

sheep through the dingo, and also a large number of cattle. I hope the Government will consider this matter, and decide not only not to withdraw the reward, but to increase it to a substantial extent. For this purpose I think it would be advisable to impose a tax on all sheep throughout the State, a very substantial tax, and supplement this with a very heavy subsidy from the Treasury. This would enable the reward to be increased to something like £2 per dog. Nothing less would be of any avail. The effect of this would be to bring into existence a large number of hunters to deal with the extermination of dingoes. The same principle which justifies steps being taken with regard to the rabbit invasion justifies steps being taken for the extermination of dingoes. There is another matter in connection with the Speech which I prefer to leave until a Bill dealing with the subject comes forward. A subject I should like to refer to is that of adjournments. I hope that if there is not likely to be any important business before the Legislative Council, we shall from time to time adjourn for a day or two. Last year myself and others had to come hundreds of miles for half an hour's business. It is all very well for people living in the city of Perth or in Fremantle, but it is a very serious matter to members who have to come and go something like 600 miles.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think you did very well last session.

HON. J. M. DREW: It was not so bad last session as the session before, and I hope there will be a still farther improvement. I have much pleasure in supporting the Address-in-reply.

On motion by HON. E. M. CLARKE, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6:23 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 3rd August, 1904.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock, p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### QUESTION (POSTPONED).

MR. MORAN asked the Premier question No. 1 standing in his name on the Notice Paper.

THE PREMIER requested that the question be postponed, as he had not had the question placed before him yet.

MR. MORAN: It was rather extraordinary that a question of which notice had been given had not been placed before a Minister before now.

THE SPEAKER: The matter could not be debated.

THE PREMIER: Things were a bit congested at present.

#### SUPPLY—MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending the appropriation out of Consolidated Revenue and General Loan Fund of £1,000,000 for the services of the year ending 30th June, 1905.

THE TREASURER moved that the House resolve into Committee to consider the Message, and that the Standing Orders be suspended to allow the passage of a Supply Bill through all stages.

MR. MORAN (West Perth): The House and the country would not fail to take notice of this extraordinary request. The amount asked for was extraordinary, and the conditions under which it was asked for were still more extraordinary. He would not oppose the motion; nevertheless, pending a vote of want of confidence which had not the worst chance in the world of being carried, we were now entrusting to the Government a million of money. For three years past it had been our misfortune to have to vote large sums of money in a manner

not contemplated on the institution of Responsible Government. We were now repeating the practice owing to the lateness of the session; and presumably as heretofore the Estimates would come down at the end of the session, after all the money had been spent; and the financial debate, apart from its educative value, would be useless. Surely this demand had no parallel in Western Australia.

Question put and passed.

House agreed to resolve into Committee.

#### CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES, ELECTION.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Walter James): I have great pleasure in moving that Mr. Quinlan do take the Chair as Chairman of Committees; and I do so with pleasure, because Mr. Quinlan has long been acting in that position, and has discharged his duties in a manner thoroughly satisfactory to the House.

**MR. T. F. QUINLAN** (Toodyay): By leave of the House I beg to decline the offer so kindly made by the Premier, and in doing so I would express my gratitude, I may say perhaps to all members of the House, for the kindness in supporting my candidature for the higher position. However, I feel that my health does not at present permit me to offer my service for the position of Chairman. I regret this, because I realise the honour done me by the offer; and I move that the member for Brown Hill be appointed Chairman of Committees.

**MR. W. B. GORDON** (Canning): I second the amendment.

**THE PREMIER**: I ask leave to withdraw my motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

**MR. T. H. BATH** (Brown Hill): I have pleasure in submitting myself to the House.

Question put and passed. (General applause.)

#### IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

**MR. BATH** in the Chair.

**THE CHAIRMAN**: I must thank members for having elected me to the position of Chairman of Committees. I hope that while I occupy this Chair I shall carry out my duties with strict impartiality, and that my conduct of business will commend itself to members.

In return, I would ask for the cordial support and co-operation of members on all sides of the House, so that I may be assisted to carry out my duties in a manner which will maintain the dignity of the Chamber in the eyes of the public who are our creators.

Formal resolution passed.

#### IN COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

**MR. MORAN**: Were not members entitled to some information from the Treasurer, at least as to the loan funds in not to revenue?

**THE TREASURER**: That would be given on the second reading.

Formal resolution passed, preliminary to a Bill.

#### SUPPLY BILL.

Supply Bill introduced, and read a first time.

**THE TREASURER** (Hon. C. H. Rason) said: In rising to move the second reading of the Bill, I desire to explain to the House that the procedure we have adopted is simply that of following what has been the custom in past years. The member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) said the amount asked for was wholly unparalleled in the history of Western Australia. On the contrary, the amount asked for is precisely the same as was asked for in the first Supply Bill in the last session of the last Parliament. In moving this Supply Bill it can hardly be said that the Government is actuated by any desire to improve its own condition. It is certain that whatever Government is in power, supplies must be voted, and this Government thought it would best be meeting the difficulties which seem likely to arise before very long if, in view of those contemplated difficulties and the adjournment of the House which will probably have to follow a Supply Bill were introduced and put through, the difficulties and complications which may arise to a Government that may follow in our footsteps thereby being avoided. As to information upon the Loan Bill, or state of the loan funds, rather, the fullest possible information on this subject is published in the last *Government Gazette*, the *Gazette* of last Friday, 29th July, and I do not intend to weary the House, or attempt to thrust upon the House information as to the

state of the finances or as to the state of the loan funds which is properly given when the Treasurer for the time being is making his Financial Statement to this House. The Government have nothing to gain, I repeat, by the adoption or rejection of this Bill. In bringing it down, they have been actuated by only one motive, that being the desire to do their duty to Western Australia. Supplies are absolutely necessary to any form of Government. As to the Estimates, I feel bound to say to the House I do not anticipate that even had I remained in the office of Treasurer, it would have been possible to bring down the Estimates any earlier this session than they were brought down last year. A general election has intervened, and I do not see that it would have been possible for me, and I say in justice to whoever may succeed me I do not see how it will be possible for him to bring down the Estimates at the earliest before October. In future sessions I hope it will be possible to bring them down at an earlier date. But for the general election and consequent turmoil intervening, certainly the Government would have made an endeavour to bring down the Estimates at an earlier date. No doubt they should be brought to the House at the earliest possible date, but we must recognise that there are considerable difficulties in the way. It depends in a great measure on the Treasurer of the Commonwealth when the Treasurer of this State is in a position to make a forecast of the future. I say, in view of probable circumstances, probable changes of office, that I do not think it possible for the Estimates to come down to this House earlier this session than last year, when they were introduced early in October. If any one—I trust no one does—if anyone imagines for a moment that the Government have any ulterior motive in asking for supplies, I should say, without any hesitation at all, we have no desire to press the second reading of this Bill. I beg to move the second reading.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): We all regret the lateness at which Estimates are introduced during the session, and it has been a matter of regret for many years. We are unanimously of opinion that it is almost a farce to con-

tinue bringing the Estimates of Expenditure down to this Chamber so late as has been the practice in the past. Members of the last Parliament agree with me when I say that the examination of supply last year was a farce absolutely. In most cases the money had already been allotted, and the examination was of the most cursory character, at the end of the Parliament. The first duty of the responsible House, the people's House, is to examine finance, ways and means, and that is the last duty this Parliament has devoted itself to in the last two or three years, and it has been most imperfectly done. I say again that the combination of circumstances about this Bill is extraordinary and unparalleled, taking into consideration the political position and the amount of money combined. One cannot help hoping it may be possible, in the future, to avoid this principle of bringing down the Estimates at the end of the session. I know that when the New Zealand Parliament met this year the Treasurer delivered his Budget Speech not after the opening of Parliament. We may seriously consider what has been proposed in Western Australia before—I think I myself proposed it once. Is there any insuperable obstacle against closing our finances in March? I have never been able to know that, though I asked the question. Sir John Forrest himself, at one time, went into the matter, and I think that the residuum of his advice and information was that he would prefer June. He still stuck to it, anyhow. I think we should have the Budget laid before Parliament as they do in New Zealand. When public works came before us, the wants and requirements of members, they would then be intelligently discussed, and we should know our exact position. I intend to ask the Treasurer now: Has the last loan placed upon the market been completely floated? I ask also for this piece of information, What amount of loan money is unused to the credit of Western Australia to-day? Perhaps he can tell me that.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): With regard to this Bill, I may say I intend to offer no opposition whatever to it, but I think the House is fairly entitled to a reply to the last sentence of the member for West Perth. I think that at this

time, and in view of the present condition of the money market, it is very important we should know the exact financial position of the loan fund.

**THE PREMIER:** How will it affect the Supply Bill?

**MR. MORAN:** Apart from the Supply Bill.

**MR. DAGLISH:** I want personally to understand if we have the money available to be appropriated in the manner proposed by this Bill, and, if not, perhaps the Treasurer will be good enough to inform us what are the intentions of the Government in regard to obtaining any immediate increase of loan funds. I believe there is a certain portion of the last authorisation still unfloat, and the House is, in my opinion, entitled to have full information on this subject from the Minister before the Bill is passed.

**THE TREASURER:** I should be very glad indeed to give the information asked for, if asked for in a proper way and notice given. But I am afraid I am somewhat out of order now in endeavouring to speak a second time.

**THE SPEAKER:** The hon. member has a right of reply.

**THE TREASURER:** The last loan issued was not fully subscribed. There remains, roughly in round numbers, £160,000 of that yet to be raised. If I am asked whether there is an actual cash—

**MR. MORAN:** A brilliant success for the 4 per cent. loan!

**THE TREASURER:** It has been a greater success than any loan raised by any Australian State recently.

**MR. MORAN:** Not quite so successful as the Perth City Council loan.

**THE TREASURER:** Vastly more successful than the Perth City Council loan, and I may say that the credit of Western Australia stands as high in the money market as does that of any other State.

**MR. MORAN:** Which money market?

**THE TREASURER:** Either the Australian or any other money market.

**MR. MORAN:** Look at the latest cables in the *West Australian* and see what prices are quoted there.

**THE TREASURER:** I shall proceed. I had better repeat that the credit of Western Australia stands equally as good as, if not better than, that of any other Australian State in the money market of

Australia and in the money market of London to-day. Asked if the Government have any intention of raising any more loan moneys in the immediate present, I can only give for an answer an unqualified "no." The Government would not be justified at the present time in making any effort for additional loan money. Let me explain, if I may, why £500,000 is asked for from general loan funds. Money will have to be expended upon loan works. Even if taken out of revenue it will be debited to loan; and it is necessary, in order that the bookkeeping of the Treasury shall be accounted for, that the money should be voted both from revenue and loan funds.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Clause 1—Issue and application of £1,000,000:

**MR. HASTIE:** In view of the statement made just previously that the last loan was not subscribed for by £163,000, were applications still being made for the balance?

**THE TREASURER:** The issue was still open and still being subscribed for, daily.

**MR. HASTIE:** The Government would still give opportunities for subscription towards it?

**THE TREASURER:** Yes.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted; read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### THIRD DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous day.

**DR. ELLIS (Coolgardie):** I understand that this morning there was, in one of the papers over which a Minister is supposed to preside, a comment upon the adjournment of the debate last night. It was not the fault of the Labour party that the adjournment took place, nor was it the fault of the Opposition. We were quite prepared to go on with the debate; but I was given to understand that the ordinary custom, certainly in the earlier portion of the debate, is that a member from each side should speak alternately; consequently when the member for

Hannans (Mr. Nelson) sat down it was naturally expected a member from the Government side would get up to continue the debate.

THE PREMIER: How can the hon. member make that out? With only 18 men we cannot go one and one all round.

DR. ELLIS: We did not intend to carry it out all round; we only intended to commence in that fashion. In continuing the debate on the Address-in-reply I should like to deal, which I had not originally intended to do, with one or two observations the Premier has made. The first thing was that he had a great objection to the pledge.

MR. TAYLOR: The temperance pledge?

DR. ELLIS: I do not know whether it was a temperance pledge; but I am talking of the pledge that binds us and compels us more or less to act unanimously.

THE PREMIER: That is an intemperate pledge.

DR. ELLIS: It is intemperate for the Premier, because it will have the effect of moving him from his place. I should like to call the attention of the House to the fact that there is in office in South Africa at the present time a Ministry led by Dr. Jamieson, and that there a pledge has been accepted. The Progressive party in South Africa, supposed to be connected with capital, have found it necessary for legislation in that Colony to adopt a pledge. Every man supporting Dr. Jamieson is pledged to abide by the decision of the majority or go back to his constituents. If that is generally adopted throughout Australia and is done in South Africa, there seems to be some proper reason for making members adhere to a pledge.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member did not say that last session.

