council. It was this, that at the end of 27 years from now the trams were to become the property of the municipality of Perth. The municipality was to pay nothing for them with the exception of the cost of the freehold land on which the car barn is built. Otherwise the company's property was to be handed over free and in good order to the council. And at a less period than 27 years the trams could be purchased by the Perth City Council at a stipulated price. I do not know whether

it is the best to give the right to buy or not at the end of 27 years, but something equivalent should be given to the ratepayers of Perth. They should be given the 3 per cent for ever, and something equivalent to the right of purchase they have or their right to take over the trams at the end of 27 years free of cost. There is no objection to the nationalisation of the trams, but there is a decided objection to the Government legislating the Perth City Council out of any of their property, just as much objection as there would be to a private buyer taking something from the Perth City Council without paying compensation. I notice it is proposed to introduce an amendment to the Licensing Bill. I do not envy the leader of the House or the Minister who introduces the Bill in another place, because I had some experience of a Licensing Bill, and a tougher job I do not think I ever tackled. However, I protest against this principle of taking a consolidating Bill before the ink is properly dry on the paper and bringing it before the House to recast it again. The present Act is fair and equitable, but it has not had a fair trial. I say it is fair because it is a compromise. It was not the Bill introduced to the House, and it certainly did not suit the temperance people or the publicans. After all, the teetotallers are only a small portion of the community, though they seem to make a great deal of noise; and the publicans are only a small section too. Apparently as the Bill did not please the teetotallers or the publicans it pleased the majority of the people, that is the public, which after all is the section of the people who ought to be most considered. People who use the hotels want the accommodation, and they are the public generally, and apparently they are quiet satisfied. If neither the teetotallers nor the publicans are satisfied it is a fair conclusion that the Bill is an equitable measure, yet we find before it has been a year on the statute-book we have a reference in the Governor's Speech to tell us that it is to be brought down for re-amendment and consolidation. I notice there are a great number of Bills proposed. Some of them are necessary, but in regard to some I think it will

be heaping legislation on the statute-book unnecessarily. I notice that there is to be a consolidating Bill to amend the law relating to companies. That is a measure that is badly needed. I trust that when it is brought down it will give particular attention to mining companies. I would ask the leader of the House to look up the different reports of Royal Commissions of this particular question. There was one on which Mr. R. D. McKenzie, Mr. Allen, of the School of Mines, and Mr. Dowley sat. They were inquiring into the Boulder Deep Levels and Perseverance scandals. If the Government would embody the recommendations of that Royal Commission in the Companies Act, they would do the State a great service. We have heard a lot of the late Paul Kruger; he was a very much maligned man, but from the mining laws he passed we can take a lesson. I recommend the Transvaal company law so far as it relates to mining companies to the present Government. Paul Kruger insisted that the directors of mining companies should live on the scene of operations. What are directors? They are a board of gentlemen who manage and direct the management, and it is quite proper, if they are not going to be dummies, or worse than dummies, that they should reside on the scene of operations, just as the director or manager of a bank resides at the scene of his operations. It was one of the most unfortunate things that happened to Western Australia that the Kruger law relating to mining companies was not enacted in the early days of the goldfields when our companies were formed.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Where would you have got the capital from?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Where did they get it in South Africa? At the time when our mines were booming we would have got it without doubt.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Where was it coming from?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Great Britain, France, and other places. Why do they put capital into Mexico and Burmah and the South American republics?

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Because they control it in Mexico.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Very much, if there is an insurrection! Money will

go where the gold is, and we had the gold at that time. Just now we have gentlemen sitting on boards of directors who are directors in no true sense of the word at all. The majority of them hold a number of shares under cover, but probably they do not hold actual script representing more than a hundred shares, yet they control operations. Worse than that, it has been proved over and over again, that they rig the market, and the grossest swindles have been perpetrated in that way. Take the scandal the Perseverance and Deep Levels Commission sat on. We were told by the management that there were 400,000 tons of ore in sight worth over a million pounds, but three months afterwards when the Royal Commission sat the manager said there were only 100,000 tons of ore in sight, though the ore taken out in the meantime was a mere nothing in comparison with the 300,000 tons difference between the two estimates. What would be said of a board of shipping directors who would calmly tell their shareholders that they had 400 ships and three months afterwards say, "No, we have not 400; we have only 100"? I think if the law was not strong enough to put them in gaol it would be promptly amended to do so. And that is the position of the mining companies to-day. Take another instance. If the directors wish to become possessed of a mine, they simply give 30 days' notice that they are going to pass a certain resolution. I do not know, in point of fact, that they need give any notice at all, but in another 30 days they have to pass a confirmatory resolution. This has taken place over and over again. You hold shares and see a cable in the morning that there is a reconstruction scheme on. It is passed by the board at Home and you only get a cable about it. Then there is a confirmatory meeting in 30 days and the resolution is confirmed. I know of an instance here of a company of 100,000 shares which stood at 6s. The company had £30,000 in hand and there was no need for reconstruction. I am speaking of the Hannans Star and Boulder Deeps amalgamation. There was no need at all to reconstruct, because they

had £30,000 in hand, yet they passed a resolution that they should reconstruct and turn the company into a 200,000 shares company and make a call of 4s. cash per share, giving about one-third of the amount away to a sharebroker for guaranteeing the 4s. in cash. About 27,000 of the shares of the company were held in Western Australia; and some of the local shareholders objected to the reconstruction, myself among others, but we were very much in the minority. The confirming resolution was passed thirty days afterwards. These shares that stood at 6s., the next day were not worth a snap of the fingers, and hundreds of people dropped their shares although it could be shown they were worth 15s. per share. I protested and others protested. It was no use. The procedure was this—the resolution was passed against us. They had a majority of shares under cover and could carry anything. We held one-sixtieth of the mine. We had to get the mine valued and to prove what one-sixtieth of the mine was worth, so as to claim our share. We did that. We were told then that everything had to be tried in London. We applied for a commission to be sent out, so that the case could be tried in the courts of London. We were to go all the way to London and take the valuator of the mine there. It was not worth it. The same thing has occurred over and over again. You could not have got a fair understanding and a fair inquiry at Home, because the very judges sitting on the bench would not understand anything about mining, nor would they understand anything of the prospective value of the mine, or of the term "ore in sight." The only way was to try the case on the spot where everybody is familiar with mining. These boards of shareholders very often have not a brass interest of their own in a mine. They simply control it. As I have said, if we had the Kruger law in force in this country these things could not happen. We have boards of directors at Home drawing their £3,000 and £4,000 each—I refer to some of them—and this is paid them for attending meetings now and again. I think it was in the Perseverance or the

Associated that the statement which I have made was denied; they said that they only received £200 a year as directors' fees, but these directors receive 2s. an ounce for every ounce turned out of the mine, so that their fees really amounted in the instance I have quoted to £2,000 or £3,000 a year. That is the way mining is carried on by the London boards. These boards should be here on the spot. They should be composed of men who can assist the management, not be in London to rig the market and assist the jobbers. I do not say that the companies now in existence should be made to have their directors here, but they should have one or two directors here, not dummy directors such as we have under the local share register, but directors who could take the responsibility and prevent the sort of thing that I have mentioned occurring. New mining companies should have all local directors, and then mining propositions would be carried on in a legitimate way as a mining proposition and not as a share jobbing proposition. All this accounts for capital not coming into this country, for investment in mines, now. How can we expect a man to put capital into mining when a man may wake up one morning, find a resolution has been passed to reconstruct which may mean that his shares are not worth a snap of the fingers. I ask the Minister to look up the recommendation of the commission to which I have referred, and if that recommendation is embodied in the Companies Act it will be of benefit to Western Australia. I wish to make an explanation with regard to my remarks on the Transcontinental railway. The mistake which I made is excusable because during the session 1903-4 I was not here a great deal. In passing the Bill in 1903 giving permission for the construction of the Transcontinental railway, provision was made that if the railway was built by the Federal Government from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie within five years, that we should build the railway from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. But that was in 1903, the five years have passed, so that the understanding referred to by Mr. Kirwan does not exist to-day. We promised that if

the Transcontinental Railway was built in five years, that is from 1903, we would construct a broad-gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, but the Federal Government did not carry out their part of the agreement so we are free from it now.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Except the moral obligation.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Of course there is the moral obligation, which is a very wide obligation. There was a great deal of the moral obligation in regard to the building of the railway by the Federal Government, but I agree with Mr. Cullen we should construct the line at all costs. I have almost finished except I wish to refer to one or two matters left out of the Speech. It is a long Speech and there is a great deal that should have been included in it which is not. I wish to refer to one important matter which I took a great deal of interest in, and that is the question of immigration. I think a vigorous immigration policy is all-important to a united Australia, and more especially to Western Australia. If there is one thing to which I gave more attention than another when I was in office, it was the question of immigration, which subject came under my control. I worked on that policy very hard indeed because I recognised the importance of it to Western Australia. We talk a great deal about our defence; that the Japanese are going to come here and that the Germans are going to come here. It is unreasonable that we can hold this vast country with the few millions we have in Australia, and we have only in Western Australia some 300,000 persons. It is unreasonable to think that we can hold this country with such a small population. We are only inviting invasion in going on in the way which we are doing. It is impossible; no matter what amount of money we spend, we cannot spend sufficient money in Australia for defence to keep out an invasion, especially with the few people which we have here. We should all have to be soldiers and that is an impossible proposition. The only thing is to people the country. We have a country which will

carry a vast population if it is given the chance, and if the people coming into it are allowed their freedom and to do as they like we can work out our own destiny. Undoubtedly we could do more for the people of Western Australia by encouraging a vigorous policy of immigration than by the socialistic schemes of fancy legislation in regard to Arbitration Acts and so forth and making everyone good by Act of Parliament. We have such socialistic schemes talked about as milk carts and fish carts, and so forth, whereas we could do more by encouraging thousands of people to come here every year. When the last Government took office the position was not very hopeful. There was a deficit and things did not look too well. We were receiving about 200 people a year as immigrants; the Government worked it up laboriously, advertised the State wherever they could; they set up an agency in Melbourne, they set up agents wherever possible, with the result that after five years, when we went out of office, 10,400 people a year were coming here. I say without fear of contradiction that if we had remained in office, we should have easily had 20,000 people a year coming here. The present party in power say that they are in favour of immigration, but by their actions and the conditions imposed they are totally opposed to immigration. They say in words that they are in favour of immigration, but in words only, their acts are opposed to immigration altogether. We know in the past when that party got the secretary of the Metropolitan Council of the Western Australian Labour Federation, and secretary of the Trades Hall, by orders of the Trades Hall, to write that article which appeared on the 19th September of last year in the English newspapers. He wrote as no decent citizen of Australia should write about this country, and it was done, as he said, with the instruction of the Trades and Labour Council. And we are told, and I believe it, that the same Trades and Labour Council dictate to the present Executive. That being so, how can we be surprised at the few immigrants which are coming in to-day. I would just like to read a few things which

Mr. McCallum, who wrote this letter, said. He wrote—

We have no hesitation in warning our English brethren that the supply of town labour in Australia has always been equal to the demand, and on an average of 11 months out of 12 it is overstocked.

Then again—

Re farm labour, What you have to consider is whether or not it is worth your while to come out 10,000 miles to take work which the man on the spot refuses.

In the introduction to the letter Mr. McCallum says—

I have instructions from the Metropolitan Council of the Western Australian Division of the Australian Labour Federation to seek a portion of the space of your journal in order that the views of my council on the immigration policy, now being so vigorously pushed by the Australian State Governments, may be placed before the British public.

He goes on to talk about the "scabs" and "blacklegs," warning people not to come, in view of the fact that they might bring down wages. He says—

We believe that the blood of the ordinary Britisher will revolt at being used as a blackleg and scab, but we have cases brought to us that would melt a heart of stone. We have no hesitation in warning our English brethren that the supply of town labour in Australia has always been equal to the demand, and on an average of eleven months out of twelve it is overstocked.

Again he says—

The bush here is in its virgin state. Perhaps one of the most objectionable features of the bush life in Western Australia, from a married man's standpoint is (and this should be understood by all intending immigrants) the fact that in the great majority of cases they are situated 10, 20, or even 40 miles from a school. This position often breaks the heart of a woman who has been used to town life. Most of the farm hands have to live in tents and under conditions alto-

gether void of the most primitive conditions of civilisation. To make a success of this class of work it is imperative to be possessed of previous farm experience. It must be recognised that the average Australian is a hustler, and none more so than the Australian farmer.