DR. ELLIS: I was not here.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: But the hon. member's party was. The member for Mt. Margaret was here, for example.

DR. ELLIS: I was not here last session, and I take none of the sins of last session on my shoulders. The Premier took great credit to himself for the increase of population in this State, and said it was owing to the large amount of good legislation that was passed that population was increasing. But a much more serious question has cropped up.

I refer to the unemployed. I fail myself to see what advantage there is to a State if the population increases and the unemployed increase more; and I think that is one of the great points upon which we are at difference with the party on the Government side.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member ought to prove that statement that the unemployed are increasing.

MR. DAGLISH: Everyone knows of it.

DR. ELLIS: I shall deal with a few of the facts later.

THE SPEAKER: Order! I desire to give new members in this House the greatest possible hearing, and desire that my wishes shall be met in that respect. [Several MEMBERS: Hear, hear.]

DR. ELLIS: I quite agree that possibly in Perth things are shining beautifully; but they are not so on the goldfields. The number of miners employed on the goldfields diminished last year. I should like to know if that is a sign of prosperity. I can give the number of miners employed during the years 1902-3. There were 14,000 in 1902 and 13,850 in 1903. Is that an improvement in the State? The whole of the Eastern Goldfields depend upon miners, and if miners are diminishing, should we say the State is progressing satisfactorily? I think not. I hear that even in glorious Perth, as we call it on the goldfields, there is a question of a reduction in wages in the building trade. That does not look as if things were too prosperous—as if things were too good.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Is that reduction of miners for the State, or for the Eastern Goldfields?

DR. ELLIS: It is for the Eastern Goldfields. I have not worked out the figures for other parts of the goldfields. On the fields, and I am talking now of the term applied to the fields which I am connected with, the Eastern Goldfields, we know perfectly well that times are harder than they were. We have frequently to do without luxuries we used to have, and from our point of view the State has not been progressing. The Premier asked "What had he done that he should be turned out of office?" Why had the Labour party such a 'down' on him? When a man looks to a party to support him and keep him in office for two years, and then at the first moment

turns round and spurns that party, he does not deserve much support from it.

**THE PREMIER:** That statement is false.

**DR. ELLIS:** If the Premier thinks that the statement is incorrect, all I can simply state is that the Press have most flagrantly misreported him. I was not at Bunbury when he made that speech, but I never heard anybody contradict the statement that it was made by the Premier. If the Premier did not say what he was reported to have said I am glad to know it.

**THE PREMIER:** I said that the Labour party had not kept me in power.

**MR. DAGLISH:** We put you in power, at any rate.

**DR. ELLIS:** It was generally understood through the fields that the Labour party kept the hon. member in power last session. I can only give the idea that is generally held over the fields from one end to another. If the Premier can prove that the Government and the Labour party had not been working together last session, I can understand his attitude; but if they worked together last session, was the Premier justified in turning round and telling the country not to have anything to say for the Labour party? If the Labour party kept him in office, was it fair to turn round on them?

**THE PREMIER:** They did not keep me in office.

**DR. ELLIS:** They could not keep the Premier in office. They did their best to do so; but the country would have nothing to do with him. The Premier says we have made no charges against him; but to my mind what I have pointed out is a very grave and serious charge. I wish to go into the question whether this magnificent material, moral, and social prosperity which the Premier has stated is true; have the laws which he has passed and the measures which he has propounded acted so well that the State is progressing favourably towards plenty? I think, when we consider the question carefully, it will be found that it is not so. The Premier says there is nothing against him or his administration. I hope to deal with one section of his administration to-day—the greatest, the railways—that section of administration over which the Minister for Railways is supposed to preside. I intend to deal rather fully with that, but before starting

I wish to make a few observations on the general prosperity of the State. I maintain that the administration up to date has not been satisfactory. It has been costly, it has been injurious, and it has been provincial; and if the Premier does not think that a sufficiently strong statement to put him out of office, I am sorry for him, because I think it is strong enough for anyone else. Let us start and deal with this brilliant State. We were told we had a surplus; at any rate, we were led to believe that. Members will notice the careful wording of the Speech. We were led to suppose that we had a surplus.

**MR. MORAN:** That was last month; this month things are different.

**DR. ELLIS:** I have the figures. The expenditure for 1904 was £3,698,318, and the revenue was £3,550,000, or a deficiency of £148,000. Do members consider that is going the right way in legislation? It is no answer to say, "We are taking the surplus of the previous year and thus making a surplus for this year." What business company would do such a thing as that? The country has a deficiency of £148,000.

**THE TREASURER:** You forget the Estimate.

**DR. ELLIS:** I am taking the revenue and the expenditure for the year. Have we gone to the good or the bad on the year's transactions? I am not considering whether or not it is advisable that the consolidated revenue should be dealt with as a whole.

**THE PREMIER:** The estimated expenditure based on the revenue, *plus* the surplus.

**DR. ELLIS:** I say you spent more than you got. That is the straight way to put it.

**THE PREMIER:** Parliament said we should.

**DR. ELLIS:** Parliament said you could, or you would not have been able to do so; but you are not going the right way to do it. It is true the revenue was £200,000 more than in 1902, and the expenditure was £150,000 more than last year; but the expenditure was £500,000 more than that for 1902. That is a tremendous increase in expenditure.

**MR. BURGESS:** But that was to help the unemployed.

DR. ELLIS: I will show how the unemployed were helped in the matter shortly. I maintain that when a country's expenditure is increasing and the revenue is decreasing, we cannot say that that country is going in the right direction. Anyone who studies the finances will see that the position of Western Australia is not so good to-day as it was two years ago. We cannot raise money so easily, yet we have been spending money more freely. I should like to take one of the little signs of the times, which I suppose possibly more than anything else, to those who study the finances, shows how the wind blows. Let us take the average account in the Savings Bank. That is a very fair straw to show which way the wind blows, and to show what is the position. In the year 1902 the average account in the Savings Bank was £41 17s. In July, 1903, it had fallen to £41 5s.

MR. BURGESS: It is in the land; confidence in the country.

DR. ELLIS: In December, 1903, it had fallen to £39 5s. I suppose it is still in the land.

MR. GORDON: The Labour party was growing then.

DR. ELLIS: In June, 1904, it had fallen to £36 6s., or a net fall for the year of £5 on the average amount of money in the Savings Bank.

THE TREASURER: Had not the number of depositors increased?

DR. ELLIS: It had increased, but not in proportion to the population. If the hon. member could show that the number had increased in proportion to the population the argument would be good. It means we are losing on the average deposits in the bank 8s. per month.

MR. BURGESS: And putting it into the country.

DR. ELLIS: You may be putting it into the country, but there is very little to show for it. I cannot see how you can be putting it into the country when the average is falling. If there was a fall in the large amounts I could understand it; but anyone who understands finance cannot say that would make a fall in the average. It would be a fall in the total, but the average has gone down, and that is the serious part. The average has been steadily falling for 18 months; month by month it has been going lower,

until this month it has reached the lowest point yet reached.

THE TREASURER: Reached in any one year?

DR. ELLIS: No, I do not say in any one year. I said last month. That is very clever on your part, but it "won't wash."

THE TREASURER: What was it in 1898?

DR. ELLIS: I have not the figures with me now. The present Government were not in office in 1898. They took office in 1902, and ever since they took office the Savings Bank deposits have been falling steadily, until the lowest point has been reached in their term of office. I know that 1898 was a special year; 1896 was the boom year. I am speaking of the time since the State has been increasing in population, since this magnificent prosperity, since we have had this social, moral, and material prosperity, the Savings Bank deposits have been falling, to keep the country going, I suppose. Let us turn to the gold. It is said we are in a beautiful position, that the exports of gold have increased by two millions; but of those two millions one million has been dividends, and we as a State derive no benefit from dividends excepting from the dividend tax. That is not a sign of the increasing material prosperity of the State. Of the gold increase, principally it has been in dividends; but I tell members that mining has fallen off. The number of miners employed to-day is less, which is a serious position. Let us go into the question of the money which has been spent so carefully from the Savings Bank. One naturally supposed there would be an increase in our exports, but what do we find? The total exports have fallen from 1901 to 1903—the total exports excepting gold—by £60,000, which is a nice sign for this progressive country! Our Savings Bank accounts are being invested in the land, one hon. member says: that is the advantage we are getting. It is not that, but because everyone has to draw savings to keep things going; that is why the deposits in the Savings Bank are coming down. The country is not going to the good but to the bad. It is more difficult to get loans, it is more difficult to raise revenue, people are worse off right through the goldfields; the country instead of having

that magnificent prosperity is gradually sinking.

THE TREASURER: Is Western Australia singular in that?

DR. ELLIS: I should like to make a point in answer to that question. I will read to members one passage from the King's Speech on this matter. The Speech says:—

In no similar period of three years has any portion of the Commonwealth experienced such striking and permanent advance in its material prosperity and in the social and domestic well-being of its people.

THE TREASURER: In respect to recent loans, I asked.

DR. ELLIS: When I get on to the loan question I will give the hon. member just as much as he wants.

THE TREASURER: There is great difficulty in raising loans.

DR. ELLIS: I will explain the reason why. The number of miners on the Kalgoorlie field has fallen from 6,300 to 6,100. I am told that the A.M.A., one of the largest mining unions on the fields, has an enormous proportion of unemployed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: What figures are you quoting?

DR. ELLIS: I am quoting from the figures from 1901 to 1903. The figures are supplied to me by the Department of Mines, so that I assume they are correct. The value of the ton has fallen, the value of the gold output has fallen. I think the Mines Department has now got the gold ounce down to £3 11s., the lowest point it has yet reached. I should like to deal carefully with the railways. That is a question which some members may know I have given more than ordinary attention to. I have with me complete railway reports from the year 1892 to the present time, a period of 12 years, and the figures that I shall give will be a complete analysis of this period. We shall see how the administration of the Government pans out when I come to deal with the railway figures. The railways, members will understand, are naturally very important to the House, for out of a total of 15 millions of loan money, the railways have absorbed eight million pounds, and out of a revenue of 3½ millions the railways give us a revenue of 1¼ millions, which is pretty good. It is about three times as large as that of any other State

in Australia. The total expenditure of the State, per head, is £16 17s., but the railway expenditure is £7 8s. The Commonwealth expenditure, throughout Australia, is only £7 7s. per head; so that members will see our railway expenditure is equal to the total expenditure of all the States of Australia, and thus the railway figures are of paramount importance to the country.

MR. MORAN: What a progressive country we must have been!

DR. ELLIS: We have been progressing with loan money more than any other country on God's earth. The average railway expenditure of the other States is £2 18s. Spendthrift New South Wales only spends £8 a year to our £16, and the railways of the other States only cost £2 18s. per head. Members will understand therefore that the railways are a very important department to the State. Therefore I may be excused if I weary members slightly in placing the railway figures before the House. I wish to deal with the railway figures under three heads, and I wish to use strong terms. The three heads are: the greed of the Railway Department, the folly of the Railway Department, and thirdly the misrepresentation of the Railway Department. In dealing with these three heads I shall take them in order. To deal with the first, the greed of the Railway Department, I should like to put it in a very simple way. The Eastern Railway practically carries two millions of money, the Eastern Goldfields Railway 1¼ millions, and the other railways 2¼ millions; very nearly equal quantities. In addition to that we must make allowance for two million pounds' worth of rolling-stock; so we can practically divide the eight millions, for the sake of convenience, into four amounts of two millions each. Now the profit on the whole of the railways last year was roughly £30,000. Firstly I deal with the Northam section. When I talk of the Northam section, I mean the trunk line from Fremantle to Northam. When I talk of the Eastern Goldfields section, I mean the line from Northam onward to the goldfields. When I talk of the other railways, I mean the South-Western, the Great Southern, and the Northern. I divide them thus because



they are so divided in the railway reports. The division is not mine, but that of those who are responsible for the figures. Last year the Northam section made a profit of £60,000, the Eastern Goldfields line a profit of £68,000, and the other railways, with their two and a-quarter millions, made a loss of £97,000. There was not a profit on any one of the three.

MR. BURGESS: Give us the figures for each.

DR. ELLIS: I will give you them presently. For what year do you want them?

MR. BURGESS: Any year you like.

DR. ELLIS: In 1902-3 the Northam railway profit was £60,000, and the Goldfields railway profit £67,000—a total for the Eastern Goldfields railway of £127,000. The loss on the South-Western line was £34,000, on the Great Southern £37,000, on the Northern £25,000—a total loss of £96,000. I think this will satisfy the hon. member that I know what I am talking about. The total profit on the State railways was about £30,000. I am now talking on a subject which I know accurately. I have here every railway figure tabulated.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Pardon me; you are talking of 1903.