That is the unpatriotic and disgraceful way in which this man, the secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, writes at the dictates of the Trades Hall. He says the supply of labour is far above the demand. As a matter of fact his letter was written in August, and on the 24th of that month 153 men were wanted at the Labour Bureau, while only 53 men were supplied. On the following Monday 61 men were wanted but only 22 came forward. On the Tuesday 56 were required, but again the number supplied was 22—and so on right down the piece. On September 11th 50 men were wanted, and only 13 could be found, while on the 13th, 53 men were required and 14 came to hand. Yet this gentleman says the supply exceeds the demand. When we get the Trades and Labour Council sending home this sort of stuff it is not to be wondered at that so few immigrants are arriving. This letter was sent to the *Labour Leader* in the first place, but was copied into a great many other English papers. It is not to be wondered at that the present Government are so lax in encouraging immigration, for we are told that the present Government are largely dictated to by the members of the Trades and Labour Council. Is it not disgraceful that the Government should have unconstitutionally used the State's money by giving them a grant of £1,000 and in the purchase of land from this body and afterwards given them land back at a nominal rent? It may be said when the Minister replies, that they have brought out a number of immigrants since they have been in power. I find that according to the number given in the Press that during the nine months the Government have been in office, 7,100 persons have been brought to our shores. It may be considered that this is a fair number; but when I tell you that 3,500 of these

were actually on the water or about to embark in London when we left office in October last, it will be seen that there is not so much credit due to the present Government after all. Possibly it is significant that not many more than the 6,400 nominated immigrants whose passages were approved prior to October of last year have not yet been brought out. And we see that every day the Government offer some fresh discouragement to immigration. They have raised the fare from £2 to £6, and they have lessened the facilities previously provided. Here in Perth we had a home established on very satisfactory lines, but they have removed it to an old building in Fremantle—the old men's home. Anyone who knows that building will understand the methods they are adopting to stop immigration. This country, I say without fear of contradiction, could absorb at least an average of 2,000 immigrants a month without any trouble at all. We brought in 10,400 in one year, and the supply was not nearly equal to the demand. The other day I was speaking to a gentleman who had travelled through America. He remarked to me the size of the American cities. I said, "How did you feel when they spoke about our population?" He replied, "That was the one thing I always tried to side-track; it was awful to admit that we had so few people occupying so vast a territory." It is the one thing we feel pretty deeply when we travel abroad, for one cannot help being ashamed to admit that we are afraid to accept a few thousand people a year. The Government are not just or patriotic to ourselves nor to the Empire. Many thousands of people are leaving the old country every year for other lands. Only last year 35,000 people left Ireland for the United States. If we could have brought them here we would have retained them to the Empire. But they have gone to the United States, and in due course will become naturalised citizens, and so will be lost to the Empire. Are we doing justice either to ourselves or to the Empire in allowing this sort of thing to go on? It is a small, miserable policy, and one which I trust the people of the country will not permit this or any other

Government to continue with. I must apologise for the length of my remarks; and may I say again it is with no pleasure certainly that I support the amendment. However, I do say emphatically that the action taken by the Government was certainly an insult to the House, and, in my opinion, the attitude we have adopted is a very mild one in the circumstances. The Government have sought to set aside the House and, what is worse still, to set the Executive above Parliament, a thing which, whether they belong to the Liberal or the Labour party, unless a man be bound by caucus he could not give it support.

Hon. W. PATRICK (Central): I would like to congratulate the old members returned to the House, and to welcome the new ones. Judging from the speeches that have already been made by the new members, the debating power of the House has been considerably strengthened. But, in common with other speakers, I must say that I regret the absence of some of our old friends, notably Captain Laurie, who was a member for some twelve years, possibly longer. He was one of the men in this Chamber who, when anything specially connected with shipping or with matters relating to the sea was under discussion, were always to the fore to assist us out of a difficulty. We have been very fortunate hitherto in having amongst us a number of able specialists, particularly in the legal profession. Indeed, I do not know whether we have not almost a superfluity in that profession. At any rate we are never in a difficulty when any subject relating to law is introduced. On the contrary we have the advantage of hearing the opinions of some of the ablest men in the profession in the State. It is quite a treat to listen to some of the speeches made by them, and I say we are fortunate in having been able to retain so many of them. It is with extreme regret that I feel compelled to support the amendment before the Chamber. It seems to me that, having considered the matter for several months during recess, the Government might well have waited a little longer, and consulted the opinion of Parliament

before plunging into entirely new State enterprises. Although I support the amendment it does not necessarily follow that I am opposed to the principle of the Government running the steamers. There is no earthly reason why the Government should not control, if they can manage it, the transport on the coast. But it seems to me that before entering into a business of this magnitude they should have made every inquiry from men who had full information on the subject, prepared a statement of possible or probable receipts and expenditure, and then placed the matter before Parliament for consideration and approval or rejection. But in this case they have evidently plunged into a huge business without considering the matter at all. Not only have they engaged in the purchase of steamers, but they have gone into an all-round attempt to carry out one of the leading planks of the Labour platform, namely, the control of production, distribution, and exchange. It means that they want to control the whole business of the country, from a lolly shop to a steamer. One of the main reasons they have adduced for entering into this business of purchasing the steamers is a wish to smash up what has been generally referred to as the meat ring. I think on this point Mr. Connor, in the remarkably clear and able speech he made before the House yesterday, completely broke up the Government's case. I do not think there is any doubt whatever that whether meat is dear or cheap, Mr. Connor proved that there is no ring so far as either owners of stock or the sellers of meat are concerned. Apparently the meat is sold in the open market where anyone can come forward and buy anything from a single quarter up to 50 or 100 bullocks. The statement is made that meat is dear in the State. I believe it is, but I think that before entering into this business the Government ought to have got all particulars such as Mr. Connor and other business men could have provided them with. When they found the shippers were not getting this big profit they should have tried to trace where the money went; who got the advantage, and then formed their plans afterwards. Apart altogether from the

policy of entering into a business of this kind, the main question before the House in connection with it should be the financial one; and before the business was gone into at all we should have had a full statement of ways and means, and Parliament should have been taken into the confidence of the Government as to how the money was to be raised, not for this particular little business of £60,000, but for the whole of the vast communistic scheme they propose entering into.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. PATRICK: Before tea I made some reference to the purchase of steamers, and incidentally to the alleged meat ring. Anyone who knows anything about the attitude that I have always taken up in political life knows that I have always been opposed to rings of any kind, and possibly I spoke on this subject before some of the leaders of the Labour party of the present time were born. In so far as the Government intend to do away with rings, they will have my support. There is one ring in this State which I think is of as much importance so far as the welfare and development of the country is concerned as the meat ring, supposing it does exist, and that is the ring in artificial manures. It is notorious that the price charged in Western Australia for superphosphates is greater than the price charged in New Zealand. This is a condition of things which ought not to exist, and it is a kind of business that I think it would be possible, seeing there are only two firms manufacturing artificial manure—superphosphates—in this State, to devise means of seeing that the producers have a fair deal in this article, which is absolutely necessary for the success of farming in Western Australia. I may say that it is not very encouraging in reference to this matter when you find one of our own representatives in the Federal Parliament (Mr. Lynch) supporting a duty of 10s. a ton on superphosphates. A few weeks ago a deputation waited on Mr. Tudor, the Minister for Customs, and he was very sympathetic with this deputation. The deputation was composed of repre-

sentatives of the manure manufacturers, who asked that a duty of 10s. a ton should be imposed. They said that it would only amount to 3d. per acre, and Mr. Tudor said "That is nothing," and practically stated that he would take the request into his favourable consideration. Fortunately the producing community of Australia is organising. They have been asleep in the past, and are now awakening, and I am certain Mr. Tudor will consider many times before he imposes this duty, because he has to look to the support of the farmers of Australia for the maintenance of his Government. I commend the Government for the assistance they gave to the farmers in supplying seed wheat in districts where it was required, and also in supplying water; but I think the conditions in many cases were altogether too harsh. Practically so far as the supply of seed wheat and manure were concerned, I believe in some cases they took a mortgage on the selectors' property. I remember that about 25 years ago the South Australian Government in somewhat similar circumstances supplied seed wheat to farmers there. They told them if they could pay, well and good, but in the great majority of cases they were never asked to pay, and were certainly not asked for any security whatever. In reference to the supply of water, in cases where a season such as the last is not likely to occur again in a generation, it seems to me to be altogether bad policy to impose a permanent tax on the farmers on the route of the Goldfields Water Supply. In many cases that tax is equal to a very heavy rent. I know perfectly well that the Government, through the Minister for Works, in reply to a deputation which waited upon him, said that the Government must look upon it as a business transaction. It was proposed to charge 8s. per 1,000 gallons, and the price was finally reduced to 6s., but the tax is to remain permanently. Now, a farmer in an average year can get a supply of water for himself, and that water supply in most cases is ample for his needs. This permanent tax will certainly prove hard on the producers on the line of the Goldfields track.

The Colonial Secretary: The laying of pipes cost many thousands of pounds.

Hon. W. PATRICK: Yes, I quite agree with what the leader of the House says. Still if it is possible to supply water at a distance of between three and four hundred miles at so many shillings per thousand gallons, it ought to be possible to supply it at an equally low rate one or two hundred miles nearer to the city. I am glad to see that the Government propose to do all they can to encourage mining, that is gold mining of course. Of other mining there is practically little, although one of the largest copper mines in Australia is at Whim Creek. Certainly gold mining requires a great deal of encouragement, because judging from the records since the gold flood year of 1903, our gold production has been going down from year to year and month to month. In very few cases during the whole of that period has any month in the year equalled the corresponding month in the previous year. It has been a constant descent, and if it continues, it looks as if the gold mining industry must die. Considering the vast auriferous extent of our country, if the Government can encourage prospecting or by any other means within reason bring about a stoppage of this drifting, they will deserve credit from this community. I notice that the Government propose to build a good many railways, and as I have said on many occasions from the floor of this House, if railways can be built at a cost of not a great deal more than a good macadamised road, wherever there is any justification for building a railway, it shall have my earnest support. I must say that I take the same view as the Hon. Mr. Connelly regarding the construction of the 4ft. 8½in. gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, that the money would be much better applied in developing the rest of the country. If the people in the rest of Australia could travel from Adelaide to Terowie on the 5ft. 3in. gauge and from Terowie to Port Augusta on the 3ft. 6in. gauge and then to Kalgoorlie on the 4ft. 8½in. gauge, surely the rest of the journey could be completed on the present line, at any rate for a few years.

to come until money is more plentiful and the State is in a better condition financially. It is stated that a Bill will be submitted providing for the purchase of the metropolitan tramways. I do not think that I should assume that the Government in this measure are going to perpetrate a permanent injustice on the city of Perth. Personally, I am opposed to the nationalisation of the trams, and the reason why I am opposed to the nationalisation of the trams is that in the old country where the tramway system is carried out on a huge scale and successfully, in out of about ninety millions of capital invested in tramways in the towns and cities of Great Britain over fifty millions is invested in tramways controlled by the municipalities. And these tramways controlled by municipalities have been marvellously successful, so much so that they have in many cases reduced the burden of taxation in some of the leading cities to a considerable extent, and the figures of some of them are, to put it mildly, simply astounding. I just wish to refer to one single system to give an idea of the vast importance of the tramway system being in the hands of the community for the benefit of that community. The City of Glasgow tramways serve a population of 1,050,000. They have a capital of £3,307,000 and in 1910 they carried 221 million passengers at ½d. and 1d. rates, the fare being somewhere about .90, and they served the country for about 14 miles out of the city; the highest fares charged were 2½d. or 3d.

Hon. M. L. Moss: They have ½d. sections.

Hon. W. PATRICK: Yes, and 1d. sections. The receipts in 1910 were over £900,000, the working expenses were £505,000, the net receipts over working expenses totalled £387,000 and interest amounted to £53,000. Towards repayment and reducing the liability £71,000 was paid, and after all these payments, working expenses, interest, and the reduction of debt they had a surplus of £262,000. They used £212,000 of that for depreciation and renewals and after that they had £50,000 to put into the treasury. If that system had been in the hands of

the Imperial Government it would have been a nice little asset to pay into the Imperial treasury, instead of which it belonged to one city. I may say that during the series of years ended last year the average paid into the common good by the municipality amounted to over £300,000, that is, they reduced the rates to that extent. It seems to me that if the Government of this State are going to introduce a scheme at all, it should be a scheme whereby the City of Perth—and I mean by that the metropolitan district—ought to have the benefit of any profits that may be made by the system in the future, and apart from that, as a representative of a big portion of the State, I take the position that if there is any profit, and the working of the tramways in the old country proves that large profits are to be made—and in a growing city, such as Perth, the profits are likely to increase—these should go towards reducing the rates which, I believe, at the present time are very high. On the other hand, if there is going to be any loss on the working of these trams, the metropolitan district should bear it, and not the whole of the State. When the measure comes before the House I shall give it my best consideration and certainly if there is any attempt to confiscate the rights which at present belong to the city under an agreement with the Tramway Company, I shall vote against it. I strongly commend the Government proposal to do all that is possible for the advancement of education. This has never been a party question. The people of Australia deserve very great credit indeed for the efforts they have made in giving opportunities for as many as possible on this continent getting the best education, and Western Australia, considering the smallness of the community, has done marvellously well. But I object to remarks such as those made by Mr. Davis when, as an argument in favour of giving additional educational facilities, he said what was practically to the effect that the great advance made by German manufacturers in recent years was due to the fact that they were more highly educated than the people of Great Britain,

and the hon. member practically told us we were going behind in the race for wealth and business. Even if that were so, there is no necessity for making too much noise about it, but the fact of the matter is that instead of Great Britain during recent years going behind Germany, it has been advancing. I hope the House will bear with me while I quote figures to show what I mean. I may say that one of the chief factors in the progress of Germany has been the free market of Great Britain. Germany is one of the biggest customers of the old country and the old country is the biggest customer Germany has. Germany has a highly protective tariff; the market of Great Britain is open to the world. In 1909 the imports into England from Germany totalled 57 millions and the exports to Germany were 47 millions. In 1910 the imports from Germany were 61 millions and the exports 54 millions. In estimating the value of exports and imports, the imports into Great Britain are valued at cost c.i.f.; the exports are valued at f.o.b., and everyone knows that there is at least a 10 per cent. difference between c.i.f. and f.o.b. In other words, the business between the two countries is practically balanced. But there is this difference, it is of mutual benefit to both countries. Great Britain is not only a big exporter of iron manufactures, but now she is a big importer of raw material, that is iron and iron ores, and as a matter of fact, a considerable proportion of business with Germany is in the shape of that kind of raw material.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind the hon. member that the question before the House is the amendment to the Address-in-reply.

Hon. W. PATRICK: Of course I know that there has been a considerable latitude allowed to other hon. members, but I would just like to finish quoting these figures.

The PRESIDENT: I will allow the hon. member to do so; I only wish particularly to draw attention to the fact that I have allowed latitude, almost amounting to longitude.

Hon. W. PATRICK: I will just make this remark, that the business of the old country last year was 400 millions sterling more than that of Germany, and Germany has 60 millions of people, while Great Britain has a population of 46 millions. In addition to the matters included in the Speech, there are, as was pointed out by several speakers, one or two important omissions. The first question is that of immigration, on which Mr. Connolly spoke strongly. I do not think there is any doubt whatever about the fact that immigration is not mentioned in the Speech for the simple reason that the Government are not in sympathy with it. When one considers the position of Australia it will be found that it is, to all intents and purposes, geographically speaking, a huge island among many other islands on the south of Asia, and when we remember that in the course of recent years the Empire of Japan has become one of the great powers, that it crossed swords and defeated the great Empire of Russia, which has the biggest white population in the world—somewhere about 120 millions of people—and when we consider that China, the slumbering giant, has commenced to rub its eyes and is awakening, and that in a few years' time will be indisputably another of the great powers, and that there is discontent in India, where there are 300 millions, and also leaving out of the question a small place like Java, with a population seven times that of Australia, it seems simply madness for any Government to hesitate about filling up this continent with white people. The Northern Territory, the history of which I have known for about 30 years, is 650,000 square miles in extent and has only 1,000 Europeans occupying it, and 1,700 or 1,800 Chinese and other coloured people, while our own northern country, which Mr. Connor referred to last evening, as possessing some of the most magnificent pastoral land in Australia, with great rivers and alluvial flats, and with a rainfall which is not tropical—

Hon. F. Connor: Thirty inches on the coast.

Hon. W. PATRICK: It is possible that this country may be able to maintain a

white population, or a white population may be willing to colonise there. Though I spent a number of years in the tropics, I think I would prefer to remain in the temperate regions, but here is a place 975,000 square miles in extent, and thirty times bigger than Scotland, and yet we find that Scotland has been sending from 10,000 to 100,000 emigrants from her shores annually for the last 50 years all over the globe, and to-day she still has a population which is greater than that of Australia. I say it is a disgrace to the Governments of Australia, especially that during the last few years they have not wakened up to a greater extent to the tremendous responsibility they have in peopling this continent. The Government of the Commonwealth are the worst of all. They are doing their duty and raising an army and navy which will cost about £6,000,000 per annum as near as can be estimated, but they are throwing cold water on immigration. We have also in our midst citizens who write letters such as that quoted by Mr. Connolly. It is a disgrace to any community that any such communication should be sent to England. There could not be a particle of patriotism in anyone who could have sent such a letter, and it was doubly a disgrace if authorised by any body of men, I do not care who they were. Now, there is a clause in the Speech which says that a Bill will be submitted to enable a convention of representatives of the people to draw up a scheme for altering the Constitution. It so happens that we have a Constitution that can be altered now. We altered it some months ago and we have had an election under it since the alteration. Of course, we know perfectly well a convention will not be asked to alter the Constitution of another place because, I suppose, they are satisfied it is as liberal as it possibly can be, being elected on adult suffrage. But recently we had an election under this altered Constitution which, so far as the metropolitan area is concerned, is practically household suffrage. No dwelling that any person can possibly live in in Perth would cost less than £17 per year under the present conditions. There is no doubt that £17 annual value in this State is equal

to household suffrage, and what was the result of that election? It was a crushing defeat for the people who are asking for the alteration of the Constitution. There is just one other little matter I would like to refer to. I have always considered that the moment a man enters this Chamber, unless he be the leader of the House for the Government in power for the time being, he should consider himself non-party. It is quite true that when members are on the hustings and when supporting or opposing a candidate they call themselves Liberals or Laborites as the case may be, but the practice of this House hitherto proves that it has not been a party House. All the Liberal legislation on the statute books—adult suffrage, the legalisation of trades unions, the Arbitration Act, the great Liberal educational measure for the establishment of a University—in fact, all the legislation carried in this State has been passed into law entirely independent of the Labour party. The measures were all looked upon as non-party and passed. If they had been treated on party lines, they would not have been on the statute books. I think it is very regrettable that the question of parties should have been introduced here. We know perfectly well that we have six members in this Chamber who on all occasions are really bound to support the Government, but I am sure that every other member will take the same view as I do that any measure introduced into this Chamber, whether by a Labour Government or a Liberal Government, will be dealt with entirely on its merits, so far as it concerns the progress, the interest, and the welfare of this community of Western Australia.

Hon. E. McLARTY (South-West) : It would be difficult indeed for me to make a speech without reiterating a good deal that has already been said by previous speakers. I shall not weary the House by expressing my opinions at any length on any of the subjects that have been so ably dealt with in the speeches delivered yesterday and to-day. I will content myself with brief references to many

of the subjects and with indicating my approval or disapproval of the remarks that have been passed. In reference to the amendment, I shall say at once that I am in accord with it because I entirely disagree with the proposed legislation that is put before the country at the present time. I believe in encouraging private enterprise in every possible direction, but it appears to me that the present aim is to stifle private enterprise and embark on all sorts of State undertakings that the Government should, from my experience, leave alone. I have never seen men in the employ of the Government who thought it their duty to do the same amount of work they would do if employed by private individuals or contractors. Very recently I have travelled about the country very widely and I have had an eye on a good many of these Government employees, and I have been disgusted beyond measure to see what was going on. When I heard from the Governor's lips the other day that the present Government have in their employ wages men numbering something like 3,000, a shudder ran through me; and I thought that is enough to ruin any State. I took it that 3,000 men in the Government service meant an expenditure of £1,400 or £1,500 per day, and I am satisfied that the State is not getting value for the money expended. I have always protested against departmental work where it can be carried out by contract, especially in connection with the railway system of the State. The previous Government had the same fad for carrying out railway works departmentally, and I say that some of the works done in that time are a standing disgrace and have been a terrible expense to the State. For instance, one railway in my own district of Pinjarra was constructed departmentally and the result of that work was that no sooner had the Works Department taken it over and commenced to utilise it than an engine ran off the rails and the unfortunate driver was killed, and the Government were obliged to spend thousands of pounds in order to make the line safe. At the present time a great deal of in-

convenience is being caused by the manner in which the cattle-yards have been put in, for the cattle seem able to walk in and out of the yards just as they please, and the whole work is no credit to the departmental system. I think that there are other works of immense magnitude in this State that should engage the attention of the Government at the present time. I have no patience with the pettifogging legislation of milking a few cows here and making a few bricks somewhere else. We should undertake the works of great magnitude mentioned by Mr. Lynn last night, and first and foremost amongst these we should extend the accommodation at Fremantle to meet the requirements of the steamers that will use that harbour in future. That, to my mind, is the work of greatest importance in this State. Then, next to attending to the other harbour works throughout the State that require attention, I think that the construction of railways proposed by the Government is a policy worthy of the support of every member of this House. At the same time, we have gone at a great pace in the building of railways, and the time has arrived when we should be careful where we are building them. There is such a thing as going too far in the construction of railways, although up to the present moment no great mistake has been made, and I think that every line built has been justified. Nevertheless, with our present population and with the policy of borrowing millions of money, it seems to me that the present Government and also Parliament are imbued with the one idea that a few millions here and a few millions somewhere else are of very little importance. I say the time has arrived when the Government and Parliament should take into consideration how we are going to meet this enormous interest bill and sinking fund. I am quite in accord with the members who spoke this evening, Mr. Patrick and Mr. Connolly, in the views they have expressed in regard to immigration. I contend that the construction of railways and a bold policy of immigration should go hand in hand. We have, as has already

been stated, a very small population for this enormous territory. It seems to me that the present Administration fear that a few extra people coming into the State are going to put somebody out of a job. If we are going to be imbued with that idea, how is this country to become the great State which it is destined to be and ought to be? I am satisfied from our experience during the last few years when population was pouring into the State at a fair rate, that the country can absorb an enormous number of immigrants, and the sooner the Government set about bringing people to the State, the sooner we shall be in a prosperous condition. I am pleased to notice in the Speech, in the reference to railway construction, a proposal to build a railway from Busselton to the Margaret River. Personally I know very little of that district about the Margaret, although I have seen a good deal of it for some distance out of Busselton, but I believe it is the Warrnambool of Western Australia, and that with proper facilities given for the cultivation of the soil it will provide homes and employment for a very large number of people. I hope that the work will be put in hand at no very distant date, and I can assure the Government that they will have my hearty support. I was rather sorry to hear Mr. Connor last night sound a note of warning to the Government in regard to the use of Collie coal on their boats. We have in this State a great and valuable industry in Collie coal. Last year a considerable quantity was bunkered at Bunbury, but this year, I regret to see from the past half-year's returns, the trade has fallen off considerably; but that may be only temporary. Mr. Connor asserts that the difficulty of getting the coal away from the Collie fields is responsible in a great degree for the falling off, and that they have not the facility for loading the vessels with the despatch necessary to make Bunbury a coaling station. As hon. members are aware, it is contemplated to have a fresh survey and, if possible, find a line with easier grades to connect the coal field with the port of Bunbury. I would like to see the Government encourage the use of Collie coal in every possible direction. I

have not heard of late of any great trouble in regard to the coal, and I think if it is good enough for the ocean-going vessels to utilise, it should be good enough for the Government. As one hon. member said last night, it would be a bad advertisement for our local coal if those engaged in the industry outside the State could point to the fact that the Government of Western Australia were afraid to make use of it on their own boats. Mention has been made this evening of the cost of the Trans-Australian railway, at least of the section between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie. I dare say it is not a popular opinion that has been expressed by Mr. Connolly and Mr. Patrick, but I venture to say it is a very sound opinion. I do not know what obligations the Government may be under. If they are under an obligation to build a line on the 4ft. 8½in. gauge, of course the obligation must be carried out. While I fully recognise that the line must be built, and that we must have the gauge the same as the other portion of the Trans-Australian railway. I think it is a matter that in the present state of the finances of the country might very well be deferred for some time to come. It has already been pointed out, and I need not repeat it, that there are different gauges in the Eastern States; for instance, between Melbourne and Sydney. I do not think to have a 4ft. 8½in. gauge to Kalgoorlie only would be a great hardship on the passengers. It would not be a hardship on them to be transferred to the ordinary trains which are in use at the present time. I think we can do far better with the million and a half. We could put it to far better use than duplicating the line to Kalgoorlie. The traffic is not going to be great. I do not think the train will be rushed. The long, tiresome overland journey will only be made by people to whom time is of some importance. It will be only business people who will make use of the line. And I think we could well afford to wait and make better use of the million and a half pounds. We hear a good deal about the cost of living in this State. No one will deny that the cost is considerably high, but a remarkable thing to me is the rates fixed by the Labour

party. Take, for instance, the shearers. We have to pay the increased rate of 25s. a hundred for sheep. I do not think that hurts the squatter; I do not object to it; but if this is because the cost of living is so high, why did this party fix the board and lodging for shearers at 14s. a week? If the cost of living is so enormous that the men must have an increase, why is it that the man boarding them must have no more money for the boarding, especially when these men must have six meals a day? They refuse to strike a blow in the morning until they get tea and bread and butter at six o'clock; then they go to work late and want a good breakfast, and expect to be well fed; they knock off before lunch for refreshments and at twelve o'clock they have dinner. Then again at four o'clock they knock off for refreshments, and then they want a meal at six, and some of them want their supper before they go to bed. Yet the Labour party allow only 14s. as sufficient for that, though we have to give additional pay for their labour. Then take the plumbers. The award under the court is that if a man goes out to the country he has his fare paid out and back again. That is only right. And he has to get 17s. a day for his work, and the employer must provide him with board and lodging. I do not think this costs quite so much as in the case of the shearers. Plumbing is not so appetising an occupation.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Does the hon. member know how many days in the year a plumber works?

Hon. E. McLARTY: I am speaking of the days when the plumber works for me. If I board him at the same rate, 14s., and his wages have gone up in consequence of the high cost of living, I contend the person who provides the provender should have an additional allowance as well. I may be expected to make a few remarks with regard to the purchase of steamers. I read the other day that at a meeting which was held one Labour leader made the statement that the Government were going to breed their own cattle in the North-West, bring them down in their own steamers, and slaughter them and sell them to the people. I do not know

whether the Government are going to cook them, but this gentleman seemed to think there was nothing to do but take up a bit of country in the North and there would be bullocks next week for shipment. The squatter is a very much abused individual. The man who goes out pioneering in the wilds of this State, and who has done so much to open up the country, does not in many instances get the credit that is due to him. I have some knowledge of pioneering in the North, though I have not been there. In 1881 a band of old Western Australians joined together and formed a company to open up the Kimberley district. I was in the prime of my life at the time and full of energy, but with very little money, but I was so impressed with the reported possibilities of this fine country, which had just been discovered by the late Mr. Alec. Forrest, that I put all I possessed into the company, and my brothers joined in the same venture. Two of them went up there. They left Fremantle on the 10th November, 1881, in an old boat, the "Macquarie," and they took with them a few breeding ewes, some horses, and the necessary outfit for a station. They went as working partners, one to act as manager and the other as assistant manager. They were to get magnificent salaries. The manager was to receive £48 a year, and his assistant was to receive £24, and they were bound down that they were not to take up any country on their own account, but that everything was to be done in the interests of the company they were representing. Well, we had secured some very good country, but at that time there was no communication with Kimberley except every six months. Their first experience was that the flour went bad and was not eatable. They had no sugar for months, and they had no meat except what they could kill with the gun. They would not kill the young ewes. They lived a very hard life indeed. A young friend of mine, who also put his money into the venture and went up as a working partner, had only been in the district a few weeks, when, while following the sheep in the bush, accompanied by a native man and his woman, and leading his horse by

the bridle, he was attacked from behind by the native who split his head open with an axe. This happened four miles from the homestead, and when it was reported to my brothers they had to carry the body four miles to the homestead to bury it in that lonely bush. For 17 years that station was a drag on me, and nearly brought me to poverty in trying to make up the calls that were required to keep the thing going for my brothers and myself. For 17 years I never received a shilling back from it. Then the stock began to improve and things were a little bit better, and to-day the station is built up. I may say my eldest brother remained there for 12 years. He could do anything; he could build a house or do any carpentering work, and he was a mechanic at anything he took in hand; but his 12 years of hardship in that district in building up the first station in Kimberley was the cause of his health breaking down, and he died, perhaps years before he should have. My other brother remained as manager and worked on for years, living in the bush like a native and riding among the stock with rugs strapped to his saddle by day, and camping wherever night overtook him. He remained there for 20 years and built up the station, working like a slave. Well I remember meeting him at Fremantle and leading him off the boat. He stepped ashore in total darkness and for three months never saw the light of day. He was here under the best skill that could be obtained, and eventually regained the partial sight of one eye. That was his return for all his long years of labour. To-day, though we employ a large number of men, thousands of pounds have been expended in fencing improvements, and in boring for water in waterless country. We took up some hundred thousands of acres of waterless country. We imported from America our own boring machines and sent experts at heavy salaries to put down bores in various parts to open up this country, with partial success in some instances. We got a flow of water within five feet and another flow within 15 feet. We have pumped it up and we are able to water a large number of stock at

these bores. I mention this to show that these people are not drones, that they do not take up this country and make no effort to utilise it. We have done all in our power to make use of the country. After all these years it is paying the company, and the Labour party seem to think we have no right to any return at all, no right, indeed, to hold the country. Why should we be allowed to hold this country and bring our meat here and sell it in the open market? I say there are very few in the Labour party who, given the means, would have had the pluck and energy to go into that wild country among hostile natives and endure the unspeakable hardships of pioneering there. There are very few people among the Labour party who would have taken the risk.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: What about the prospectors?