DR. ELLIS: Of the year ending 30th June, 1903. I have the official report in my hand. Presently I shall deal with it more in detail. Or if you allow, as is perfectly fair, half the profit on the Northam line to go to the goldfields, because that line carries all the traffic which reaches the goldfields, we find roughly the Eastern goldfields line made a profit of £100,000, that is with a capital expenditure on the line of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  millions; whereas the three other lines, with a capital expenditure of  $2\frac{1}{4}$  millions, have made a loss of, roughly, £100,000. So one can easily see that on the face of it things are not quite equitable. If members would like to have the question put in another way, so that they may clearly understand it, I would point out that the Northam line, after paying working expenses, depreciation, and interest, made a nett profit of £100,000, and that its earnings were contributed by 55,000 people, which forms the greatest railway tax in the world. That is why I wish members to understand these figures. These 55,000 people paid a net profit of

over £100,000 in addition to the interest on rolling-stock, the expenses of working the line, and the interest on capital. Now let us look at the earnings per head. This is another way in which people conversant with railway figures naturally look at the question. In Western Australia for the year 1895-6—that is, just before the great developments—the railway revenue per head was £4 6s. 6d.; in 1901, £7 4s. 3d.; in 1902, £7 1s. 2d. Now the next highest State in the group is South Australia, wherein I believe the railway revenue never exceeded £3 4s. during those years, and where it has fallen as low as £2 16s.

MR. MORAN: Some of the Eastern States had very high railway returns in the early days.

DR. ELLIS: That is quite possible; but I wish to point out that we are now paying per head practically three times as much as any other State in the Commonwealth; and the situation is infinitely worse when we come to consider the relative proportion of the goldfields payments to the payments of the people served by the other lines. Divide the amounts by the population, and what do we find? That the goldfields population are paying the exorbitant amount of £18 per head, whereas the rest of the State is paying for the use of money £3 8s. per head. These figures are accurate; they may be wrong by a few shillings; but members can check them for themselves. The goldfields population of which I am speaking consists of only 55,000 people.

MR. MORAN: You admit that the element of distance must be taken into account.

DR. ELLIS: I have not the slightest objection to our paying a reasonable amount; but I do object to our being charged at least £100,000 more than we should pay, when the rest of the State is not so charged. I mean £100,000 over and above interest and expenses. Can we not now understand why the miners are falling off in numbers? And why are not all members conversant with these figures? Because the Commissioner of Railways is good enough in his report to state that it is impossible to compare our railways with those of any other State, as without a knowledge of the local conditions this could not do otherwise than

mislead. As far as I can make out, the present publications mislead with a knowledge of the local conditions. Where is the equity in asking that the goldfields should pay 10 per cent. for loan money, while the people in the other parts of the State pay only 1 per cent. for loan money? Do we call that equity or justice? Can we expect the goldfields to go ahead while such an exorbitant demand is made on them for loan money advanced? Why, it is absolutely impossible that they should prosper. And we have to pay not only for our own loan moneys but for those of the rest of the State also; and to show to what extent this is so, let us remember the loud song made as to the Coolgardie Water Scheme not paying depreciation. What is the fact? That the water scheme has saved to the Railway Department, from what I can make out, at least £30,000 a year.

MR. BURGESS: That is all charged to the railways.

DR. ELLIS: That £30,000 a year gives the goldfields no advantage whatever. If it were debited to the goldfields railway and also set against some of our interest or some of our heavy charges, then there would be some sense in the procedure. But it is not.

MR. BURGESS: You had better separate.

DR. ELLIS: We do not wish to separate. We are quite satisfied that we and the rest of Western Australia will be better as one community; but we do expect from our brethren on the coast some justice, something like reasonable equity, and not the imposition of 10 per cent. interest in one place and 1 per cent. in another. Let us look now at the rolling-stock. Do members know that half the rolling-stock is practically debited to the Eastern Goldfields line, though some of it had disappeared before the Eastern Goldfields line was thought of? Do they know that the capital cost of the railways is piling up year by year, while nothing is being done to keep it within anything like an equitable limit? It is true that this cost is much below the cost in any other State of Australia; but every year it is increasing. I believe by improper expenditure and the improper management of the railways; and all this bears heavily against us on the goldfields, because we are being debited with half the total rolling-stock on the line from Northam

onward. We have to pay half the interest and half the depreciation on that rolling-stock; and can the goldfields be expected to go ahead with such a heavy tax upon them? I do not wish to worry the House with railway details; but I must give a few figures to show the position in which the railways stand. Take the locomotive power. We know that is always worked out at so many pence per train mile. In 1903 it was 33d., in 1901 29d., in 1900 23d., and in 1896—the last year in Mr. O'Connor's administration as Commissioner—it was 16d. The cost of train haulage has doubled. Does not that suggest that possibly our methods of administration are not perfect; that possibly there might be some improvement made in the Railway Department, when the cost of haulage has absolutely doubled in less than 10 years? What is the cost in Queensland? 17d.; in Victoria 18d., in South Australia 20d., in Western Australia 33d. Take again the total expenses per train mile. These are, in Queensland 41d., in Victoria 47d., in South Australia 41d., in Western Australia 65d.—one third more. Do members consider that economical and capable administration?

MR. MORAN: Do you expect our lines to be run as cheaply as the Eastern States railways?

DR. ELLIS: I see no reason why they should not be run as cheaply. When we come to that question of cheapness I will give you some startling figures as to which are expensive lines and which are cheap.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Give us the figures about the wages, for instance.

DR. ELLIS: I will give you them. We notice that the cost of our locomotive haulage worked out at 33d., as compared with the cost for the other States, the highest of which is 20d.—a difference of 13d. We notice that in expenses per train mile the difference was between practically 41d. and 65d.—that is 24d. What is the difference in wages? In Western Australia wages are 17d. against an average in the other States of 11d.—a difference of only 6d.; yet the total expenditure works out at 2s. Seventeen pence per mile is no very great sum to pay for our wages. I feel convinced that this State has no objection to paying that

and to paying more, provided the railways are in other respects economically administered; but we do object to the fact of the wages bill showing an excess of 6d. per mile over the average for the other States being made an excuse for a total expenditure of 24d.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Is there nothing else higher?

**DR. ELLIS:** I will come to two or three things which are nicely managed; and you will understand presently, Mr. Minister, why they are higher.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I understood there was no item higher, except wages.

**DR. ELLIS:** No; there are many more. I have now a few things to say about another little matter, which I know the House will take in the good part in which they are meant, and that is the question of Collie coal; one of the very serious reasons why our railways are so expensive. I wish the House to understand that I have no objection to subsidising the Collie coalfield to anything like a reasonable figure, and I have still less objection to the State taking over the Collie coalfield and working it, because the State is the largest user. What I do object to is the present condition in which Collie coal is used.

**MR. A. E. THOMAS:** What is the use of working a useless article?

**DR. ELLIS:** I do not say it is useless.

**MR. THOMAS:** You call it useless, and yet you propose to work it for the State.

**DR. ELLIS:** If the hon. member will wait a little he will understand that a thing may be useless for a State as a whole and not useless for a part of that State, that it may be highly economical to use Collie coal in one part of the State but not economical to use it in another part of the same State. The Collie coalfield practically employs 400 men or a little under, and the figures I am about to quote are given on the authority of one of the highest officers of the Railway Department, showing that Collie coal in 1903 cost the country, over and above the price paid for it, £75,000. I am sure the House was not acquainted with that fact before.

**MR. MORAN:** We had that last session.

**DR. ELLIS:** I want to be fair, and I do not want to say that we on the goldfields are not willing to pay that £75,000.

What I do say is that if we pay it, let us pay it in black and white; not pay it so that you have to work and work till you find out how much it really is. What I say is that Collie coal cost this State £75,000 in 1903 over and above the price paid; and I say the actual cost is concealed, hidden up, so that anyone looking at the departmental figures will find they are published in such a way that we cannot see straight out what the actual cost is. [Interjections by Mr. FRANK WILSON.] I thought I would be asked the question, so I took the trouble to get ready for it. If the member for Sussex, who I understand has some little interest in Collie coal, will look at the Railway Report for 1901, he will find at page 41 some information is given about Collie coal and how the cost is arrived at. I said I was speaking on the authority of one of the highest officials in the Railway Department, Mr. J. T. Short, and on page 41 of his report for 1901 he shows the cost of Collie coal to the State. The report shows that Collie coal was bought cheaper by a total of £8,597; but that coal cost the State a total sum of £47,420 in that year; consequently, the State was £29,000 to the bad on that purchase. This result was arrived at in the following way. The price of Collie coal is taken as the cost at the pit-mouth in Collie, and the price of Newcastle coal is taken as the cost landed at Fremantle; so members will see that if we worked on the basis of a private concern, we must add to the purchase price the cost of carriage from Collie to Fremantle, in order to put the two kinds of coal on equality at that point. Mr. Short has given us what is the amount used, and how much it cost to the State; and he tells us it cost £24,250 to haul Collie coal from the pit-mouth to Fremantle.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Are you speaking of coal carried to the goldfields?

**DR. ELLIS:** I am talking of coal as it arrives at Fremantle, one kind from Collie and the other kind from Newcastle, and I am dealing with the cost of haulage from Collie to Fremantle. Mr. Short has carefully shown that as the efficiency of Collie coal is one-third less than that of Newcastle, and as you have to haul the coal over great distances, you must haul three tons of Collie coal for one ton of

Newcastle coal. That again increases the cost. Mr. Short shows that in the year 1901 coal required for the railways was hauled from Collie, 100 miles at a cost of 10s. 10d. per ton, the total cost being £23,170. I am not a railway expert, but I am giving the figures of the man in charge of that department, and I presume he knew what he was putting in his report. I have taken the trouble to go into what it has cost the State for Collie coal since the coalfield was started, and I find that the Collie coalfield employs an average of 380 men, that the Government bought 330,000 tons of Collie coal, out of a total of 510,000 tons sold by the Collie companies; consequently if you work it out the Government are practically employing 250 miners. What has it cost the Government to employ them? And could we expend that money on them in another way, or to the greater advantage of the State? I find that Collie coal cost the State in the year 1900 a total of £26,256, in 1901 the cost was £38,823, in 1902 the cost was £65,114, in 1903 the cost was £75,484, and in 1904—here I am only able to estimate the amount for the current year—on the basis of the prices given at the end of the report, the cost will be £71,000. In other words, Collie coal has cost the State over and above the price of the article, in absolutely hard cash, £277,476 since the coalfield started operations.

MR. ANGWIN: What has the State saved on the cost of Newcastle coal? It must have saved 10s. or 12s. per ton as compared with the price of Newcastle coal previously.

DR. ELLIS: As to the idea of saving money by using Collie coal instead of Newcastle coal, I have here a complete statement of everything concerning Collie coal. You want to know what the State saves by buying the mixture, as compared with what we would have had to pay for Newcastle coal. I take that to be the fair question put by the hon. member. In the year 1900, and assuming we had bought Newcastle coal at the standard price, the saving to the State would have been £4,000; in 1901 the mixture would have saved £8,000; in 1902 the mixture actually cost £10,000 more than Newcastle coal would have cost; in 1903 the mixture cost £20,000

more than we should have had to pay for Newcastle coal; and in 1904, on the basis I have already mentioned, the shandygaff will have cost £16,000 more than Newcastle coal.

MR. ANGWIN: But the price of Newcastle would have been raised considerably.

DR. ELLIS: I suppose that is why Mr. Commissioner George has now before him a little contract in which the Collie tenderers are raising the price of coal to be supplied to the Government. The present price asked for Collie coal, I understand, is 12s. 9d. per ton, if it is of any steaming value at all; consequently, the price will rapidly go up again. I do not say you should not support or use Collie coal; but I desire that the actual sum the State has to pay should be voted in this House, and the actual cost of the coal should not be hidden in the railway accounts as it is now. That is what I want to say about Collie coal, and that is one great reason why the locomotive expenses have risen from 21d. per train mile before Collie coal was used to 33d. per train mile since Collie coal was used. The money has been apportioned in the following way: the goldfields line £140,000, Northam, £70,000.

MR. ANGWIN: What would the goldfields have had to pay for coal if Collie had not been opened up?

DR. ELLIS: I cannot tell that. I treat the figures as they stand in the Railway Report, Newcastle coal at 28s. and Collie coal at 13s. a ton in 1902—and yet there was a loss on the purchase of something like £10,000 for that year as compared with the price of Newcastle coal. I particularly want to make it clear that the published accounts do not enable us to understand how we are working. I want to explain farther how Collie coal works out, that is taking the mixture as used right up to Leonora. Supposing Collie coal starts at Collie at 10s. 6d. a ton, and Newcastle coal starts at Fremantle at 18s. a ton, what would be the working value of the coal when it got to Niagara? That is a fair question. It is a straightforward question. What would Collie coal and Newcastle coal stand to the department at Niagara, both being hauled there in trucks for use? Collie coal would cost 72s. per ton and Newcastle coal 48s. a ton. It would take a

lot of rise in the price of Newcastle coal to get from 48s. to 72s. per ton. [MEMBER: The figures must be wrong.] The figures may be wrong, but I am working them out on Mr. Short's statement. Mr. Short explains, on page 14, that the average cost is 10s. 10d. for carrying coal for 100 miles. If we work out the distance to Niagara, and allow two tons of Newcastle coal to three tons of Collie coal, which I am given to understand is about the relative value, for I am told that that is how the Admiralty work it out, the result is 72s. at Niagara for Collie coal, and 42s. for Newcastle coal. How can we expect a line to pay with that advance? The House has been unacquainted with these figures. The Ministry have been concealing these figures; they have been allowing the country to foster an industry at any cost. I am in favour of fostering an industry if it can be done at a reasonable rate, but not at any cost. If the country wishes to give £75,000 a year to Collie, let them give it, but do not conceal the fact. Do not take £35,000 from the goldfields in extra railway freights because the line will not pay, and then come and say, "We have to make the line pay, therefore we have to debit the goldfields line with this £35,000." It would pay the Government to put the Collie coal miners into something else and save the money, for I understand £4 per head is what the country is paying at the present time. I have dealt I think pretty fully with this matter. I hope I have not fatigued the House. That is what I call the folly of the railway administration. Before I leave Collie coal, a question put by a member (Mr. Thomas) comes in properly at this stage. He says that Collie coal is a useless article. Taken as a whole it would pay the State to burn every ton of Collie coal at the pit's mouth and thus save £35,000 on the five years. [MEMBER: Nonsense.] It is an absolute fact, and I will give hon. members the reason. Collie coal has cost the State £277,000; the Government have paid for the coal £243,000; consequently if we take the Collie coal and burn it at the pit's mouth the State will save £35,000.

MR. THOMAS: Have you made any allowance for water to keep the coal from burning?

DR. ELLIS: The member for Dundas wishes to pile up the agony, but the agony is quite bad enough without it. It would be better to take the miners and employ them at clearing ground or any other work for the next five years than to pay, as is being done, for Collie coal. It will pay to use Collie coal on the South-Western Railway, and if the Collie-Narrogin Railway is built it will pay to use Collie coal on that line, and if the Collie-Narrogin Railway is run as far as the Great Southern Railway it will pay to use Collie coal on the Great Southern line; but once Collie coal passes Fremantle it does not pay to use this coal.

MR. TAYLOR: What period do your figures cover?

DR. ELLIS: From the year 1900 to the 30th June, 1904. I have a complete statement worked out, and to show that there should be nothing wrong about it I did not trust myself, but I gave the figures to one of the best actuaries in my particular town, that is Coolgardie, and he worked them out. Coolgardie is to me my native town because I have been associated with it from its early days, and I hope to be associated with it until I die. I wish that some members of the House had before them the railway report for 1903, because I am going to deal with a matter that is more serious than what is in the two foregoing reports. Members cannot really understand this report unless they have the railway figures before them. I did my best to have the figures placed before the House; I do not know if they have come down yet. If not, members will have to take my word for them and verify the statements afterwards. The third heading on which I wish to deal is that of misrepresentation. I claim that the railway figures have been misrepresented. That is a very serious charge to make as regards any public figures whatsoever, and I make that charge with every feeling of the great gravity of it. If any member happens to have the documents before him, if he will look at page 38 of the report for 1903—I hope the Minister for Railways will take notice of this, because I expect the Minister to annihilate me, for I know he knows more about the railways than I do—

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That should be easy.

DR. ELLIS: I know it should be easy, and I hope the Minister will explain one or two other matters which I intend to deal with shortly. I take table 3, which is the general revenue account, and which purports to give the debtor and creditor account of the Railway Department. When I say to the House that every figure except the totals on one side of the page has been manufactured, I am making a serious statement. Every figure on one half of the page has been manufactured, and I can understand that members will want some proof of that statement. If we turn to page 43 we find a statement of the expenditure for the year. It says right across the page "Expenditure for the year." These figures are likewise manufactured. [MEMBER: Where, in Germany?] No; in Western Australia; they are not allowed to manufacture these things in Germany. They have such advanced technical education and scientific education there that they would not be allowed to manufacture figures which pass muster in Western Australia, but which would not be allowed to pass muster in Germany. I do not wish to deal with the report for 1903, and I will explain why after I have dealt with the report for 1902. I will tell members in a minute why I am not dealing with the report for 1903. There was a beautiful little trap laid for me in the 1903 report, but I did not fall in. Naturally members would not understand the 1903 report; they would not see the little trap laid for me in 1903. [MEMBER: Perhaps they do not understand it now.] Quite probably. I know several old members of this House do not understand it, for I happened to be travelling in the train with five members of the House, and some dispute arose about railway matters, and I produced a copy of the railway returns for the year. Three of the members asked me what it was, as they said they had never seen it. They were coastal members, I admit, and they were not asleep. One member admitted that he had seen it, but had never looked inside the cover, and another member had seen it, but did not understand the figures. In this document we have table No. 3, which I say has all been made up. To prove that the figures have been made up I will take one item,

and that item is called "Maintenance of Ways and Works and Buildings." That purports to be the cost of each individual line under each particular head. How can members understand when I tell them that these figures were published in the same report as the imaginary figures. I will show members the actual ones in the Railway Report, and then they will be able to judge if I am right in my statement.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: You fell in all right.

DR. ELLIS: I am glad to hear it. I may have fallen in. I know nothing about the figures, and if the Minister for Railways will be good enough to take me out of it I shall be much obliged. To find out if the report was dealing with the same figures or not, one has to look at the total. The figures have been published in the one report and the other, and I say the figures are the same figures. I prove that they are the same because they have the same total. The total for maintenance in 1902, published by the gentleman in charge of the maintenance, Mr. Dartnall, is £215,320 4s. 5d. I like to be accurate in the pence in this account. Now let us see if I tumbled in. I thought that was a little thing raised for me, and that is why I did not use the 1903 report. The total in the other schedule amounts to £215,230 4s. 5d. Ordinarily I would think these were the same figures. The one total goes back every year in the same way, and one thinks they are the same figures. They are not the same figures. It appears that for the first time during seven years they have been altered, and that is why I did not use the 1903 figures, because there is £8,000 difference in that case, and I would have tumbled in if I had used them. Let us look at the difference. Taking the Eastern Railway, table 3, which gives the estimated not the actual cost, says the cost of maintenance was £58,000, whereas the man in charge of maintenance, the man in charge of the actual cost, says it was £60,000; for the South-Western line, table 3 says that the cost of maintenance was £29,000, the man in charge says it was £32,000; for the Great Southern, table 3 says it was £9,000, the man in charge says it was £18,000, which is just double; for the Northern line, table 3

says the cost was £13,000, the man in charge says £28,000. Now we come to the only exception, where the man in charge puts the actual maintenance at a greater figure than the estimated cost for the Eastern Goldfields Railway: table 3 puts the cost of maintenance at £104,000, whereas Mr. Dartnall, in charge of the line, puts it down at £75,000. If that is not a misrepresentation, it goes a long way towards misrepresentation, and anyone who does not understand how misrepresentation is done could not discover the difference. I wish just to say the reason why I do not use the figures for 1903 is that, for the first time, the figures are not the same. I would like the Minister for Railways to take a note of this, and explain why all the figures are not the same.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** But you are using the 1903 figures.

**DR. ELLIS:** Yes. The figures published in table 3 for the year 1903 are £231,970, whereas Mr. Dartnall puts down the cost of maintenance for that year at £238,509, a difference practically of £8,000. Let us look at it also in train miles. The report points out that all the lines are charged at 11d. per train mile; but what is the real figure? For the Northern line the cost was 23d., for the Great Southern the cost was 23d.; and I am sorry to notice that the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) is not here, because I would like to inform him that the cost of maintenance for the Eastern Goldfields line is 8d. per mile, which shows very well against any other railway in Australia. I have worked out the amount that this came to for the years in question, and find that the total overcharge for the Eastern Goldfields line in the seven years—I am sure the Minister would like a note of this—is £184,000, and the total amount taken off for other lines in the State, with one exception, is a similar amount, £184,000, which has been added on to the goldfields line and taken off the maintenance cost of all the other lines. Do you call that straight finance? Do you call that misrepresentation or not? To my mind that is the grossest misrepresentation, when you have in your office figures which show one thing, while in your accounts the figures show another thing. I take the year 1897 as the beginning of the seven-years

period, because that is the year in which the late Mr. O'Connor gave up the control of the railways; and although I have spoken and fought against the Coolgardie Water Scheme, no one can think of Mr. O'Connor as other than almost a genius, who as an engineer developed no ordinary capacity; and I will say his railway figures while he had charge of the lines in this State are a perfect treat to read, for in them you will find none of those hanky-panky games in his day. You find that for every line he shows the cost for maintenance, for haulage, for everything. It was only when Mr. J. C. Davies took charge of the railways that they started to make figures look different from what they are. In Mr. O'Connor's day the accurate figures were published, and there is no reason why the accurate figures concerning the railways of the State should not be published at this day. What do we find? When we come to the total cost of the railway lines in this State we find that railways representing three millions of the total capital are not paying interest at all; and that is the reason why the figures are "faked." I know this is a very serious statement to make; but I say, and anybody interested may look it up, for I have here a little corrected chart made to show the maintenance cost taken off other lines and the maintenance cost added to the Eastern Goldfields line, so that we can have the correct figures before us although the Government cannot publish them. And what do we find? That there are three millions of capital invested in railways in this colony that are not paying interest on the cost; that they are just paying working expenses but not paying interest.

**MR. BURGESS:** They are paying the country.

**DR. ELLIS:** They may be; and I presume the hon. member thinks the goldfields line is not paying the country when it pays 10 per cent. on the capital invested! On the other lines during the seven years I have mentioned, and on a capital cost of five million pounds, a net profit has been made of £1,486,000, that is for all the years since the Eastern Railway extension beyond Northam started working in 1894.

**MR. DIAMOND:** Nine years of railway working.

DR. ELLIS: I am giving nine years because that is the period since the Goldfields Railway started. Ever since that time the Eastern Goldfields line, as it subsequently became, has paid one and a half millions of profit over and above the cost for rolling-stock, for maintenance, for depreciation, and for other things; whereas the other railways of the State have not paid interest on the money, or practically have made a loss of over half a million of money; so that three millions of capital put in one part of the State has made a loss of over half a million, while five millions put in another part of the State has made a profit of one and a half millions during that period. That may appear to be a good result to gentlemen living in the three-millions portion of the State, but it does not appear a fair result to other people living in the five-millions portion of the State. The people on the Eastern Goldfields have had to pay this enormous sum for railway losses in other parts of the State. I have shown that there is a debit to the goldfields people of £180,000 charged to them for railway maintenance, and there is most likely a debit against them of some £500,000 which I have not been able to trace, for I assure members it has not been considered wise to let us know more than those in charge of the accounts can possibly help. Taking it all round, I find the goldfields property, the Eastern Goldfields railway, has made a profit of £1,200,000 since it started, this being over and above all the charges that can properly be made against the line; and it would, if properly handled by a private company, have given £100,000 more over and above the interest and other charges; or, to put it in another way, the goldfields line has probably returned to the State the whole capital value in addition to the cost of everything else. And now I turn to what the Colonial Treasurer may look on as the most interesting part of my speech, because it is not entirely a railway matter but a Treasury matter. A loan prospectus has just been issued in Melbourne, a copy of which I hold in my hand, dated 9th January, the Treasury, Perth, 1904, and signed by James Gardiner, Colonial Treasurer. This has been issued since the last Parliament rose, and there is in this prospectus a very interesting set of railway figures,

and consequently that is how I came to be acquainted with them. The Treasurer there puts the railways and tramways of this State at the capital sum of £8,900,000. That is a very big figure. When I look at the Railway Report on the matter, I find that the figure is not as stated in this loan debenture, but it is £7,760,000.

MR. MORAN: Perhaps his figures are later than the report you have.

DR. ELLIS: To make quite sure, I will read them. It says:—

The statement hereunder sets forth the position of the States loan expenditure on the 30th June, 1903, and shows that nearly the whole of this money has been spent on reproductive public works.