Hon. E. McLARTY: The prospectors are very fine fellows, and I have no word to say against them. The prospector has my hearty good wishes, and if he has been successful I say he is entitled to all he can make for the risk he has run, the discomforts he has suffered and the labour he has expended.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Many a man working underground to-day is as much a hero as those to whom you have referred.

Hon. E. McLARTY: That may be so, I am not in a position to deny it; in any case I say all honour to whom honour is due. But I want to say also the people who are carrying on the squatting industry do not get the credit they deserve. From my knowledge of Mr. Drew I am sure he would be the last man to say an unkind word or knowingly offer an insult to any man; but I take exception to a remark made by the hon. member the other evening when he referred to the "squatters of the meat ring." That remark was uncalled for and unjustified, and I say no such ring exists.

The Colonial Secretary: I did not say the squatters.

Hon. E. McLARTY: Not the squatters generally, but you referred to a meat ring. Now, I understand a similar discussion has been going on this evening

in another place, where I am censured as belonging to the meat ring—indeed, I have been referred to as “the fat man of the meat ring.” It does not hurt, and I am sure it is not in the least offensive to me, but I want to say that my experience, extending over many years as a partner in stations in the North, as a buyer of stock, and as a dealer in a pretty large way, enables me to know what is going on, and the condition of things as they exist, as well as any man in the State. I am going to give the House a few figures, because I think it is lamentable to think of the way the public are misled, and how utterly they are deceived by many other people who know very little about this business. In reference to the purchase of these boats, I quite agree with Mr. Moss and other speakers that the Government have rushed in and done what they had no right to do without the consent of Parliament, that they have been very badly advised. I say without hesitation that the Government can no more bring down the price of meat by the purchase of these steamers than they can fly in the air. I make this statement advisedly, knowing what I am talking about. I say they will have the greatest difficulty in getting stock at all to bring down on these boats; they may get a few stores.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: All the two-year-old stock have been bought up for two years in advance.

Hon. E. McLARTY: People read statistics and say that so many hundreds of thousands of cattle are in the North, that the market is here and, nevertheless, the people have to pay extortionate prices. What are the facts? Let them go into the district with boats for fat stock, and what do they find? In a good season when the country has been blessed with plenty of rain the percentage available for market would be about ten per cent. of the cattle on a station; therefore, if a station had 10,000 head of cattle, under favourable conditions 1,000 head would be fit for market. But that is not much in respect to our market. Now, I can speak with knowledge of West Kimberley. A

great deal has been said about the small squatter who is boycotted, the man who cannot get his stuff to market, who is boycotted by the meat ring, and has to sell it at a sacrifice or not at all. I say it is absolutely without foundation. I say without hesitation, and with a knowledge of what I am talking about, that there is not a squatter in West Kimberley to-day, nor has there ever been in the past, who has ten or twenty head of marketable cattle who will not find half a dozen buyers tumbling over themselves to get those cattle—not at a sacrifice, but at the same price as the bigger squatters are receiving. There is one price fixed at the beginning of the year, according to the prospects of the market, and whether a man has ten, twenty, or five hundred bullocks, he gets that price per head for all of them.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Who fixes the price?

Hon. E. McLARTY: The purchasers; those prepared to buy cattle.

Hon. C. Sommers: There is nothing to prevent a small man sending his cattle down?

Hon. E. McLARTY: No, one need not sell at Kimberley. Only recently a couple of growers made inquiries as to the price. They were advised to send their cattle down themselves, and put them on the market, but they said, “No, if you will give us a fair price we would sooner sell them on the station.” If they prefer to send them to market they can do it. The beasts will then be put up by public auction and sold to the highest bidder. The small man in Perth who is killing one bullock a week can come to the auction and buy that one bullock. If he has no facilities for slaughtering, what does he do? He can leave the bullock where he has bought it, in the yard, and have the animal slaughtered by experienced slaughtermen and put in the train for 3s. 6d. He can then bring it to Perth or anywhere he pleases. Is that a boycott? Any man can do it. It has been said that these people go there and are afraid to bid.

Hon. C. Sommers : But he need not even buy the bullock, he can buy dead meat, can he not?

Hon. E. McLARTY : Of course he can. It has been said butchers go there and are afraid to bid. No one has tried to stop them. The cattle are put up by auction, and there is no fairer system than that in the world. There is not the slightest foundation for the statement that any meat ring ever existed in this State. On the contrary there is a good deal of competition between those who buy the cattle in Kimberley. It is not all a case of brotherly love, I can tell you. The cattle are brought down to the sale-yards, and there is a regular sale day every Tuesday. The bidders are aware of that, and they attend in large numbers. I can vouch for this, because I have attended many of these sales myself. You will there find representatives of butchers on the goldfields and in country districts, and the cattle are put up by public auction and knocked down to the highest bidder whether he be a large or a small butcher. Under these conditions I think I can claim that the report that the small man is boycotted is nothing more nor less than a canard. Now I will deal with the conditions to be met with in bringing down these cattle to market. There is among people of no experience a general impression that you can go into Kimberley and buy cattle for anything you like to offer. I am connected with several stations at Kimberley, and I know exactly what the output is every year. I am a buyer myself to almost any extent, yet I have never succeeded in getting cattle at anything below a fair market price. I pay £5 for my cattle in Kimberley. That is the fixed price for the present year. People say, "if you buy at £5, why is it that meat is such a price here?" Let me give the House a few figures in this connection. These cattle have to be brought to Fremantle, and the risk is enormous. The first shipment I brought down this year was at the end of April. I loaded the steamer "Charon" with 288 bullocks at Derby. It was extremely hot weather, and before the ship left the wharf six of those were dead. Her first

day's trip took her to Broome, where she lay for twelve hours, and before she left Broome fourteen animals were dead. She went on to Port Hedland and when she left that port twenty-seven of the bullocks were dead, while, by the time she landed this shipment at Fremantle, the death roll amounted to fifty. So, I lost 50 bullocks on that one trip, and in spite of this I had to pay freight, fodder, attendance and wharfage at Derby on every hoof of them. Out of the next shipment I lost eleven or twelve bullocks. Up to the present time, during this year, I have brought down over 1,600 bullocks, and have thrown overboard nearly 80 of them. So there is something to come off for the risk. The last shipment I had by the "Allinga." She was loaded with 109 bullocks of mine, and I got something of a shock when I opened the newspaper and read that she had struck a reef patch near Onslow. Eventually she was got off, but I stood a very excellent chance of losing every hoof I had on board. It is a big risk, of that the House can rest assured.

Hon. V. Hamersley : What about insurance?

Hon. E. McLARTY : Yes, you can insure but you can only insure against the total loss, for to insure against individual loss is more than even this risk is worth, and in consequence we insure against the total loss as a rule. People of no experience think that if you ship 200 bullocks you put those 200 bullocks in the market and the butcher gives you the top price for them. Possibly there are some instances where they are badly drafted on the station, and I can understand from my experience that it is difficult, where you get large numbers of cattle, to pick out average bullocks, and a good many are passed in which have no right to be shipped. When they reach their destination we first go through them and take out the bruised and crippled cattle which are unable to walk through being bruised or damaged. We have to get them slaughtered at Robb's Jetty, and the meat inspector comes along and grades them down, perhaps one penny or 1½d. a pound, and you have to sell

those damaged cattle at considerably below cost price. Then we go through them and find a certain number are not in marketable condition. We have to pick these out as store stock and keep them perhaps for twelve or eighteen months in the paddocks in order to get them into condition again, and run the risk of loss during that time. Then there is something to be said about the expenses. It is not done for nothing. I have just run out the figures. I engaged space for 3,000 bullocks this winter, and speaking on this matter I want to say I had no difficulty at all in getting the space. It is said at these monster meetings that the meat ring monopolise all the freight and that small men cannot get room to put their stock on. I have been in this business for a good number of years and have never once had the slightest difficulty in getting space for all the cattle I could provide. This is the biggest deal I have had with regard to numbers, and I engaged space for the 3,000 bullocks and had no difficulty in getting it. To-day these people who have the boats chartered are finding considerable difficulty, and do not know where they will get cattle to fill their space. I went into an office this morning, and the first thing said to me was, "Oh, I had just telephoned to you five minutes ago as I wanted to see you particularly." Then they put before me several dates of boats to load at Derby, and wanted to know what assistance I could give with cattle to fill this space. A little later there will be great difficulty, before the season is anywhere near ended, to get cattle to put into the boats. We have no fewer than nine boats running to the North, four Singapore boats, the "Minderoo," the "Paroo," the "Charon," and the "Gorgon," all touching at ports and loading stock. We have the "Allinga" and the "Bullarra" also running around the coast, filling up with stock every trip. Then we have the "Moonta" running from Fremantle to Derby direct and lifting 640 head a trip, the "Junee" running to Wyndham and lifting 600 a trip, and the "Moir" running to Wyndham and lifting 570 a trip. I can assure the House that they cannot keep up this strain. The cattle are not in the North to bring down.

There will be a great scarcity, and I say that cattle are going to be dearer next summer than they have been in this State for a long time.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They are finding them for Manila.

Hon. E. McLARTY: So much depends on the state of the country. If we have a favourable season we do not want Government boats or Government help to cheapen meat, but in a droughty country, which a great portion of the time misses the rain, the cattle become miserably poor. Last year when there was a scarcity and the price of cattle was extremely high, a statement was made by a member in another place that there were thousands of cattle in a certain district in the North and that people could not get space to bring them to the markets. At that time I was in communication with the very station—there were only two in the part referred to—and I had a relative on that station who keeps me posted up even to the extent of sending a telegram if there is a shower of rain. At that time cattle were dying in hundreds for want of water. They were dying at the wells which they had just been able to reach, and the dead carcasses were being dragged away by the aid of horses. The same thing has occurred this year in a great many places, and I am at a loss to know where a supply will come from when the Kimberley season is over. That season is not going to last very much longer. I make these remarks to show that there is no necessity for additional steamers. We have nine boats on the coast, but we have not the cattle to fill nine boats and to keep them anything like going. A reference has been made to sheep which are to be brought down by the Government steamer. The sheep which are being brought in now are for the most part drafted out and sold as stores not fit to kill. If the Government can get sufficient to put into the boat, then I say they cannot get the quality and the marketable cattle, and time will prove that my words are correct. With reference to these 3,000 head of cattle to which I have referred, the drafting cost 5s. per head, that is £750; wharfage at Derby cost 1s. 6d. a head, a total of £225; the wharfage at Fremantle cost 1s. 10d. a

head, £275, and yarding dues at Robb's Jetty 3d. a head, £40 10s. That is a total of £540 10s., which I have to pay to the Government for the use of wharves at Fremantle just while the cattle run on to and off the steamer. When these cattle are landed at Robb's Jetty it costs another £700 to rail them to places where they are to be slaughtered. That is another nice item for the Government, making £1,240 10s., which goes to the Government. For freight, fodder, and attendance, in addition to these charges, I have to pay £9,750 on the 3,000 bullocks, which makes a total of £11,740 expenses, not including one shilling for purchasing the cattle. These are the actual expenses and we cannot get away from them. If we add to them the losses I have already indicated, namely 80 bullocks in a few weeks, and add to that again the cripples we have to sell at reduced prices or for what we can get for them, and again draft the stores out, members will find that we cannot supply the butcher for less than is being done at present. The Colonial Secretary interjected last night, "If cattle are sold at this price, why have I to pay 1s. 2d. a pound for meat?" These remarks are taken up all over the State, and the construction put upon them is that the cost of living is so high, and that meat is 1s. 2d. a pound. I am sorry the hon. gentleman is not in the Chamber because I do not think he got a very satisfactory reply, and I think I might be able to give him a little light on the subject. I believe what the Minister said. I know it is a fact that as much as 1s. 2d. a pound is charged for fillet and rump steak. I will tell hon. members why this price is charged. With the public there is a great demand for this particular part of the meat, and butchers have told me repeatedly that if they were to put the price up to 1s. 6d. they could not meet the demand. Everybody wants rump steak and fillet, and no matter what is charged, people will have these particular cuts of meat. On the other hand, they could get meat, practically as good, for 7d. a pound, and any quantity of it. The butchers put on this very high price because they do not want people to rush it. I know a