MR. MORAN: Is that in the prospectus?

DR. ELLIS: This sets forth the result of the financial year on the 30th June, 1903, and it states—this is the Railway Department's report—that the whole of the money has been given to them to invest. I know the little pitfalls, and I will deal with them directly. The capital expenditure is put down in the Railway Report at £7,760,000.

MR. MORAN: Is that loan or loan and revenue combined?

DR. ELLIS: Only loan. The revenue and loan combined amount to £8,141,000. This document says:—

The statement hereunder sets forth the position of the State's loan expenditure on the 30th June, 1903.

MR. MORAN: There must be something wrong, according to the statement.

DR. ELLIS: There is something wrong. There is a difference of over £1,000,000. It might be meant that the money had been expended on railways which had not been taken over by the department, for the department will not take over a railway until it is in going order. Under these conditions there might be £1,200,000 missing somewhere there. I wish to read one clause farther of the prospectus. It says:—

The railways and tramways, after paying out of their revenue £35,000 for construction of stations and sidings, and £54,490 for replacing obsolete and worn-out rolling-stock, returned a surplus for the year of £322,458, or £33,862 more than was necessary to pay interest on the capital expenditure of £8,905,868, and this year the result will be quite as favourable.

I presume this is dealing with loan moneys, as it is a loan prospectus. The



figures are given at £8,900,000, and what any ordinary person expects is that they refer to loan money.

**THE PREMIER:** But you are extraordinary.

**DR. ELLIS:** I quite agree with the Premier, as he will have ample opportunity of finding out. That is a very serious statement to make. In an official prospectus there is a difference of so great a sum as £1,200,000. It becomes more serious when we find that the statement of interest here sets out that the railways have made a net profit of £33,862 on the expenditure. There is a very grave difference between £12,300 and £33,862; but when we take into consideration that the £12,300 is on a capital of £7,700,000, and that the £33,000 is on a capital of £8,900,000, we begin to see that there is something very curious indeed in the statement, something that demands serious inquiry. There is a reconciliation account that is published in the railway returns, of the difference between the railway estimate and the capital expenditure. If we look at the Reconciliation Account which is on page 40, table No. 5, it will be found amongst other sums that there is a sum of £37,000 put to new railways. But the serious part of it comes in here: the whole figure is £8,600,000, including the £800,000 that has not yet passed into the Railway Department; consequently it must be shown that the sum that has not yet gone to the Railway Department has made a profit, roughly speaking, of something like £50,000 on the year's working. When the Treasurer publishes a loan prospectus, the statements in it should aim at being accurate and in accordance with the figures. The State's honour is involved in this document. It differs materially from the document of the Railway Department. Giving them all the Reconciliation Account, it is still £300,000 to the bad. What I hope the House is going to do, and what I hope the House will see is done, is that before the close of the session the Railway figures, the Treasury figures, and all the departmental figures will be accurately published and put in such a way that an ordinary man like myself may understand them.

**MR. ANGEWIN:** You don't appear to understand them now.

**DR. ELLIS:** I do not understand the discrepancies. I do not believe there is anything wrong in them, but I cannot understand them. I think the figures should be so published that there would be no difficulty in having them printed so that any reasonable man, in an hour or so, could arrive at what they mean. There is one answer that will be given me I know, which is that all this case is bogus; that the railway figures which I said were misrepresenting were made up on the train mileage. [**MEMBER:** Which figures?] All the expenses. As the goldfields happen to run half the train mileage of the State, the goldfields are put in the beautiful position of paying half the cost for the Southern and the Northern railways.

**MR. BURGESS:** Is not the Northern Railway a goldfields line?

**DR. ELLIS:** I am talking of the Eastern Goldfields and I am dealing now with the names which are given to the railways in the book, and they are given as the Northern and the Eastern Goldfields Railways. If the hon. member does not understand that, it shows that he is practically ignorant of the railway reports. The inequality of the thing is that the goldfields are charged with half the total expenditure for coal, half the depreciation, and half the whole cost. Is it fair to pile such an amount on a population of 55,000 out of a population of 240,000? Is it fair? Is it just? Is it honourable? If the Government are going to treat us like that, then they might put it in black and white, so that we should know what we are paying. In the old country they do deal with these things plainly. The expenditure which caused the Transvaal war loan is nothing compared with what we are paying on the railways here. The Transvaal loan only amounted to 18s. per head, whereas on our railway loan we are paying £18 per head, and I hope—here I look to the Opposition who represent decentralisation and not centralisation, for we want to see the whole colony treated on an equality—

**THE PREMIER:** The Labour party do not say so in their platform.

**DR. ELLIS:** They have said so on the platform.

**THE PREMIER:** It is not in their platform.

**DR. ELLIS:** I do not say it is, but it is a self-evident fact that a platform that does not differentiate one part of the State from another should have such a plank in its platform.

**THE PREMIER:** The clothing factory at Subiaco?

**DR. ELLIS:** That is not in the platform. The party to which I have the honour to belong wish to represent the whole State and not a part of it.

**MR. MORAN:** That same party supported the Government two years ago in raising the railway rates.

**DR. ELLIS:** I am not saying that in the past they may not have done so, but I say they have done it in ignorance.

**MR. THOMAS:** Time after time it has been stated to the House.

**DR. ELLIS:** There is a new party now, who will see that such things continue no longer. I look to the new members to say, whether on the coast or on the fields, that equal opportunity shall be given.

**MR. THOMAS:** That was one of the main points of the no-confidence debate.

**DR. ELLIS:** I have nothing to say to past Parliaments, thank God, but I hope to have a great deal to say to the present one; I hope to have a great deal to say on the question of centralisation. Let us know what each part of the State is debited and credited with. Let us have some idea of it, because that is the only way to manage any reasonable commercial concern. Are we not all here as directors of the commercial enterprise of Western Australia, and should we not know all the figures and insist on all the figures being published in an ordinary way? I have shown that there is ample reason why we should have that statement in the future. We want to see an equality between the coast and the fields, and I look to the party in Opposition to see that no inequality occurs in the future, so that the separation between the coast and the fields may no farther prevail.

**MR. E. NEEDHAM (Fremantle):** Seeing that no member on the Government side cares to reply to the onslaught made by the member for Coolgardie, I want to keep the debate going, and I rise to address this House for the first time. It was not my intention at the outset of the debate to take part in it, owing to a

physical difficulty; but as the debate has progressed I have physically improved slightly, and consequently I take this opportunity of joining in the fray. At the outset I can assure hon. members that I will not trespass long on the time of the House, particularly after the lengthy oration we have had from the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis). I am entirely in accord with the amendment moved by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish). I consider the Government of the day have taken a roundabout way in trying to find out the opinion of this House. Remembering as I do the famous policy speech given in the Queen's Hall, I thought the Premier would have faced this Parliament with something tangible in the shape of a programme, some strong remnant of that policy speech; but instead of that he has adopted this method of challenging the opinion of Parliament and in his reply yesterday to the member for Subiaco he adopted the same tactics as used in the historic campaign which has led up to the present position, the gist of his remarks being an attack on the party which now constitutes the Opposition in this House. He says we (Labour members) are entirely wrong in the position we take up to-day. It is very strange how some politicians use their thoughts as one would use his wardrobe, doffing or donning them at will. We heard some time ago that the Labour party in Australia were wrong in seeking power without taking responsibility. That was an old gag, and it has been used by the Premier; but so soon as that fallacy was exploded and the Labour party proved they were prepared to take the responsibility of office, we find the Premier and several more of his class turning round and saying that the Labour party have no right to aspire to the "sweets of office," as they term them, now that we are prepared to take the responsibility of office.

**THE PREMIER:** I said nothing of the sort.

**MR. NEEDHAM:** First the Premier said the Labour party were in the position of desiring assistance, and that they wished to occupy the direct Opposition benches. [Interjection by the PREMIER.] I say you have forced the position on us, and we are not cowards enough to shirk the responsibility that is now thrown on

us. I say advisedly that the day has passed for the Labour party occupying the position of a third party in the State, and that the time has arrived when in every Parliament in Australia the Labour party will either be the party in power or the party in direct Opposition. I will now refer briefly to the Governor's Speech as framed by his advisers. We are told in it that the Fremantle Harbour Works have been completed, at a cost of £1,500,000. I fail to see how these works can be complete without the addition of a Fremantle dock, and I do not care what party may occupy the Government benches, that is a work which will shortly have to be started.

**MR. A. E. THOMAS:** There are works of more importance.

**MR. NEEDHAM:** I question that. I desire to impress upon members this fact, that I am not approaching this matter in any parochial spirit, for it is a work of national importance. Hon. members may laugh; but those laugh best who laugh last. The Premier himself admitted that it is a work of national importance when he was speaking in Fremantle; but I recognise, while reading the Governor's Speech, that the reference to this matter is only another of the promises that are like the proverbial pie-crust, made to be broken—

**THE PREMIER:** You have no foundation for that.

**MR. NEEDHAM:** A promise made to be dangled before the electors. We have had too much of this from the old Governments in the past, and I hope the Government in the future will set a better example. [Interjection by **MR. MORAN.**] Fremantle in the past has been treated somewhat as a step child. It is said that Fremantle is the first and last port of call in the Commonwealth. Yes; in more ways than one: it has been the first place forgotten and the last place thought of.

**THE PREMIER:** Base ingratitude!

**MR. NEEDHAM:** Mention has been made somewhere of a proposal to construct a floating dock to cost £100,000. That would be an unsatisfactory makeshift, and I trust that whenever the work is taken in hand it will not be on the penny-wise and pound-foolish principle. We do not want a dock that may just serve the needs for to-day or to-

morrow, but we want something in keeping with a work of such national importance. I do not need to quote figures for proving the necessity of this work. It is well known to hon. members. I simply point out the neglect of the Government in not including a dock for Fremantle in the proposed works.

**THE PREMIER:** There are no works proposed in the Speech.

**MR. NEEDHAM:** Another matter in the Governor's Speech is that in the course of a few months the Railway Workshops at Midland Junction will be completed. In these few lines of the Speech the Government stand condemned. Six months ago those workshops were not completed, were in a worse state than they are at the present time, but notwithstanding that fact, three hundred workmen were rushed from the Fremantle Workshops and put pell-mell into the new workshops at Midland Junction. Those workshops are costing an unnecessary amount of money, and I contend that the work which has since been done at the Midland Workshops could have been done just as well at Fremantle, if not better. I have made this statement before on a public platform, that the removal of those men from the Fremantle Workshops to Midland Junction was nothing more nor less than a huge political dodge. I do not intend to dwell on the railway administration referred to in the Speech, especially after the remarks made by the member for Coolgardie, which compel me now to adopt different tactics. But allow me to add this, that we have a service seething with discontent from one end to the other; and from a discontented service you cannot expect beneficial results. Another matter referred to in the Speech is immigration. I am not in accord with that paragraph in the Speech at the present time. The idea is laudable; but charity begins at home, and although I recognise a necessity for importing desirable immigrants who will take up land and assist in developing the resources of this State, yet I contend that we have at our doors a vast number of men who, if given proper facilities, would be the first to put the land to a practical use. Let us deal with the problem at home, before we go abroad and seek to attract desirable immigrants. Perhaps the Minister for

Lands will say that everything has been done that can be done to induce people to take up land and work it. It is a very fine thing to give 160 acres free to a man in the country or to an immigrant newly arrived, without a prospect of getting from it the ordinary sustenance of life. It would be better to induce people already in the country to take up the land on conditions enabling them to make a living. I will briefly touch on the remarks of the member for South Fremantle in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply. He said the Labour party will not get to the position it ought to occupy so long as it is trammelled by the caucus. The hon. member knew when he made the statement that there is not a political party in any portion of the British Empire but has its caucus. The members who occupy the Government benches to-day would not face this House unless they were assured of a solid following behind them. The hon. member also said that the Labour party had no right to oppose the Government at the general election. It reminds me of erecting a figure on a pedestal, with a caution that persons looking at it are not to touch it. I fail to see what the member for South Fremantle has done in the past that he should be exempted from a contested election; and I can assure him that at the next election he will not be so cocky as he has been on this occasion. Dealing with his remarks, is it just an ordinary coincidence that the Labour party to-day occupy the position they do; that in the Victorian Parliament there is a solid body of members; that in Queensland there is a fair proportion; that in South Australia there is a fair proportion also; and that in Western Australia a party of 22 has been returned to this House in the Labour interest, to take up the challenge given by the Premier? We have to-day a Labour Ministry governing the destinies of the Commonwealth; and still the sun shines! Is that a mere coincidence? No; it is the law of evolution, and it only shows that the day is at hand when the victories the Labour party have won will be more emphatic, and they will reach a still stronger position. In conclusion, I desire to thank hon. members for the patient hearing they have given to a new member. I did intend to speak longer;

but having listened to the deluge of figures from the member for Coolgardie, he has taken a considerable amount of wind out of my sails; so I will content myself with again thanking hon. members for the patient hearing they have given me, and express a hope that our deliberations in this Chamber will be attended with beneficial results to the State whose destinies we are called to guide.