business man in Perth who says notwithstanding the price he is charging, namely 1s. 2d. a pound, he is unable to supply his customers, and he is importing scores and scores of rumps of beef from the Eastern States to get that particular cut for the people. When we take this steak at 1s. 2d. a pound we must remember that the butcher has an enormous lump of bone left. It would pay him better to sell the rump in one piece at 8d. a pound than to cut the steak off and sell it at 1s. 2d. a pound. That is what makes this cut expensive. I do not know where the Colonial Secretary lives, but assuming that he lives in West Perth and telephones to a shop in Barrack-street for a couple of pounds of fillet, the butcher would have to send a man, horse, and cart to deliver it. It costs a butcher in Perth 1½d. a pound for delivering meat. In fact he cannot do it for that. A leading butcher in this place told me if he could do away with all his horses and carts and all the men employed in the delivery of meat he could supply the public, if they would go to his shop and buy over the counter, at 3d. per pound less than the price for which he could deliver it. I quite believe him, for I know this business. This matter has been investigated, and it has been proved that the retail butcher who delivers meat cannot hold his own at the price he is getting. That is the reason for the very high price of meat. The expenses are enormous. Last Saturday I landed a shipment of cattle at Fremantle. Afterwards I went into the offices of a firm there, and I saw a good deal of money being paid out in wages. I remarked, "You must pay a good bit every week for running your business." He replied, "Yes, I pay over £100 in wages. The expenses of running my business"—this man has a shop and two branch shops—"for wages, rents, fodder for twenty-two horses employed daily, and for feeding the stock at the slaughter yards, is £200 a week." Well, it takes a good many pounds of steak at 1s. 2d. to pay for that. The public have no idea of the expense involved in running a butcher's business. I would like to ask hon. members how many butchers in this country have ever

made any money, and I would further like to ask whether they know of any other business in the State in which so many men have failed, and not paid for their goods as in the butchering business? I know of none. I have had considerable experience and I know many butchers who had the inclination to pay but were unable to do so. There is a misconception altogether about the butchering business and the Government will find that they have been misleading the public and misleading themselves. I believe they are quite conscientious and that they think they can buy cattle for a mere bagatelle in the North and land them here at a cheap rate and supply people practically for carrying the stuff away. That, however, will not be the result. I am sure there will be great disappointment over this stock trade. I believe the Government will get a good deal of tonnage on the boats from the North on account of the feeling of dissatisfaction among the squatters. They consider they are paying too dearly for their goods in those parts. It is an enormous expense to send goods to the stations in the North, and I myself have complained repeatedly, but I have found out that I am not paying as much as the freights in other parts of the Commonwealth. Although I am not a shipping man, I know that the risks are very great in the North, and I know the expenses are heavy, and I am not prepared to say that these people who are running steam boats are coining money, or are in a position to carry on this business for less. There have been strikes amongst humpers, and agitations have been continually going on, and these have meant continuously increasing cost. Two years ago I could have landed 3,500 bullocks for £1,800 less than I can land them for this year. The chief reason is the additional expense that the shipowners are put to. I am not an advocate for the steamship owners, but at the same time I desire to do justice to every section of the community, and it must be borne in mind that these people are catering very well for the North. If we compare the class of boats which are engaged in the trade now with those of a few years ago it will be seen that the companies are not unmin-

ful of the existing requirements. Take that beautiful, though ill-fated, steamer, the "Koombana." It seems to me like extravagance to put such a magnificent boat on that trade, but the Adelaide Steamship Company invested a lot of money when they put that boat there for the convenience of passengers, a vessel which was certainly good enough for a yacht for His Majesty. Then again the Singapore boats have been replaced by a very fine type of steamer. The "Minderoo" is a very good stock-carrying boat. The solution of this whole question lies in two facts, as stated by Mr. Connor last night. One is in the erection of freezing works in the far North, and this will be the principal thing which will bring about the reduction in the price of meat down here. The freezing works will be of immense assistance to the squatters, because the waste that is going on at all those stations is surprising. Hundreds of cattle are lost that might be turned to useful account in the way of canning, and things of that sort. I do not know that the people would go in for chilled meat as much as for fresh meat, even if they had it. The other alternative is that if you cannot get freezing works, there should be properly fitted up and fast boats in the trade. The present boats are not fitted as they should be, and the result is there is a great deal of cruelty to stock because of the calling in at every port. I have given hon. members one instance where twelve of my bullocks died whilst the steamer was lying at the Broome jetty, and had that steamer been at sea I should probably not have lost one. Stock suffer exceedingly while the steamer is lying still, so that what we want are fast, direct boats to trade from Kimberley to Fremantle. The "Minderoo" has made a special trip, and has accomplished the journey in five days; if we could get boats of that class to carry the stock from Wyndham to Fremantle in five days there is no question about it we could supply the cattle at a cheaper rate, and make a far better profit than we do at the present time. Mr. Connor referred to a firm who had any amount of money behind them, and who started with a determina-

tion of cutting prices, and running all others out of the business. This was the firm of Yuille & Co., who opened up a fine shop in Barrack-street, and who were going to upset things altogether. What was the result; they went down and down, and lost, so it is said, £80,000. I cannot say whether they lost that, but I do know that they lost an enormous sum of money, and they were glad to wash their hands of the business and clear out. I am quite sure that many others have done the same thing. With reference to the building of abattoirs at North Fremantle and Robb's Jetty, I agree with Mr. Connor that North Fremantle is about the most unsuitable place that ever could be selected for the purpose. It is most expensive there. Sale yards have been erected at this place, and the charges for shunting and removing stock are so great that I contend we do not want to heap on that additional expense. What we want to do is to reduce the expense, and I am quite satisfied that to erect abattoirs at North Fremantle will be a huge mistake. There are between 25,000 and 30,000 head of cattle landed each year at Robb's Jetty; there is plenty of room there, and there are facilities there for abattoirs and stock yards and everything that is required. It is a convenient place from which to get the stock away, and I cannot understand why the Government decided to go into that cramped corner at North Fremantle. There is only one thing in favour of North Fremantle as against Robb's Jetty, that is in very boisterous weather it is possible to get alongside the North mole and land the cattle, when occasionally it is difficult to get alongside Robb's Jetty. That, however, does not happen very often. Last week the "Charon," in coming alongside Robb's Jetty, did considerable damage, and when the "Allinga" came in on Thursday morning the captain would not try to go to the jetty, and I landed my cattle on the wharf at Fremantle, and railed them to Robb's Jetty at considerable expense. With regard to the price of stock at auction sales, we have here very fluctuating markets. I made contracts for most of my bullocks in the early part of the

year, and I found in the month of May I was travelling the stock 50 miles from Fremantle to my place and railing them to the various butchers, and I saw that the very same class of cattle were being sold at public auction at Robb's Jetty and were realising 1d. and 1½d. per lb. more than I was getting. In the next month I attended the sales, and I found that I had an advantage, and that I was getting better prices for my contracts, and saving the expense connected with the auction sales. One never knows how they are going to sell, but, on the whole, the prices just now are low, and as recently as yesterday there were about 200 cattle more than the market could absorb, and they were a very fine quality too, and sold at a very low price. I am quite certain that the Government will find, and the public will find, that all this demonstration on the part of the trades unions, the playing of brass bands and cymbals will be of no avail, and I imagine that the dance will come later, and the taxpayers will be those who will dance to the tunes which have been played. The Government will be astounded at the results of their venture, and then the public will turn round and say that the Government made pledges at election time which no doubt they tried to carry out faithfully but failed. While on this subject of promises, I might mention that there is one that they failed to carry out, and that was the reduction of their salaries by £300; that in itself would have effected a saving to the State of £1,800 a year, and it would have been a great consideration. Although I do not envy Ministers what they are receiving for the responsible positions they hold, and I contend they should be well paid, yet, if they are carrying out the rest of the programme in the way of effecting reductions, I see no reason why they should not carry out that of reducing their salaries as well. A great deal has been said with regard to this meat business, and I might be excused for having dwelt upon it at such length. I would like to mention that at a very largely attended meeting some time ago one gentleman was addressing a crowd and he gave a very pathetic account of the way the meat ring treated the small

squatter in the North. He gave an instance of a man who had travelled 200 miles to a port, with a couple of hundred fat bullocks; the steamer came into port, and this is what I consider to be the most unlikely story that I ever listened to. The man said to the captain of the vessel that he wanted him to take 200 bullocks to Fremantle, but the captain replied that he was very sorry he could not do so as the vessel was full up, and the steamer went away, leaving the cattle at the port. Of course the meat ring had representatives there and they expressed great sympathy for this man, and the result was, to make a long story short, they offered him 30s. a head for this lot of bullocks, and they were readily handed over. I would like to know whether any common sense man would ever believe such a story as that. Will anyone tell me what squatter would be mad enough to start from a station with a number of bullocks without having engaged space beforehand; then there must be fodder provided to feed the stock, and provision must be made for the stock to be looked after. Yet this pathetic story was told to a big crowd, who, no doubt, believed it. There was not, however, one word of truth in it, from beginning to end, and it was simply in keeping with a great many other statements made with regard to this meat question. I have had a great many dealings with one firm, which is supposed to be the leading firm in the meat ring; I refer to Emanuel Brothers. I have dealt with these people to the extent of some thousands of pounds, and I can say that I never dealt with more honourable or more liberal men. Whenever stock had a favourable trip, a trip without loss, and if they struck a good market here and realised well on their cattle, I have known them to write a cheque of £100 for the men who brought the cattle down satisfactorily; I have known them do this also on several occasions when I have not known what amounts they gave. Speaking for myself personally, I may say that I was bringing cattle to this market in conjunction with Mr. Emanuel. We held a station between us. We each took what cattle we required. Mr. Em-

manuel's share was 180 head, and, wanting a good number at that particular time, I said to him that if he was not wanting those cattle I would buy his interest in them. After a brief consideration he said, "Give me £1 per head on the station price and take the lot." When the cattle arrived, I was sadly disappointed to find that they were landed in store condition and were not worth nearly what I had paid for them on the station, and I had let myself in for £180 in addition by taking over Mr. Emanuel's share. That was the position when I went to settle, but I did not make the slightest demur. It was a straight-out deal and I was quite prepared to stand the loss. I was in the office of the manager settling up and Mr. Emanuel heard my voice. He came in and asked the manager if this matter had been settled; the manager replied that I had paid for the cattle. Mr. Emanuel said "Refund that £180 to Mr. McLarty; the cattle are a disappointment to him and to me, and I do not want to charge him a penny." That is not the action of a man who is robbing the public. I speak thus of a man who has treated me well and who has treated the public well. He has been a benefactor to the Kimberley people. This year I have had a larger business than usual. Mr. Emanuel has left the country, he has been practically hounded out of it and he has given up all his connections here, and all his retail butchers' shops, numbering 21, I think. When the Royal Commission sat some time ago to inquire into the meat question Mr. Emanuel said that the Government then in power could take over the whole of his butchers' shops as a going concern without paying anything for goodwill. He offered to deliver all of his own bullocks to them at Derby for £4 per head, but the Government did not take the offer and thereby showed their good sense. Mr. Emanuel closed every one of those shops after losing an enormous amount of money in the retail trade. He then closed down on the purchasing of cattle in the North, because he had had enough of that too. He said that he would confine himself to breeding cattle on his own station,

shipping them down to market, and taking whatever they realised at public auction. Now, I do not know why a man should be stigmatised and abused as Mr. Emanuel has been. What I am telling the House is positive truth, and I can substantiate every word of it. I will not detain the House much longer, but I felt very strongly on this question, and I think that I had a right to give the House information which some members were not aware of and which the general public are not aware of. I fancy the figures I have quoted in regard to my own shipment of 3,000 head of cattle, namely, a total cost of £11,741, without any incidentals or any loss that may be incurred afterwards, will astonish hon. members. So far as the policy of the Government goes, I shall be just as ready in my place in this House to support the Labour Government in any measure that I think is conducive to the best interests of the State generally, as I was to support the proposals of their predecessors or any other Government in power. I care not a straw whether the Government are Labour or Liberal so long as their Administration is along lines which I think are in the best interests of the people generally. But, in my opinion, the whole of this legislation is designed to benefit one particular class of the community. Its object is to pull down the man who has been thrifty and who has worked all his life in this country as I have done. I have worked very hard from an early age. I bought land when I had the opportunity and that I have turned to the best account; I have spent every shilling that I earned for years in developing that along the best lines, and I have six fine sons to divide it amongst. I am taxed by the roads boards and by the Federal and State Governments, and the opinion seems to be that I am not entitled to a bit of that land when the poor man has none—the man who perhaps has not been in the State six months and will not stay six months longer. I claim that I have been as good a man to the workers as a great many of the Labour agitators of to-day who are responsible for a good deal of the strife in this State. When-

ever a man comes along with a swag on his back he never passes my house without a meal. They tell me that throughout the goldfields my place is known as one where the traveller can rely on getting a good feed. I never turned a hungry man away from my door, and I never will. Sometimes I give men a few day's employment when I have really no need for them. On occasions men have come to me and told me such a tale of woe, that I have put them in the field with a few tools, and told them they could have a few hours' work. When I returned shortly afterwards I found the tools on the ground and the men gone. I have had men come to my place saying they were starving and I have given them a few shillings to buy food and a bed, and told them to come next day and I would find work for them to do, but I never saw them again. I have even paid passages of men in the Eastern States who told me that they were without work and without means to get to the West, but never in one instance did I receive one penny back for those passages. Only a few days ago in riding home I met two fine young fellows near the Pinjarrah railway station, and they inquired of me the way to the State sawmill at Dwelling-up. I showed them the road, but said that the train would be coming in in a few minutes and they could travel by it and thus save themselves a three miles' walk. They answered that the Railway Department wanted 1s. 6d. each for their passages, that they had not a cent in their pockets, and that they had had nothing to eat since the preceding day. I said to them, "The station yard is full of union men, and why don't you ask them for a few shillings to pay your passages; that, I understand is the idea of unionism." They replied that they knew too much about unionism to ask the men for assistance in that way. I do not want to boast about it, but I paid their passages and gave them some money with which to get food. I said to them, "If you are honest men you will send me back this money and it will help some other poor fellow who may come along. However, you can please yourselves." Of course, I never expect to

see a penny piece of it back, but I just want to say that although I am designated as a great opponent of the poor working man I have always tried to help any man who was in distress. As an employer I have men in my service who have been with me since their boyhood days, and have grown up in my employ. If they were badly treated they would not have stayed a week, but if they do leave me they come back again. I pay them and feed them as well as any master in the State. The man who has to earn his living by the sweat of his brow has my sympathy and I treat him well. The hon. member referred to the men working underground and the pioneers of the gold-fields. Often when moving about as a bushman in the early days I have been struck with the pluck and perseverance of some of these men, going into wild country, not knowing where they would find the next drink of water, and with nothing to guide them in those days. I have been impressed, indeed, with the courage they must have had to have pursued their calling perhaps for months together, and if they succeeded I say of the prospector, as I say of the pioneer squatter, they deserve all they get and should have the well-wishes of every person in the State. I desire to say in conclusion that I will support the amendment when it comes to a division.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): Like other hon. members who have spoken, I desire to extend a hearty welcome to the new members in this Chamber. I was very much impressed with the speeches delivered by Mr. Sanderson, Mr. Lynn, and Mr. Colebatch, and by their earnestness and determination to give every measure introduced into this Chamber careful consideration free from party bias. That is as it should be, and I am glad to hear them say that. I am sure also that they will carry out their intentions to the full. In regard to the meat question, a great deal already has been said, and I do not intend to weary the House at any great length, but having come fresh from the people, I think it is a duty to my supporters that I should say something on this most important question. I said during the election that anything which could

be done to cheapen the meat supply to the consumer would have my heartiest support. I outlined then what my ideas on the subject were, and I said that the Government were adopting the wrong method of endeavouring to cheapen the price of meat. They should have gone in for chilling works and given that system a trial. I am sure such works would have been successful, but the present venture I believe must end disastrously for this State. The thanks of this Chamber are due to Mr. Connor for the exhaustive information which he supplied in regard to this matter. He threw a flood of light on this question, and although he spoke for over two hours, it was a pleasure to listen to him because he knew what he was talking about and backed up his statements by figures which he offered to hand over to the Minister in charge of the House. Mr. McLarty who has just spoken, I listened to with great interest indeed, particularly in regard to the early experiences and hardships of his brothers. I say that they deserve nothing less than they have got, and I, for one, never begrudge any success to those who have had to face the strenuous trials of the old days. When listening to Mr. Connor I could not help thinking that the Colonial Secretary must have been impressed with the fact that the Government would have done well to have consulted him before embarking on this hazardous undertaking. A wise man about to embark his money in a new venture would naturally take all the steps possible to get the fullest information as to the prospects of success before investing his money in it; and if a man will do that with his own money, how much more should trustees controlling other people's moneys do it? The Government are trustees of the money of the people of the State, and money is loaned to us to use judiciously and with due regard to all inquiries that should be made in regard to new ventures. Trustees should be more especially careful, knowing the money they are dealing with is not their own. The Government, having from the bustings for political purposes promised a cheap meat supply, have now lightly set out to carry out their promise made with-

out due regard to the consequences or prospects of success, and I think they will find it difficult to make it profitable. How can we expect the Government, trammelled by all sorts of red tape regulations, to be successful? I have had experience and paid severely for it, and I am satisfied there are easier and safer investments for one's capital than entering into the meat trade. Shortly after I came here in 1894 I could see from my experience on the goldfields that the meat supply was a very difficult question, and that meat was very dear; and it suggested itself to me, and to some of my friends who were backing me, that it would be a good investment to charter boats with chilling space, and bring meat over from the Eastern States to supply it to the goldfields. A small company was formed and chilling works were built at Coolgardie, and I secured all the available space on the "Pullarra" and the sister boat owned by the Adelaide Steamship Company, and we were able every week to land something like £2,000 worth of chilled and frozen products. We opened shops in Perth, Fremantle and Coolgardie; and although money was plentiful in those days, I regret to say, owing to the cost of distribution and the other costs and bad debts, this meat venture was very unprofitable indeed. It may have been my fault; possibly it was; but we have only to remember that men who have had much more experience than I had found it an unprofitable venture. Such men as Yuill and Co., who have their chilling works in pretty well every part of the globe and have trained men following up the pursuit, making it a special study, we have only to see what happened to them recently when they endeavoured here to fight their opponents and cheapen the meat for the metropolitan area. Mr. Connor told us that Yuill & Co. lost £80,000 in eighteen months. I have been trying to get better information with regard to that, because a relative of mine was manager of the concern for portion of the time they were in business. I believe the actual facts were that in eighteen months they lost £50,000. Yet this was a firm that brought years of experience into the business, and had an

accumulated capital, despite which they failed. And now the Government, to carry out a promise made on the hustings, a promise made really to catch votes—that is my opinion; that it was something on which to go to the country—lightly set out and embark on this hazardous business expecting success where men with unlimited capital and experience have failed. There are others who used to be in the retail business who have also gone out of it. They found that the retail business was not what they thought it was. Connor, Doherty and Durack, and Copley, and Emanuel Brothers have all retired from the retail business, and others have found it very unprofitable. I made it my business, through the slight training I had in the early days in the meat trade in the other States, to investigate the figures of the leading firms, and this is what I found from a perusal of the figures of one firm that has gone out of the business. The percentage of gross profits to cost was barely 25 per cent. We will say it was 25 per cent. for the sake of argument; it is near enough. The percentage of shopping and distributing expenses amounted to 30 per cent., showing a loss on distributing of 5 per cent. This 30 per cent. for distributing is not inclusive of such items as rent of head office, salaries and general expenses, management generally, discounts and allowances—which are no small item—provision for bad and doubtful debts—that is where the trouble comes in—or allowance for depreciation of plant and improvements on leasehold. This means that when the lease is up the owner may probably want the place for another purpose and the expense they are put to on improvements is lost. The cost of distributing wiped out the 25 per cent. Mr. Connor told us last night conclusively that the average price of meat on the hooks—to use his own term—was something like 2½d. to 3½d. per pound, and that in April of this year the highest price was 3½d. The leader of the House told us that he was paying 1s. 2d. for his meat, but 3½d. per pound is the highest price Kimberley cattle has produced in the dead meat market. One naturally looks

round for all these rich retail butchers who are in business. It is part of my business to get some of that money to put into other ventures, but I have not yet found a rich retail butcher; and taking into consideration the enormous loss and the small profit, we will find there are no rich retail butchers, while if we read the Trade Circular we will find that some of them are poorer than that. If that is the real state of affairs, how can we possibly hope that the Government, with employees doing the Government stroke, and with expensive management, and with the credit system and Trades Hall interference, can expect to make this trade pay? It is an utter impossibility. Occasionally there will be strikes. When a strike occurs, every striker will look to the Government butcher for credit when he is out of work, and I can imagine the position of a Government manager of any particular shop in any locality. I presume that if the Government carry out their policy to the utmost they must open shops, and I can quite imagine the agitation of the Political Labour Party if credit is refused; I can quite imagine what Mr. McCallum would say, because he tells us that the Trades Hall is practically the power behind the throne. My family are at present residing in the country and I am living for the time being at the Perth Club, and I can assure the House that the Perth Club does not distribute the worst of food. In fact I venture to say that one can get the best of anything there, the best joints and the best fish. As a member of the Club, I had the right to ask, and I found out that the average price at which the club is supplied with the best of joints is 6½d. a pound, and these joints include the very best joints it is possible to get.

The Colonial Secretary: That is a special quote.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Of course, and I was going to put the question to Mr. O'Brien if he had been in the House. Probably he would be able to tell us that the price he pays is not more than 5½d. or 6d. at the most.

The Colonial Secretary: Quite likely.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: The big consumer naturally gets special prices. I am only trying to show that meat is actually cheap here.

The Colonial Secretary: It is 1s. 2d. a pound for the best steak.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I wonder that Mr. Drew persists in that silly talk. I have slaughtered cattle, and I know how much of this particular variety of steak is in an ordinary carcase; and if one will insist on getting that of course one has to pay for it; but to try to mislead the people and get them to suppose that it is the average price of beef in Perth, when I have quoted these figures of the Perth Club, is arrant nonsense. I thought the hon. member had more sense than to try to harp on that subject. Cheap meat was a good election cry, just as the same as cheap fish and cheap potatoes. The Labour party have made a lot of mis-statements in regard to this question. and they find now they have embarked on it what foolish people they were to attempt it, but we as taxpayers are to foot the bill. Now we come to cheap fish. The Premier in a speech during my election campaign told the public he was going to give them cheap fish, and many other things. He said that we had the finest fishing grounds, the finest fish, and the finest variety of fish in the whole world. I have travelled somewhat and tasted some good fish in other parts of the world, but I never knew until I read the Premier's remarks that we had the finest variety and that we were going to get fish at the cheapest price practically in the world. These words were trash and idle talk, and such statements will come home to roost. There was a former member of this House—I am glad I cannot refer to him as a Labour member, but he was a sort of "Jim Crow;" I refer to Mr. Thomas Brimage—that gentleman embarked on the fishing trade some years ago; and Mr. McLarty, Sir Edward Wittenoom, and Mr. Jenkins know all about the fish, and I think Mr. President could tell us something about this company. The gentleman I mention was so imbued with the idea of a magnificent spec. that he induced a lot of people to form a com-

pany, and they bought boats, just the same as the Government have, and went looking for fish, but in four months, under the control of Mr. Brimage as managing director, this limited liability company spent the whole of the capital. Not only did it do that, but by some means which I do not understand under the Companies Act the shareholders had to pay an extra call over and above the pound share in order to pay the debts of the company.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): Where was your business capacity there?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I was not a director. For my £50 I never even got the smell of a fish; I never saw the scale of one. I told the House that my short experience of the meat trade satisfied me there was safer and easier means of making money than embarking on that line. I am sorry I did not include the word "fish" when I said "meat." Now in regard to this magnificent fishing ground on our coast, and the splendid variety of fish to be secured, the Federal trawler recently visited the coast and made a number of hauls. I have here a newspaper clipping which shows the result. It is as follows:—

The Federal trawler, "Endeavour," which returned from a 14 days' cruise on Tuesday night, and anchored in the Roads, entered the harbour on Wednesday morning. Trawling operations were conducted in from about 97 to 120 fathoms between Fremantle and Geraldton, but no better results were obtained than on the two previous cruises. When off Geraldton one haul realised no less than 1,120 stingrays, these fish comprising the whole catch.

Where does the variety come in? We are told it is the finest fishing ground in the world, with the finest variety, yet the whole of this haul consisted of one variety in it. One does get tired of always having the same kind of fish. The paragraph continues—

The next net raised to the surface brought to light 830 stingrays. "This," said Captain Pim, "was quite a unique experience. I think we must have struck a breeding ground. Mr. Gale, I notice, netted 200 stingrays in this locality on

one occasion, but with them he obtained a number of whiting. In the deeper water we found, as on the previous cruises, dense growths of sponge, whilst the bottom for the most part was very rocky and unsuitable for trawling. When about 60 miles off Fremantle on Tuesday we dropped the net in about 120 fathoms of water, and when it was raised to the surface again it contained no less than two tons of sponge. The weight of the edible fish was only 40lb. The latter included 28 rock perch, 2 parrot fish, 1 zebra, 5 dories, 2 jack-ass perch, 4 flathead, and 6 leather jackets. There is no doubt," concluded Captain Pim, "that at this time of the year at any rate there are not sufficient fish to keep a trawler in commission in the waters between here and Geraldton."

Let us hope there are at sometime of the year. "The finest fishing ground in the world and the finest variety of fish." Is it not utter trash to talk like that? For the Premier of the State, who has never travelled outside of Australia, to talk about the finest fishing ground in the world! How can fish be made cheap by the Government? Nobody has told us. Already the private fishing boats supplying the Murchison Goldfields and Perth go as far north as Carnarvon for their supplies.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: They ought to go to Esperance.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: So far as the west coast is concerned, the boats go considerable distances north of Carnarvon. In order to make fish cheap, will the Government employ men to catch this fish at standard wages; will they pay overtime for wet and rough days? If they will not do this, for it is against their creed, will they limit the hours of work to eight, and, if so, will the men be allowed to knock off, perhaps just as the fish are beginning to bite?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: They will have to bite quickly if the men are to stay.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Well, you could not expect the men to continue working after five o'clock, certainly not Government men. Then we come to the distribu-

tion. Every householder knows that the fish are brought round, as a rule, before eight o'clock in the morning. Many housewives will only take the fish on the condition that the hawker cleans it for them; they will not be bothered with it. The ordinary housewife will not bother her head about fish; indeed we are not the fish-eating community that the Government would have people believe.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: There is the Kalgoorlie market.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Do not talk to me about Kalgoorlie. I was in Kalgoorlie before ever you were. I was there in 'ninety-five when you were not, so don't you talk to me about Kalgoorlie. You talk about something you know something of. Even if the Government secure the fish, will they allow their men to work eight hours a day and call round for orders? I venture to say "No." The whole thing is a humbug; it is only an election cry to catch votes. "Cheap fish" was an election cry just as "leasehold instead of freehold," and "day labour *versus* contract." I cannot help saying that during the election campaign a great deal of stuff came out, and I found out that the Labour party, as a rule, do not practise their principles in regard to leasehold and freehold, and day labour as against contract. It is a well-known fact that the Premier himself, in the only land dealings he has had, other than the unfortunate ones with Mr. Bath in April, has confined himself to freehold, and the only buildings he has erected have been erected by contract, and not by day labour. That is something for the Trades Hall to consider. Now, all these Government schemes for interfering with private enterprise were brought forcibly to mind on reading an item of news in this morning's *West Australian*. It certainly throws a little light on Government enterprises in Manitoba, and concerns our wheat growers and the public generally. It is as follows:—

An experiment in Government handling of wheat on behalf of farmers in Manitoba has turned out unfavourably (says the *Argus*). According to a recent despatch to the *Times*, the province devoted 1,000,000dol., or over £200,000

sterling, to the purchase and construction of elevators, which were worked in competition with private elevators. During the last four months of 1911 on the Canadian Northern railway 2,360 cars were loaded from Government elevators, and 5,279 cars from private elevators; while on the Canadian Pacific railway, 2,374 cars were despatched from Government and 6,126 cars from private elevators. The deficit on the operation of the system in 12 months was 100,000dol., or over £20,000. The Premier of Manitoba, Mr. R. P. Roblin, has stated in the Provincial Legislature that the Government embarked upon the experiment as the result of a long popular agitation in which it was represented that the grain dealers were robbing the farmers, and that the panacea was to be found in Government-owned elevators. "I took the voice of the demagogue," said Mr. Roblin, "for the voice of the public, and I consequently made a mistake." He could not explain why the public elevators did not receive a large patronage, particularly as the Elevator Commission was controlled by the former president of the Grain Growers' Association; but it was not the determination of the Government to buy or build any more elevators, and it was in negotiation with a company, and if an agreement could be effected it would cease to operate elevators altogether.