MR. MORAN: Can we not come to a division now, before dinner? What is the good of spinning it out any longer?

SEVERAL MEMBERS: Divide!

After a pause,

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I rise to speak with very great regret, more especially because I know that certain charges concerning administration will be made against the department which I control. I think it very unfair that statements are made in this House when a man has no chance of replying to them.

MR. MORAN: The Minister can get a chance by an amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think it a wise thing. It is what I expected from some goldfields members, more especially from the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor), who always waits until the attacked person has no chance of replying and then makes charges which that person will have not the slightest chance of refuting. It is with the deepest regret that I speak before the hon. member; but still there are certain charges made regarding administration, and I shall take this opportunity of replying to them. In the speech made by the leader of the Opposition, attention was drawn, at least it was stated that the cost of administration had been considerably increased in our various departments. It is only fair to myself to point out the work of the Mines Department in regard to the cost of administration and efficiency of work done. Certain figures were also used by the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis), and I am afraid that the member for Coolgardie has waded through the figures of the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), for they are altogether mixed. I do not know whether the hon. member is interested in the Esperance Railway and Collie coal; but his figures seem to be somewhat mixed, and I do

not propose to deal with them. We all ought to feel pleased with the speech just made by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Needham.) I believe the member for Coolgardie said that we want to represent the whole of the State, and that we want a party in power who shall represent the whole of the State. The member for Fremantle showed how we wanted to be represented, and he showed the injustice done to Fremantle by sending 300 men to Midland Junction. It mattered very much—

MR. NEEDHAM: There was expense to the State.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: More particularly to Fremantle. I am prepared to take the advice of the officers of the Railway Department. I think the member for Fremantle will admit that we have competent officers in the department. They said these workshops must be removed. At the present time the cost of repairing locomotives and carriages is excessive, and we were advised that if we removed these workshops and had properly fitted workshops at Midland Junction, these charges would be considerably decreased. I am quite satisfied that it will be a loss to the traders of Fremantle; and some people will admire the patriotism of the member for Fremantle when he points out how wrong it was to remove these workmen whom he represents. At the same time, I am quite satisfied that the department did a good thing when they removed these workmen; and I am quite sure that when we have these workshops fitted, at an early date, we will have a considerable decrease in the working expenses of the Railway Department. In connection with the administration of the Mines Department, members know we have had additions to that department, such as the Explosives Branch and the Mines Water Supply Branch; and a good deal of extra work has been attached to the department in consequence. I have no desire to add the cost of these new departments except as they apply to the Mines Department as it stands. In 1900-1901 the cost of the administration of the Mines Department, without the Boilers Branch, was £58,985; the next year it was reduced to £54,606, the following year to £50,155, and for this last year £48,223. In that small department a reduction of

over £10,000 was effected in the administration of the Working Mines Department; and I am sure no mining member will say that we have not had greater facilities for the people on the goldfields than years ago, and that the people are not being better treated. Still, the cost of that administration is £10,000 a year less than it was three years ago. I think I am quite justified in pointing that out. In these returns I have not included the wages and supplies for our State batteries. Of course, we know their work has been increasing. In 1901 they cost £25,000, in 1902 they cost £34,000, in 1903 they cost £41,000, and last year £60,000. I have not pointed that out, because we have for them a revenue corresponding with the expense coming in to meet the administration and maintenance of that system. In regard to the Boilers Branch we have appointed inspectors of boilers so that inspectors of mines may carry out their work more efficiently. The inspector of boilers has to send notice to a mine manager before he examines a boiler, but the inspector of mines may go on a mine without notice so as to give a surprise visit. [Interjections from several Members.] There have been no complaints with reference to inspectors of mines.

MR. TROY: How about the inspector of mines at Mt. Magnet?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: We find these statements from men who never go near a mine.

MR. SCADDEN: They have come under my notice.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I would not take the experience of the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) on mining matters. When he has had a few years' experience he can speak to us. The hon. member has been secretary of the workers' association in that district. How is it that he has not made a complaint?

MR. TROY: I think the Minister has heard complaints.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is the hon. member's duty to look after the lives and welfare of the men in his district. If he has found that the inspector of mines has not been doing his duty in that district, where are the complaints that he should have made?

MR. TROY: Were no complaints made against that officer from Boulder?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Is this some more tittle-tattle? I think the hon. member was speaking just now from his own experience.

MR. TROY: Quite so.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member, as secretary of that organisation, knew that the carelessness of the inspector would imperil the lives of men in these mines, why did he not send down a strongly-worded complaint and make it public? No complaint has been made in regard to that officer since he has been on that field.

MR. TROY: There were complaints from other fields about him, were there not?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Prior to his going there?

MR. TROY: Was he not shifted from Boulder because of these complaints?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think the complaints came from the workers' organisation. I was under the impression that the inspector did not attend to mines as he should do, and I transferred him to another district. I had my own reasons for making the transfer; but, speaking from memory, I do not think it was done upon the reports of the association there. I am not saying it is a fact, because I am only speaking from memory in a matter of this sort; but I know that the inspector of mines is a man of irreproachable character. If there was any cause of complaint, that complaint should have come from those who represented the workers' organisation.

MR. TROY: Not necessarily.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Because they do not care about anything else except unionism, and that members should pay something in each week to pay the secretary. It is the secretary's duty to raise quarrels between the workers and employers, so that he can have something to do. I want to point out the work done lately for the benefit of these people. Look at the Mining Commissions appointed.

MR. TAYLOR: And see who is appointed upon them.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I defy even the hon. member for Mt. Margaret to point the finger of reproach

at any gentlemen connected with these Commissions.

MR. TAYLOR: I point to the success of those who appointed them.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I thought, when I received no complaints from those huge organisations, that those people felt satisfied. I am certainly not going to try and satisfy the member for Mt. Margaret. This one thing the hon. member feels quite satisfied about, that I have never bothered my head to satisfy him. The hon. member is pretty well known, not only among members on this side, but also among the members of his party. I believe he did, a little while ago, aspire to be leader of that party. He had three votes, his nominator's, his seconder's, and his own. He should be proud.

MR. TAYLOR: Where did you get that information from?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member can contradict the statement if it is not correct.

MR. TAYLOR: I shall deal with your administration.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If he deals as he did at Menzies, I know how he will deal with it. When he got up on a public platform at Menzies he said: "Gregory pretends to be a friend of the miner and prospector. Do you know that Gregory is vice-president of the Chamber of Mines; and how can he do his duty to that chamber and do his duty to the miner and prospector on these fields?" It did not matter whether there was any truth in that statement.

MR. TAYLOR: According to the *Kalgoorlie Miner* it was so.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Still that was only one of twenty other things. I do not want to be drawn off my point. I want to show the House that the statement of the leader of the Opposition regarding my department was wrong. He said that the cost of its administration was increasing. I want to point out to members that, although we are getting administration from the Mines Department better than was got three years ago, the cost to the State has been £10,000 less than it was three years ago.

MR. TAYLOR: We have better facilities now in the matter of railway communication.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** There are, I believe, certain other matters with which we have been charged; but I want to speak a little while administratively. I would like to point out one very important thing with regard to one of the first actions I took, on assuming control of the Mines Department, dealing more especially with the surrender of gold-mining leases. It was a well-known practice started in this State, quite illegal—that of accepting the surrender of gold-mining leases. Some 18 months ago a company in London published a statement that they had certain values to the extent of £50,000, and were quite satisfied that they would be able to obtain from the State land to the value of £30,000. They had the impudence to publish this in London, and they anticipated that this State would accept the surrender of their lease, and that they would get £30,000 worth from the State. The whole thing was illegal. One of my first actions after taking control of the department was to stop that. Then there is the question of the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie, which had been promised for years. The mining people at Kalgoorlie are satisfied that there is a good School of Mines there now.

**MR. ANGIN:** I hope you will build the Fremantle dock; similarly it has been promised for years.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Is this some other parish trouble? This School of Mines had been promised for years.

**MR. A. E. THOMAS:** The money was put on the Estimates, and you would not spend it.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The money was on the Estimates, and was not expended by a previous Government. We came into power about the middle of April, 1901. The vote would have expired on 30th June, and I had no time therefore to engage a director of the School of Mines, and I had no time to build the school, but I did allocate a small portion of the money to start the work. The member for Dundas, I am sure, will admit that we did push on with all the possible speed we could, and now free assays are made by the Director of Mines, and Mr. Allen is doing good work in reporting on these

assays. Then there was the appointment of the State Mining Engineer. I heard remarks by the leader of the Opposition—but I am sure he was ashamed of them afterwards—of the dishonesty of the Premier. He stated that this dishonesty consisted in the appointment of the member for Greenough as Minister for Works. Had this appointment been made after the elections, possibly there would have been some ground for the charge, but having made the appointment prior to the elections the charge falls to the ground. In reference to the appointment of the Director of the School of Mines and the State Mining Engineer, any of those interested in the success of the mining industry must feel that the gentlemen appointed to these two positions were well qualified for the positions they now hold. The method of appointment was, after inviting applications, to appoint a committee of selection. There was no political influence brought to bear, and by obtaining the services of Mr. Allen as Director of Mines and Mr. Montgomery as State Mining Engineer the services of two good men were obtained, the appointments being free from political control. These two officials command the respect of all members, no matter where they sit. We have tried to have all appointments made free from political influence, and the gentlemen I have referred to are able to earn the salary paid them and to do justice to the State. Mr. Montgomery's report for the year will be published shortly, and I am sure the mining members will look forward with a great deal of pleasure to its appearance; especially when we remember the report made on the Phillips River field by this officer, his work will be highly appreciated by those interested in the mining industry. There is the question of the concentration of labour on leases and the amalgamation of leases. Some strong criticism has been made as to the Mines Department dealing with these matters, but I would like to explain that when I took office leases were amalgamated no matter how far apart. I gave the strictest instructions that no concentration of labour should be allowed unless the leases belonged to one and the same parties, and that no concentration of labour should be allowed unless the leases were adjoining, and unless the work on one lease would

lead to prove and help the work of the other, and then no amalgamation should be made for over 96 acres. Beyond that, tribute was to be granted, and the tribute was to be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on virgin ground, and the highest amount of tribute was 10 per cent. No royalty was to be charged unless a man was earning at least £2 a week. As to amalgamation, a statement has been made that I allowed amalgamation where leases were not owned by one and the same party. I was charged with having allowed certain things to be done. I would like to point out to members what were the facts in relation to these amalgamations. These matters may be of small consequence to members, yet it is only fair to put the facts clearly to the House. I want to point out what has been done in administration. I understood that under the old Mining Act no leases could be amalgamated unless they belonged to one and the same person, and Section 43 of that Act was quite silent on the point. It says that any number of leases up to 96 acres can be amalgamated on certain fees being paid. When the new Act came in I found that certain leases had been amalgamated which were not owned by one and the same party. The new Act states that these leases shall not be amalgamated unless owned by one and the same party; and instructions were issued by the department to that effect, and I have power to cancel the amalgamations if they were not made prior to the Mining Act of 1894. Any amalgamation effected prior to that date must continue. Under the new Act these amalgamations cannot be allowed, and I have power to cancel the old amalgamations. I gave these instructions some time ago, and in future no amalgamation of leases will be allowed except subject to those conditions. I may also mention that certain Royal Commissions have been appointed. The Government have appointed a Commission to deal with the sanitation and ventilation of mines. The member for Mt. Margaret spoke of the gentlemen who were appointed to that Commission. Could we have a better man than Dr. Jack, the late Government Geologist of Queensland, a mining engineer of great experience? Then there is a representative of the mine managers of the State on that

Commission, and of the Miners' Association. I am satisfied we have a good Commission, in spite of what the member for Yilgarn said about the work of that body. When we obtain the report from the Commission, and I hope to have it within three months so as to enable legislation to be brought forward this session on the question, I am satisfied it will do much to render the conditions of those working underground better than they have been in the past. Have these things been asked for by the miners or their representatives?

MR. TROY: It is the duty of the Minister to bring these things forward.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is his duty, but he does anticipate that those who represent the unions should have some knowledge of the conditions of the work, and come forward and give assistance to the Minister so as to have things remedied.

MR. TROY: You refused to recognise composite organisations.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I absolutely refused to recognise composite organisations.

MR. TROY: And they refused to recognise you.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: At the present time I venture to say that there are no composite organisations. The A.M.A. and the A.W.A. do not happen to be composite organisations. At the time I refused to recognise them they were composite organisations. The butcher and the baker and every man in trade was connected with these organisations, and I decided, if possible, to have an organisation of the miners alone, and that organisation I should recognise. I believe in unionism; I believe the men should have an organisation so as to bring grievances before Parliament, and to show the Minister what can be done for the betterment of their labour. When a Mining Bill comes before the House members will then be able to bring forward something for the betterment of those they represent. I expect the member for Mt. Magnet, occupying a position as secretary of an organisation of that sort, will do something more than settle strikes or foment them, but will bring forward something to assist in bettering the condition of the men.



MR. TROY: What reason is there to suppose that he has not?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: As Minister of the department no communication of that kind has come from him.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (continuing): When the House adjourned, I was speaking of the various Royal Commissions appointed at the instance of the Mines Department to deal with various phases of the mining industry. These Commissions were not initiated by the various organisations on the goldfields, which ought to be trying to secure better conditions for all the men who come to work on the ground, but were initiated by myself and my department. An objection has been taken by various members to the *personnel* of these Commissions; in fact the leader of the Opposition said that Dr. Black, instead of acting on the Mines Ventilation Commission, would have been better employed in Perth looking after the health of the people; and I did not notice that any objection was taken by the mining members to that remark. Now it is well known that Dr. Black is a bacteriologist, and that the Commission must make bacteriological examinations with a view to discover whether any of those diseases to which miners in the old country and in the Eastern States are subject can be found here; yet no objection was taken to the statement of the member for Subiaco that Dr. Black's time on that Commission was being wasted.

MR. DAGLISH: I did not say it was being wasted. I said he was taken away from his work.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: He was taken away for a very worthy object.

MR. DAGLISH: Then you should appoint another chairman of the Board of Health.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Such an appointment is not one for my department to make. I wish simply to assure the House that as the Government were desirous of having a Commission which could present to Parliament a report which would be useful to members in dealing with future legislation, and in

the interests more particularly of men working underground, we acted judiciously in making that appointment. Then a second Commission was appointed to deal with the alien question. Many members will recollect the agitation on this subject a few months ago, and how the bubble burst. It burst very quickly when we got a report from the Customs Department as to the great influx of aliens—Asiatic and Austrian. I think I was able to show there was no danger or menace to our own workmen through any influx of these people.

MR. DAGLISH: We shall have the bubble bigger than ever shortly.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The Press on the fields told us that there was a large influx of these people, and that our own workmen could not get work on the mines because undue preference was given to these men. I have the statistics for 15 months, from the 1st January, 1903, to March, 1904. There was only an increase during the 15 months of seven Italians and Austrians, a less number of Italians and an increase in Austrians. Then I had reports from the inspectors of mines. The hon. member must remember that the returns given by the inspectors have been promised to any of the organisations if they desire to have them. If any organisation wanted the report of an inspector, a copy of that report was available at once for it. So that, if any objection could be taken to these reports, it was the duty of these organisations to make it. I wanted their assistance in that matter. It was so easy for them to show us wherein the mistake occurred. I also want to emphasise here that I desire the assistance of these organisations in reference to the Commissions, to enable us to get the very fullest particulars. The instructions to the second Commission are to find out whether there has been any importation of labour under contract. We were placed in a very great difficulty in getting evidence in regard to that, because we could hardly make a person incriminate himself; and I thought the Commission would have extreme difficulty in getting any evidence in regard to it, so I gave them a second question to report upon: "Has there been any undue preference given to the employment of alien labour, and, if so, what is the cause of that

preference?" We are not asking this question at the instigation of the workers' organisations. None of the secretaries of these organisations have asked that we should do anything of the sort. We have been trying to get at the root of the evil, and have asked the organisations to give us all the information they can, and to come forward, not with the tittle-tattle of the street, but with sworn evidence. If they could not prove there was any importation under contract, then they might try to assist us in finding out whether there has been any undue preference given to the employment of alien labour. The Commission will give us a finding in regard to this, and as to what is the cause of the undue preference, if there is any. If we cannot find out whether any undue preference has been given, we may then find out whether there was any importation under contract. I was simply trying to put a fair question. I did not want to get a statement from any person in the street; I wanted to get sworn evidence, under Royal Commissioners, from all the various organisations, mine-owners, and employees, who are asked to give us what information they can. I have not had the assistance I expected. The members of the Commission tell me that it is extremely hard to get the men to come forward and give evidence. When it is a matter entirely for the benefit of the workers of this State, the workers' organisations should give every assistance to the Commission to enable them to furnish information for the assistance of Parliament.

**MR. HEITMANN:** They did so on the Murchison.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** It has been reported to me that this was not so, because the chairman asked me to let somebody go ahead to try and get the men to come forward and give the information requisite. Then I asked the Commission to go one bit farther and find out what was the effect of the contract system. Has that been asked for by the labour organisations?

**MR. HORAN:** Yes.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I was not aware of it. I had no request by the A.W.A., or even by the A.M.A., when these Commissions were appointed, to have Commissions appointed to inquire into these matters. I have heard com-

plaints; I have heard men say that under the contract system many men are working at rates at which they can hardly earn tucker. On the other hand, we have heard mine managers say that under the contract system the great majority of these men earn far more than they would under the rates provided by the Arbitration Court. I did not know which to believe, and I asked the Royal Commission to try and find out. It is all very well to get statements made, but we want to get sworn particulars. And there again I want the assistance of these organisations. I want them to come forward; but they always make excuses, and say: "If we give evidence in this case, we won't be employed on the mines in future." All the information can be obtained by the various secretaries. They can get evidence on the various contracts, and they can go before the Commission and point out that a contract was let on such a lease and the men only earned so much a day, and that at the conclusion of another contract the men only earned so much a day. The secretaries can give us this assistance. I want to emphasise that we are not to take any notice, and I hope the House will not take any notice, of wild statements of men in the street. We want to remember that, now the chance is given, we shall only take the sworn evidence given before the Commission. The Commission is going to all the goldfields centres, and every opportunity is being given. When we get the report of that Commission we shall know whether we shall be justified in bringing in legislation that will in any way restrict the contract system. If we find that under that system harm is being done, or wrong is being done to the workmen, I am satisfied that a large number of members of this House will be prepared to have legislation brought forward to prevent that harm being done. We want the information from that Commission, and the opportunity is being given by me, and not at the request of the various organisations. Then there is the Commission appointed with regard to the Boulder Deep Levels. I think that is a Commission doing very good work indeed. There have been a great many scandals lately. In fact, for many years there have been gross scandals in connection with the mines in Western Australia. I have a leading

article dealing with the Peak Hill Gold-fields. Five years ago the shares were £7, and now they are worth 10s. It points out how one of the directors of that company during the past few years has been getting rid of the interest he has held in that big mine, and how the company paid their last dividend from borrowed money. The chairman of directors in 1898 started to get rid of his shares until 1903, and in that time he got rid of no less than 83,000 shares. Mr. Darlington Simpson made a good thing out of that mine. At least, I presume he did, if those shares were his. They were in his name. That is how things were done, and according to the *Financial Times*, the last dividend was paid out of borrowed money. There is also the Boulder Perseverance. We all know the report made of that mine. I have not the figures given by the manager, Mr. Nichols, and the late report which reduces the value of that mine very considerably. I have not got the figures dealing with that; but those dealing in mining know how disgraceful affairs were in that mine.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The figures were 500,000oz. to 99,000oz.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Then there was the Boulder Deep Levels. I happened to be in Kalgoorlie at the time when the matter came out, and I saw there was necessity for inquiry. Many thought it would be of no use, but few Commissions have given better results than the Commission inquiring into the Boulder Deep Levels.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** It should have been extended.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** It is some time since those other things occurred, and it is questionable whether we could go into them again. I had a petition to extend the scope of this Commission; but the question is where we are to end once we start. It is a matter for full consideration; but we have had a Commission with regard to the Boulder Deep Levels, and the work of that Commission has shown us that some legislation is necessary in the interests of the investing public. We must have some legislation to deal with this; but in bringing forward new legislation we must always be careful that we do not harass the industry. We have to look

into all matters pertaining to gold mining, and we can easily be too strict in regard to legislation dealing with reports. For instance, supposing a manager comes across a rich chute, I do not think he should report, "I have struck a rich reef, containing 50zs. to the ton." If we had a report on every rich strike in a mine, we should have values going up for a day and coming down the following day. A certain amount of latitude must be allowed to a mine manager in any legislation we bring forward, otherwise we should make a great mistake; but we want to bring forward legislation, without harassing the industry, to protect the investor, to compel people to be more honest, to put a penalty on a person issuing a false return. That is what we want to do, and we must also have a little more power than we have now. At present we have no power to inspect a mine to ascertain values. We have power to inspect a mine by the Inspector of Mines under the Mines Regulation Act; but we have no power to deal with the values of mines; and I think, in any legislation we bring forward, we should give the State Mining Engineer the power to examine a mine for the purpose of ascertaining values. If that power was in the hands of the Minister and companies knew it, when there was any scandal, or a report was sent to the Minister to justify him in assuming that incorrect reports were being published on any property, power would be in the hands of the Mines Department to send an officer into that mine to report on it. The ordinary fortnightly and monthly reports of these mines should be verified by statutory declaration, and we should also have, for the benefit of all shareholders, proper plans of mines kept, with the assay values shown on the face of the plans. It is a matter for regulation how they should be worked out; but these plans should show the true assay values, the width of lode, and should be accessible to every shareholder. One could easily ascertain the value of a mine, make the manager all the time responsible for his mine, and also compel him to include in his report verified values of the gold, month by month. Then I think also we should have local directors so as to enable us to have an easy transfer of shares here, and also to

provide for information being given here at the same time as it is given in England. I have often seen Press comments to the effect that if we only enforced the Companies Act and the Amendment Acts of 1898 and 1899 we could insist upon these companies having local directors. At the present time such is not the case. It is optional whether these companies shall have local directors or not. I think that in any new legislation brought forward we should insist upon these companies having local directors. They should also provide for easy transfer, giving the same power to directors here for transfers as is possessed by the directors in London; and their reports should be given at one and the same time as they are given in England. I think that if we have legislation to do this—and I have asked this Commission to show us what legislation should be brought forward—we shall be able to do much to prevent scandals occurring in the future such as have occurred in the past. I do not know whether I misunderstood the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis), but he certainly gave me the impression, when speaking of the number of people engaged in mining upon those fields, that he believed there had been considerable reduction during the past few years. I am under the impression that the hon. member said there were 2,000 less engaged now than two years ago?

DR. ELLIS: No; 200. The country is not going ahead.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Were all those figures about 200 less being employed to-day than two years ago?

DR. ELLIS: Certainly. The country is not going ahead, but is going back.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: What about the machinery introduced?

DR. ELLIS: It has not employed any more men, anyhow.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: In 1901 the number of men engaged in the mining industry on the Eastern Gold-fields was 16,087, and I am not counting the Phillips River, which I think the hon. member included; the number engaged in 1902 was 16,080, and in 1903 16,056.

DR. ELLIS: Six thousand; not 16,000.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member got so thoroughly mixed up in those figures that he did not know what he was talking about.

DR. ELLIS: I thought you meant Kalgoorlie.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The total number engaged in the mining industry in Western Australia in 1901 was 19,791; in 1902, 20,476; and in 1903, 20,716, or an increase for last year of 240. Of course the hon. member was fixing up his figures, and was thinking of the number of tons of Collie coal that could be burnt at the pit's mouth which were not used on the railway locomotives. I will leave that sum for the member for Coolgardie to work out.

DR. ELLIS: I was dealing purely with the Kalgoorlie fields, the oldest fields of the lot.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I gave the figures for the Eastern Gold-fields, not including the Phillips River, which the hon. member did include; then I gave the figures for the whole State. He made a remark in reference to machinery. I have to tell the House that in 1902 for every man employed in the mining industry gold was gained to the value of £388; and in 1903 gold was gained to the value of £423 per man employed.