That is on all-fours with our Government going into trade and competing with private persons. Now, as shown in this newspaper cutting, Mr. Roblin tells us that why the Government embarked on these enterprises was because of a public clamour and because it was asserted that the wheat growers were robbing the public. I wish to draw the attention of the leader of the House to this, that he might mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. When the Government get their meat and fish schemes going I hope they will have made provision for the various setbacks common to nearly every business; and I want to know if they are providing against strikes among their employees, because it is quite

possible they will get these. Since they took control of the Treasury benches strikes are not unknown, even among State employees at the Midland Junction workshops, and now we are threatened with the strike on the *West Australian* because the proprietor gave evidence in a recent court case. Admittedly the trade unionist is a hard taskmaster to serve. When these strikes occur the strikers seem to lose their heads altogether, and have no regard whatever for their fellow men. I would just like to quote the following from Broken Hill; a strike occurred a few months ago, during the elections, and was based on the dismissal of a waitress—

Broken Hill, May 8.

The trouble between the hotel and restaurant employees' union and Mr. Riechers, the licensee of the Freemasons' hotel, has reached an acute stage. Mr. Riechers discharged a waitress, and refused to comply with the demand made by the union for her reinstatement. A majority of the staff employed by him held that he was right, and decided to remain in his employment. A special meeting of the union was held last night. The meeting was at times stormy, and one member of the hotel staff, who held out for what he considered to be right, was shown the door. Ultimately, after a prolonged discussion, the members of the hotel staff agreed to abide by the decision of the union, and promised to give their employer 48 hours' notice of their intention to cease work unless the waitress in question was reinstated. This notice was given this morning. The liquor trades employees' union last night decided not to supply beer or other goods to the Freemasons' hotel while the trouble remained unsettled. The position is a somewhat extraordinary one. The employees of the Freemasons' hotel do not wish to leave, but they say that they will have to do so, or be branded as blacklegs.

It makes one tired. Hon. members might remember that in this morning's *West Australian* we found something in interest to Western Australia in connection with the Trans-Australian railway. The

first shipment of sleepers was sent from Busselton to Port Augusta, and when the shipment was ready for landing at the port the lumpers, who had been getting 9s. a day, struck for 12s. The local managers did not know what to do, so they wired the Federal Government, and the answer came back, "Pay the 12s." I mention these facts because this was a strike of Federal employees handling Federal goods for the Trans-Australian railway. They were not asking for a small, reasonable rise, and going to the Arbitration Court, but for a rise of from 9s. to 12s. Of course the taxpayers will have to pay that. These Federal trustees for the whole of the Australian people are giving away, without the slightest hesitation, a rise of 25 per cent. on the ruling rates. The Hon. Mr. Moss said he regretted he would have to refer to the loss on the work known as the Fremantle Dock. Naturally the Speech of the Governor makes reference to that work. We all regret that a small community of 300,000 people are faced with a loss of two hundred thousand to a quarter of a million of money, and there is the point I would like to be enlightened upon by the Government. It is apparent that someone has blundered, but no attempt seems to have been made to fix the blame on the one who has blundered. The money has practically been dropped into the sea, and there is no expression, even of regret, as far as we know, and the blame is not fixed on anyone. Had this happened to any private firm a strict inquiry would have been held immediately, and those responsible would have been punished, if it was shown that the blunder was due to neglect. Even ordinary care does not seem to have been exercised by the professional heads of the department, or such a state of affairs could not have arisen. In a work estimated to cost about one million, or even over that, borings should have been made to thoroughly test the ground, particularly when it was known that the bottom was of a treacherous nature. When the Bill was under consideration we were told that the water boiled up from the bottom, and that the ground was treacherous, and we would naturally think that the professional men, our advisers who have ex-

pended this money on a work which I think was never justified from the state of the finances and the population of the country, would have thoroughly tested the ground.

Hon. A. G. Jenkins: They only put down 70 borings.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Well that shows a disgraceful state of affairs, and whoever was guilty of neglect should be fired out as soon as the blame is fixed.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Who fixed the site of the dock?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I believe Sir Whateley Eliot.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Are not politicians more to be blamed than the professional men?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: No. All that the politicians say is that a dock is desired. Naturally those who represent the port are eager that the harbour should be equipped with such conveniences, but no politician worthy of the name would take any risk with the people's money, amounting to a million or a million and a half, at a site where the bottom is treacherous, without taking every possible care. I am a grazier among other things, and no prudent farmer, intending to excavate an ordinary stock tank of 2,000 or 3,000 yards, would neglect first of all to put down trial holes to test the bottom. The Hon. Mr. Piesse has put down many of these tanks, and for a 2,000 yard dam he would not undertake the work until he knew by sinking, or boring, what he would have to go through; otherwise, after getting down a few feet, a rock might be struck and the work have to be abandoned. Any man who was guilty of such neglect would be fired out by his employer. Yet these men, professional men, after spending £200,000 without putting down the necessary number of trial holes, come to the Government and practically say, "Please sir, we are very sorry but your money has dropped into the bottom of the sea."

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Did not the engineer emphatically state that he had doubts about the site?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: If he did have doubts it was his duty to put them on record and make it plain to the Ministry

that doubts existed. Then, instead of putting down 70 holes, he should have put down sufficient to test the bottom thoroughly. The dock is not much bigger than Parliament House, and unless a man had lost his head altogether, surely he would have taken the necessary precautions. The most searching inquiry should be instituted by the Government at once. It should be conducted by an independent board altogether, and those responsible should be allowed to go elsewhere, because this small community of 300,000 people cannot afford any more risky blunders of such a costly nature as this. I regret very much that this great work has thus been set back for many years. It is the duty of the present Government, as the custodians of our money and as the masters of the professional department, to see that these men are competent, and that they do not make further blunders at the expense of the State. We can lose £200,000, which is an immense fortune, and yet, except for a reference in the Governor's Speech, the thing is to be forgotten. I would not be doing my duty to my constituents if I did not demand a most searching and thorough inquiry. Regarding the Trades Hall grant, coming fresh from the poll, as I do, I cannot help referring to it, yet I feel too indignant even at this late stage to speak calmly on it because it is a most scandalous abuse of political power. We hear a great deal about clean government and clean administration, and yet one of the most scandalous things perpetrated has been committed by the Scaddan Government, and, I presume, with the consent of the leader of this House. Words fail to express my indignation, but I will read a reference from the Melbourne *Argus* on this subject—

The *Argus*, commenting on Labour politics, says that the Labour leaders are growing less and less scrupulous in their methods, as their hope of obtaining a renewal of power anywhere in Australia becomes more and more remote. Only yesterday we learnt that the Scaddan Ministry have subsidised the erection of a Trades Hall in Perth

by a grant of £1,000, and have offered to purchase the freehold of the land on which it stands, in order to hand it over to the trades unions on a perpetual lease. This is a shameless application of the spoils to the victors' policy and outdoes preference to unionists by the directness and simplicity of the bribe offered out of public funds. Supposing the Employers' Federation in Perth or the Independent Workers' Union, if there be a branch in that city, approached Mr. Scaddan with a request for a building grant, with what scorn would the application be refused. Yet the Ministry has no more right to subsidise one such institution more than another. The Labour party seems to have no notion of what breach of trust means. It acts as if it regarded all public funds passing through its hands as its own, to scatter amongst its supporters as it pleases.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): This is one of the election cries.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Just listen to this.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: As a result of these interjections I cannot help drawing attention to a choice piece in this reference from the *Argus*—

But electors are watchful and resentful, and each new outrage on the principles of honest government will increase the punishment when the day of reckoning arrives.

That day of reckoning will arrive sooner than they think and these scandalous things will not be forgotten.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): A pure election cry and dodge.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Yes, to satisfy your trades unions.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Nobody knows better than you that it is so.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: During my twelve years of Parliamentary life I have never heard of a more scandalous abuse of power.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Tommy rot.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Well, do not try any more tommy rot of this kind.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Coming to the Savings Bank question, I say the neglect of the Scaddan Government is a most serious one for our people, and I for one strongly protest that no steps have been taken to protect this institution and save it to the State. Mr. Scaddan is the only one of the State Premiers, as far as I know, who has betrayed his trust to the people. First I may tell hon. members that in our own Legislative Assembly Mr. Scaddan spoke on this question as follows:—

I have already considered ways and means for carrying on our State Savings Bank apart altogether from any Commonwealth buildings or assistance. Personally—

The Colonial Secretary: I think you are out of order.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I would like to know in what way.

The Colonial Secretary: Quoting a debate from another Chamber.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I know I am not out of order for I have looked up the Standing Orders.

The PRESIDENT: Is this from the present session's debates?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: No.

The PRESIDENT: Then you are in perfect order.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Even if I were out of order in an important question like this, is it proper for the hon. member to draw attention to it. It is a matter of very grave importance to the people of this State.

The PRESIDENT: Yes; the Standing Orders must be obeyed.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Never mind that; but I ask is it not possible for the Minister in an important matter like this—

The PRESIDENT: I resent that statement, "never mind." Our Standing Orders are rules which give us every freedom of debate and it is your duty to support them and my duty to uphold them.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I abide by your decision. Members of this House will form their own opinion regarding the good taste of the Minister. I will read the extract again in case the Minister has missed any of it—

I have already considered ways and means for carrying on our State Savings Bank apart altogether from any Commonwealth buildings or assistance. Personally, I think we can make use of our many schools in the various districts, and in many cases of the teachers established in those schools. It is doubtful whether a Premier's Conference was ever called together where the Premiers representing the various States were so unanimous on a question, as in this instance.

Hon. M. L. Moss: When was this?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: The Premier went to the Conference, and I remember reading an interview which he gave to the Press in Melbourne. He told the interviewer that on leaving Melbourne Mr. Fisher had shaken him warmly by the hand and expressed his grateful thanks to him for assisting the Commonwealth in agreeing to their proposals. Thus Mr. Fisher got hold of the Premier and all I can say is, poor Mr. Scaddan, poor Western Australia. Mr. Scaddan was sent to represent the State and he said it was doubtful whether a Premier's Conference was ever called together where the Premiers representing the various States were so unanimous on a question as in this instance. Did he mean unanimous in saving the Savings Bank to this State? Then he said Mr. Fisher shook him warmly by the hand.

Hon. W. Patrick: That fixed him.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Yes, we have heard of a lady who fixed a flower on every new supporter that came to the House; that was supposed to fix him. In this case, however, Mr. Fisher shook him by the hand and expressed his grateful thanks to him for assisting the Commonwealth in agreeing to their proposals and I repeat, poor Mr. Scaddan, poor Western Australia. Mr. Moss, the other night stated that the Labour party were unificationists and he was right. We have only

to contrast Mr. Scaddan's action and the hand-shaking process when he gives away our rights, with his utterances in the Legislative Halls of Western Australia. As a metropolitan member I think it is only right that I should say something in connection with the proposal to nationalise the trams. I will say right away that I believe under the peculiar circumstances of the districts surrounding Perth, and the complications with regard to the various tenures and agreements that the Government are right in nationalising the system. I think though that they entered into the proposal rather hurriedly and they have not made the best business deal it was possible to make, perhaps because of their desire to have something to be able to tell Parliament when it met, and in doing this they are giving away more of our money than is necessary. But with regard to the City of Perth, when the Government take over the concession, I trust that the City will get a fair deal. At the present time Perth holds, what I consider to be a first mortgage over the tramway system. They get three per cent. of the revenue earned which amounts to a good deal, and they have the right to use the poles for electric lighting purposes and the trams after midnight for the removal of offal and nightsoil and at the end of ten or twelve years they will have the right to buy the system at a valuation and eventually get it altogether free of cost. I believe that prior to this arrangement having been entered into, the Company expressed their intention of paying the City an extra £1,000 per annum if the City Council would forego their right to purchase. With all these concessions one must realise that the city has a very valuable concern in the tramway system, which, if taken away compulsorily, must be paid for at a fair valuation. With regard to land settlement the Speech tells us that it is going on satisfactorily and even more satisfactorily than it did when Mr. Mitchell was booming it for all he knew. I for one do not believe that land settlement is going on satisfactorily and I think those members of this House who have had the opportu-

ity of going about the country will bear me out in this statement.

Hon. W. Patrick : It is absolutely dead around Geraldton.

Hon. C. SOMMERS : I have asked that I should be supplied with a return so that I might be able to quote from official figures, but that return, which would not necessitate a great deal of work has not been forthcoming. I know exactly what I asked for and as I was Minister for Lands for a short time, I know that if the books of the Department are kept as they should be the information could have been procured in less than half a day. Yet though I asked for the information in the form of a question when the House first met and I was requested to move for a return, I am not likely to have the information until to-morrow. I am forced to speak now without it, because I shall not be here when the debate will end to-morrow. We all know that the Government blundered very badly through the Minister for Lands, whose regulations compel certain improvements to be effected before transfers can be granted, and I am quite sure that the Government know full well now that they made an error in issuing those regulations. The difference between the Minister for Lands or even the Government as a whole, and the Premier of Manitoba is that the latter gentleman when he made a blunder said that there had been a clamour for it and then rectified it. Mr. Bath said that there had been a clamour for his regulations, that land had been unfairly selected, and as there was a traffic in land he was going to put a stop to it, but in endeavouring to stop a small percentage who possibly were illegally trafficking in the land, he caused a great injustice to be done to a big majority of the people. We give him credit for doing that with the best intentions but when he found that he was penalising a lot of innocent people and blocking the progress of settlement, I would have admired him if he had admitted having made a mistake and framed some other regulations which would have been less harmful. Strong men who make mistakes change their

views when they recognise that they have fallen into error. It is the only weak, foolish, and incompetent man who fails to recognise his faults.

Member : Strong men do not turn round and blame other people.

Hon. C. SOMMERS : Let the Minister for Lands take the blame on himself if he has made a mistake, and he must know now that he has made a mistake. If he does not know it he is even more foolish than I believed him to be. He should say "In response to public clamour we tried the experiment and failed." Perhaps he thinks that a man who never admits anything cannot make a failure, and that it is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all. Leasehold conditions will never suit Australia; they are obtainable in old lands. The men who come here want freehold. I think it was the late Henry Ward Beecher who said that a man who possessed freehold land felt a joy in the possession of it that was not equalled by the possession of any other sort of wealth. A man might have shares in companies or have merchandise in stores, but a piece of land when he holds the title deeds of it creates a joy and a feeling of satisfaction that no other sort of wealth inspires, and it enables him to walk over his land and say that he has entered into partnership with the original creator of the earth. That is how Australians want to feel. They want the freehold. Take our country township lands under leasehold conditions. I think that the minimum rental one has to pay for a small town block is £1 or £2 per annum, and it is to be re-appraised every 20 years. Blocks of land in country townships, hon. members will agree, are not worth more than £8 each and the lessee has to pay £1 a year rental. At Midland Junction I held a sale of blocks of land a quarter of an acre in extent on last Thursday night, and disposed of a number for £5 each, and with streets made around them. When people can buy land such as that and they are asked to pay £1 per annum rental in country townships the whole thing is absolute nonsense. New Zealand has always been

held up to us as one of the most progressive countries where leasehold conditions are a magnificent success. But what do we find? The Government have gone out of office and that the new Premier who is taking charge is going in for a vigorous policy of land settlement on a freehold basis. How many have taken leasehold land there?

Hon. C. A. Piesse: None.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I remember the Honorary Minister Mr. Dodd, twitting me with trying to wreck the Workers' Homes Bill when it was before this House because I objected to it being made applicable to the goldfields. I was one of those who was partly responsible for the late Government making this a part of their policy. I suggested it was a good thing but who ever dreamed that any Government would be silly enough to make it applicable to the goldfields knowing what we know of the rise and fall of those places. Would any business man lend money on such securities as are offered by the Act? If he did so he would soon find himself in the Insolvency Court. I would like to know how many applications have been received for loans, and probably I shall ask the question as to how many have been submitted for loans under the leasehold system and the number under freehold. It would be interesting to know this. I think the workers have as much sense as anyone else. There may be a brisk demand under the leasehold conditions when the Government build the fourteen houses at Fremantle and then perhaps forty or fifty men who badly want a house will apply and the Government will declare that these places have been over-applied for. But give them the opportunity of taking the freehold and see how many applications will be forthcoming. We hear a great deal about reforms, and one amending Bill we are promised this session will be that to amend the Licensing Act, one of the provisions of which will be for the carrying of local option by a bare majority. That is in accordance with the labour plank that majority must rule. It sounds all right if 500 vote one way and 501 the other, and that a ma-

jority of one is to control the issue! I have said that the Labour party do not practise what they preach with regard to freehold and leasehold and day labour and contract, and neither do they practise what they preach with regard to majority rule. It is one of those labour cries which is very handy but it is significant that in the Labour conventions a bare majority does not decide the issue. At the Hobart conference the Prime Minister attended and moved a resolution which was carried by a majority but not by the requisite majority to make it binding on the convention. There is another matter that I regret I have to refer to, and that is my recent election to this House. Hon. members who followed the controversy between members of the Ministry and myself will remember that many bitter, and what I proved to be untruthful statements, were made about me during that election campaign, both by the Premier and a good many members of the Scaddan ministry, but I will not refer to them, being quite content to retain the confidence of the majority of members of this House, and, as the result of the election showed, the confidence of a big majority of the electors. I would not have referred to the matter at all because I believe in letting bygones be bygones, and many things are said in the heat of an election which would not be said in calmer moments. I would not have referred to the subject but for the fact that the Premier is not yet satisfied that I have completely vindicated my character with regard to one subject, and that is the sale of Dalkeith estate. During that election campaign I had access to the official files. Of course I had access to my own files, and no one could have a fuller knowledge of the happenings on that particular transaction than I had. And I thought it due to myself, my honour, and my supporters, that I should deal fully with that matter at the big meeting which I held in the Perth Literary Institute. I did deal fully with it, which is more than the Premier and his Ministers have dealt with the charges I made against them. Some of those charges have been dealt with in a very flimsy manner, and have never been fully

answered to this day. I am just about tired of these everlasting dirty insinuations. That is strong language to use in this Chamber, I admit, but I feel strongly upon this question. During my twelve years in this House I have always endeavoured to gain the confidence and esteem of my fellow-members, and in my business capacity I am proud to say that I am trusted by a great number of my clients, who show no anxiety to take their business away from me. I say again I am tired of being attacked by men holding these high, and what should be honourable, positions, and I now challenge the Government, through the leader of this House, to appoint a select committee or any board of inquiry, either of members of this House or of independent persons, to make the fullest inquiry into the Dalkeith estate, and if that board can show that I have been guilty of anything even approaching slim practices, I will retire from the House immediately. That is a straight-out challenge. And yet knowing that I dealt fully with this matter, the Premier, in an interjection in reply to Mr. Wilson in another place, still referred to it in a sneering way. Such an action is not worthy of the Premier; it may be worthy of Mr. Scaddan, but it is not worthy of the position he holds. It is a mean and contemptible insinuation, and I challenge the Government to give me that inquiry.

Hon. F. Connor : They made charges against the meat ring.

Hon. C. SOMMERS : The meat ring consists of a number of persons. I am not a number, in fact, there is not enough of me to go round. I now want to refer to something which is of a scandalous nature. I am sorry that the leader of the House is not in the Chamber, but I am sure that the Honorary Minister will listen to me. This is a matter of persecution. The members of the Ministry did not spare me during the campaign, and I had to hit back pretty hard in order to make my case clear. But ever since the election I have been persecuted by the members of the Government and they are endeavouring even to this day to do me an injury, if possible. I was

prepared to let bygones be bygones, but I will tell members what the Government are doing. The railway from Wongan Hills to Mullewa happens to pass through my daughter's land, which adjoins my own on the opposite side of the Hills. The land had been surveyed; in fact the permanent survey has been completed roughly about eighteen months. That survey satisfies the settlers of the district, and we have been promised repeatedly that as soon as the rains fell in May the work would be proceeded with. The work has not been proceeded with, but the survey has been altered. A bow has been taken and my daughter's land has been left six or seven miles from the railway.

Hon. F. Connor : Shame.

Hon. C. SOMMERS : That is a fact. Personally I do not care a great deal. I took up the land before there was any railway proposed for the district. I was 50 or 60 miles from Goomalling and I took up some 40,000 or 50,000 acres for pastoral purposes without anticipating that a railway would come so soon, so that I cannot say that I have been robbed in that way. But when a railway suits a majority of the settlers, and the survey is completed, I want to know why the route is suddenly deviated to leave out two politicians—one is an ex-politician (Mr. Quinlan) and myself. I would not mind very much for myself, if it were not for the position which this action places my neighbours in. Hon. members know this injustice which the Government have perpetrated, not for the good of the State, but in order to enable this Government to vent their spleen on me.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : When was the deviation made?

Hon. C. SOMMERS : During the last few weeks. It has been taken out to my certain knowledge six miles eastward on to barren sand plain infested with York-road poison. The present Minister for Works told a neighbour of mine west of the hills—I may explain that my land is to the east of the line and my daughter's is to the west—that at one time there was a big battle of the routes, opinion being divided as to

whether the line should go to the east of the hills or to the west of the hills. I was not particular which side of the hills it went, but eventually a compromise was arrived at by arranging to build the line to the west of the hills, and to carry it as far east as possible in order to serve the settlers to the east. Well, Mr. Johnson informed my neighbour that he had not authorised any deviation and that he did not believe that there had been any alteration. He was assured that the alteration had been brought about, and he replied that it was without his authority. During the discussion the Engineer-in-Chief came into the room and when spoken to by Mr. Johnson he said that he was quite satisfied with the present survey, but in spite of the statements of the Engineer-in-Chief and the Minister for Works the fact remains that the deviation has been made. And to suit whom? I know of only one man who could have been responsible for this, but I know a great many who have been robbed of their just rights. Thank God, I do not expect much from this Government, and I do not want any favours from them, but I do intend to ask to-morrow for a select committee to inquire into this scandal, and if I am granted that select committee I can promise the country and this House some startling information in regard to the tactics adopted in connection with the alteration of that survey. Parliament passed a railway, the survey was completed and approved of by the people, promises were made from time to time to various members who waited on the Minister for Works asking him to push on with the railway, the work was promised, and just when it was about to start the Government suddenly made this alteration. The route was promised in a particular direction and yet, without consulting this House, the Ministry have perpetrated a political scandal, to harm a political opponent. Mr Colebatch, Mr. Wilding, Mr. Hamersley, Mr. Lefroy and many others know all about this country, and when the time comes their evidence will be available to the people. I appeal now to hon. members to grant me a select committee when I move for it to-morrow,

and I will give them some startling information.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : Has this line been authorised by Parliament?

Hon. C. SOMMERS : Oh, yes, two years ago. When this became known the settlers on the west of the hills got progress associations together and a deputation was organised and waited on the Minister for Works ten days or a fortnight ago. The Minister told the deputation that he would put the matter before Cabinet and give an answer in the course of a few days. As far as I know, no answer has been given yet. Unless the Minister in his reply understands to re-instate this line on the route surveyed, I will ask for a select committee to inquire into this political jobbery. The intention of Parliament has been deliberately flouted, apparently to give a political party in the persons of the present Ministry an opportunity to injure me. One settler to the east of Wongan Hills has for some considerable time made no secret of the fact that he knew the line would go a long way east to serve his particular place. I challenge an independent inquiry.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie : Why not give the name of the settler?

Hon. C. SOMMERS : There is a time and place for everything. We have heard of spoils to the victor. I would like the House to listen to this extract from the *Worker*, the mouthpiece of the party which preaches the doctrine of spoils to the victor. This is what they said in their issue of the 31st May, and I would remind members that the election took place on the 14th May—

The Legislative Council electors of Wongan Hills recorded one vote for the Labour candidate and ten for the Liberal. This is a splendid encouragement for the Government to push on with sleepers for the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway. Judging by the Wongan Hills vote sleepers can be locally secured without much difficulty.

Although it was promised that a start would be made in May, no start has yet

been made with the Wongan Hills line. Regarding the socialistic enterprises to which I was referring, namely, meat, fish, and so on, I venture to say that they will be a heavy burden on the taxpayers of the State. The hon. Mr. Walker, in an unfortunate and infamous utterance he made in May last—it was unfortunate that he made it at all, it was unfortunate that he made it on the 13th May, a day which some people regard with superstition. It was on all fours with the unfortunate transaction of Mr. Scaddan when he took up land on the first of April—All Fools' Day—and transferred it to Mr. Bath on the 13th. Mr. Walker, in an utterance on the night prior to the Legislative Council elections, said people who had any blood to lose would be bled, and he predicted extra taxation. The taxation, State, municipal, and Federal, is fairly high at the present time. It is getting so high that it is approaching the breaking point. We do not want these enterprises which will result in heavy losses, and which will make it necessary for the Government to levy additional taxation. The burden is quite heavy enough now for us to carry without having unnecessary taxation forced upon us. If the Government have the welfare of the people at heart I ask them to pause in some of these enterprises before it is too late. If they ceased from dismissing some of the State civil servants they would be serving the interests of the country better than they are doing. There were civil servants capable of carrying on their duties, who for political purposes as the House and country know, have been sacrificed. But a day of reckoning is coming, and the punishment of the Government will be sure and heavy. I said when I started on the matter of the elections, that I would be content to allow bygones to be bygones, and if it had not been for interjections regarding the Dalkeith estate, I would probably not have had so much to say. I will let bygones be bygones, but I will never forget what happened during that election. Whatever my feelings might be, I recognise that I have a duty to perform to the electors of the Metropolitan Province and to the

people of the whole State, and I trust that I will never forget that duty. I promise the Colonial Secretary that I will criticise his measures when I consider they need it, but that I will be fair and give him a square deal, and that I will do all I can to forward the interests of this State.

On motion by Hon. C. A. Piesse, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 10th July, 1912.

	PAGE
Questions: University appointments	287
Unemployed at Fremantle	288
Leave of absence	288
Bills: Tramways Purchase, 1a	288
Excess, 1910-11, 1a.	288
Industrial Arbitration, 1a.	288
Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, 1a.	288
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1a.	288
Nedlands Park Tramways Act Amendment, 1a.	288
North Fremantle Municipal Tramways Act Amendment, 1a.	288
Address-in-reply, fifth day	288
Personal Explanation: Mr. Foley and Bishop Riley	330

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

QUESTION—UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the University Senate to advertise for professors and lecturers in Australia as well as in England? 2, Will Australian scholars be given a chance to teach in our University?

The PREMIER replied: 1, I am advised by the Chancellor that the University Senate has decided to advertise the professorships in the leading