MR. SCADDEN: How much did each man get?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I want to show the gain to the industry, and the figures show an advantage to the working miner. There is more machinery, and there are greater facilities for winning gold, but we must have a better class of miner working to-day than we had a few years ago, otherwise we could not show the great results we are showing in Western Australia. We have been able to show conclusively that the miner in Western Australia can compare most favourably with the black or the yellow labourer in the Transvaal. I like to point out these things, because, though I do not happen to be a Labour candidate, I have no desire to reflect upon the miner of Western Australia; but of course he is led astray very often by the secretaries of these organisations. I feel quite sure about that. We have been able to show an increase of over 11 per cent. for last year. The dividends show an increase of 42 per cent. There is one little increase in copper production. In 1902 the copper production was only 2,262 tons, worth £8,090; and in 1903 there were 20,526

tons, worth £56,541. We are going to have a big industry in this State in connection with the raising of copper. I feel quite satisfied that the little field so badly represented by the hon. member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas)—

MR. THOMAS: What?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I feel quite satisfied we shall have a very good field and shall be employing a large number of people there. I think I shall be justified, on the point of going out of office, in saying something once more in regard to the battery system, because members take a great interest in it and wish us to make the system as successful as possible. We have been able to show the other States of Australasia that the Government can carry out a system of this sort; that we can in a legitimate manner help the prospectors of Western Australia. My desire is to help the men who are willing to help themselves. I have no sympathy, or very little, unless a man can show a good case to merit assistance in deep sinking. Sometimes we have to assist when a good case can be shown and is of national importance. Then, of course, it behoves the Mines Department to give some assistance; but the proper assistance is to enable owners to develop their own property, to be able to say to them "If you will only raise the ore, if you will only try to develop your mine, we will provide you with battery facilities to enable you to get value." We have produced gold by this State battery system to the value of £900,000, and in nearly every instance this money has gone into the pockets of our own miners. We should try to develop that policy, and a farther policy should be to endeavour to develop the formation of small local companies. I cannot understand why we get so little assistance from the people of Western Australia for the purpose of having small syndicates and companies to assist in the development of this State. It behoves the agriculturists to assist us. It should be the duty of the people of Perth and Fremantle to try to assist the mining industry. If it were not for that industry things would be bad indeed for the agricultural industry, and they would be a thousand times worse for the metropolis. Everything should be done to assist that industry. Of course the

excuse of these people is, "Well, in the old days we put our money into these companies and we were swindled." We want to see if in the future we cannot give them a cleaner state of things, and show them that if they put their money into mining they will get a fair and proper run for their money. We should do all we can to encourage our own people. I hope, no matter what Government is in power, the public battery policy of the past will be carried on in the future. I have no doubt the system can be improved upon. It has been improved upon from what it was in the past, and I hope we shall make still farther improvements in the future. I have, of course, my own line of policy marked out, and it will be the duty of others to formulate some policy so as to give greater facilities to these people than they have had in the past. I do not think that up to the present Parliament has ever expected the batteries to pay a profit. Members have always expressed it to me, "We do not want them to pay sinking fund, but we think they ought to pay working expenses."

MR. THOMAS: I understood you wanted to crush as cheaply as possible, even if you lost.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I say we should treat the system as a whole, and try to make the profit made in one place pay for the loss in another, making the batteries as a whole pay their working expenses. When I speak of prospectors I am not speaking of those people who have never lived a mile from a railway station in their lives.

MR. THOMAS: I have no railway station to live a mile away from.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: These men do not want to be spoon-fed, but they want a legitimate system; therefore I think this battery system should be made to pay working expenses. When I came into power we were losing about £7,000 a year and we were charging 15s. to 20s. per ton. In the district represented by the member for North Murchison they were charging 17s. 6d. per ton; now they have had a sliding scale of from 10s. to 14s., or they can have their crushing done and the charges made according to time.

MR. HOLMAN: But you charge them a minimum rate.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** We have to charge a minimum rate because we found cases where we were crushing 15 and 16 pennyweight stone as low as 10s. We would not crush ore under 10s. per ton. I wanted to make that battery pay, as I want to make all batteries pay, their working expenses. Instead of having a loss of £7,000 at the end of the year I have been able to show a small profit. I want to show the advantage of having the sliding scale. In 1902 we crushed 39,516 tons, and in 1903 49,233 tons, and the value of the increased tonnage was only 1,050 ounces. We were giving facilities for working low-grade propositions, therefore we were doing good work when we organised the sliding scale. In 1902 we only crushed 39,000 tons, and in 1903, with the sliding scale, we received 49,000 tons. That shows members how the work was progressing. We have heard a great deal in connection with the charges at the cyanide plants. I was very hopeful that I would be able to reduce the charge for treatment from 10s. to 8s., because I think we should be able to do the work for less. We have been able to make a profit on the cyanide treatment, but there was a slight loss in connection with the battery treatment. In 1903 the revenue was £49,215, while the expenditure was £46,676, leaving a credit balance on the year's operations of £2,539; and, although we spent £2,000 in additions and improvements, there was still this profit of £2,539. During the year we treated 32,369 tons of tailings at 10s. per ton, and the revenue we derived was £16,184, which showed a profit of £629. Taking our charge of 10s. a ton for the 32,000 tons, the total treatment shows a profit for the 10s. per ton of £629. In regard to the working of the department, I want to point out as to the regulations under the new Mining Act that assistance is to be given to prospectors by a prospecting area. Those regulations have not yet been completed. I have not been able to get the regulations from the Crown Law Department, but I propose to allow a prospector to take up an area of 16 acres, and hold it on a small fee for registration. He will hold it for six months, and the warden will have the option of granting him a farther term of three months. The prospector must comply with the proper

labour covenants, and he will not be allowed to crush any stone from the property without a permit from a Government officer. In the Phillips River district we have given assistance, and the member for Dundas, no matter how much he may oppose the Government, must admit that efforts are being made to try and assist that district. Everything possible is being done to try and assist the prospectors of that field, and I hope it will not be long before we get a smelter at work at that place, and thus be able to realise on our ore and give the people a far greater impetus to work than they have been able to get in the past. Work has been done in other districts. For instance in the Kimberley districts we have been putting wells all over the place, and the people say that more work has been done there during the last 12 months than in the preceding 12 years. I am sending a 12-head battery to Nullagine to give the people some benefit from the public battery system. Public batteries have been erected at Laverton, at Burtville, at Wyluna and Black Range, and we are now sending a battery to Duketown and I hope it will soon be at work. Out of the Mines Development Vote we are subsidising batteries owned by private people. These batteries crush at the Government rates and we pay the owners a subsidy out of the Mines Development Vote. The subsidy is a few shillings on all stone crushed. In this way we give facilities without having to erect public batteries. At Mt. Morgan the people are paying 10s. a ton for crushing, and that amount the Government reduce. The crushing is carried out according to the Government rule and everything similar to a Government battery applies.

**MR. TAYLOR:** The public would soon have a public battery.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The public usually express a great deal more satisfaction with a public battery than with a private one; they feel more satisfied that with public batteries there is more benefit because they are afraid the owner of a private battery will take and obtain a great proportion of the profits which are not his by right. I claim that the public battery system is now a pronounced success, and I do not care what party goes into power, pro-

vision must be made on the Estimates to carry on the system. All over the fields the miners favour it. I have come to the conclusion that there is no better or more legitimate way of assisting our mining people than by doing this. There is only one other matter I wish to speak about, and that is in reference to remarks made as to the Government paying the expenses in connection with the Hicks-Gregory case. In regard to this matter I have no desire to go into the merits of the case, and I have not heard anybody yet say that I was wrong in the action which I took in regard to the dismissal.

MR. MORAN: What did you say?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I said that so far as I could judge the general expression of opinion was that I was quite right as to the dismissal. A number of members are under the impression that I should not have given my reasons for the dismissal to the Press, but that I should have stayed my hand and not carried out the dismissal until members had heard the reason; but members will recollect that that dismissal occurred when Parliament was not sitting.

MR. DAGLISH: What month?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I think it was in April; Parliament met in July.

MR. MORAN: Did you win the case?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: No; the hon. member knows quite well why the case was not won. There was a libel, and "the greater the truth the greater the libel." The libel was this, that I stated when I visited the fields that I had heard rumours that this gentleman had been in the habit of borrowing money from miners and other people and that justice was not always done. That is the libel I gave to the Press, the statement that I heard that rumour, and the words that justice was not always done. I gave my reasons for the dismissal after that. Those reasons were fully borne out by the evidence and the strictures by the Chief Justice. I should be sorry to discuss the merits so far as the dismissal is concerned because I do not wish to go farther in that matter, but I wish to explain to members why I gave information to the Press. Hon. members must know that as Minister for Mines I occupied a peculiar position. It is not only a departmental position but a judicial position that I hold. There are

appeals to me on many matters, such as labour covenants or the forfeiture of a lease. The power as to these matters is reserved under the Mines Act to the Minister for Mines, and I have to act judicially; so when a question of forfeiture came before me and I did not concur in the warden's recommendation—for instance, if a warden recommended forfeiture and I did forfeit, or if he recommended no forfeiture and I did forfeit—it was necessary for my own vindication to give information why I forfeited or why I did not forfeit; and I was in the habit of giving the Press my reasons, and I assumed that in these matters I was privileged. I find out now that if a case for forfeiture comes to me, no matter what strong recommendation may be made, I cannot give my reasons to the Press. That would be impossible now because the reasons would amount to libel.

MR. MORAN: Why should the Minister have a right which no private citizen has?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I know I made a mistake in giving information to the Press. In regard to this important matter, the dismissal of a warden, I had been attacked in the local Press. I was attacked by the Cue newspaper, and I thought it was only right when I took such a drastic step as to recommend the dismissal of a high official, such as a warden, that I was in duty bound to take the public into my confidence and explain the reasons why I dismissed him. That is the mistake I made, not in giving the reasons but in prefacing them by the remarks that I had heard certain rumours and in all cases justice was not done.

MR. MORAN: Don't you think it a wise law? It prevents a man maligning his enemies.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think the hon. member is justified in saying that about "maligning enemies."

MR. MORAN: You would not advocate protecting a Minister all the time he was in office?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think the hon. member is right in making a statement about a man maligning his enemies. I was not prompted by feelings of enmity at all.

MR. MORAN: I was not thinking of your case at all.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I am glad of that, because I had no feelings at all. My colleagues are satisfied about that. I did what no other person might do; I gave to this gentleman a copy of my minute which I had written, and I asked the Cabinet to allow him to be present to hear that minute read, and to explain to them his reasons and what he could put forward to prevent his dismissal. I tried to act towards him as honourably and fairly as I could. I felt that he was no longer fitted to occupy the position; that he must leave the service of the State; and I think I acted towards him as fairly as possible. At the same time, when I found that a man occupying such a position would accept what I looked upon as a present from those who had to come before him, I felt quite satisfied that he was no longer fit to occupy such a high judicial position. I am sorry to have to make these remarks; but I wish to put myself right with members here. I can assure them there was on my part no bias nor animus of any kind. I placed before Cabinet the information I had received, and my colleagues were fully informed by me of all the matters in question. As to what has been said in this debate by members opposite (the Labour party), we have heard the member for Hannans (Mr Nelson) on what is termed the Labour caucus or the pledge; we have heard the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis), who says that the Labour party want to represent the State—a doctrine beautifully exemplified by the members for Fremantle (Mr. Needham) and North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton), who talked about the need for finishing their harbour, their dock, and their railway workshops.

**MR. DAGLISH:** The member for North Fremantle has not opened his mouth.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** The member for Hannans was very eloquent last night. When dealing with the pledge he became quite enthusiastic, and pointed out how universal was the influence of trades unions. But what about the Labour members in the British House of Commons? Have they enthusiastically taken up this pledge?

**MR. TAYLOR:** The positions are not identical.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Yet our Labour members call this democracy!

They represent the people? They represent the unions. What about the Political Labour party? Let us see how their democratic members work, in one district for instance. A number of people outside the unions were induced to join the Political Labour party, and commit themselves, once they joined the party, to voting for the selected candidate, no matter whom—a Chinaman or a blackfellow.

**THE PREMIER:** And we can see the shocking results.

**MR. DAGLISH:** We have never yet seen in a blackfellow.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** protest against the effort by the Political Labour party to come between the elector and the ballot box.

**MR. HOLMAN:** What about the postal votes?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** believe there have been all sorts of rumours about postal votes.

**THE PREMIER:** At Black Range and Southern Cross, for instance. The worst instance was at Southern Cross.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Members of the Political Labour party, before they know who the candidate is, are pledged either by their unions or by the Political Labour party to vote for the selected candidate before they hear either him or his opponents. Yet they call this democracy!

**LABOUR MEMBER:** We do not accuse you of being democratic.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** defy anybody in this Chamber except the chief to point to any legislation more democratic than that I have brought forward; and my work has secured the approbation of the democracy of Menzies.

**MR. MORAN:** Had you not to fight against other bodies than the Political Labour party?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** Yes, and I managed to beat them all. For my part, I claim to have shown as much democracy in this House as any member on the other side, and to have done better work than any of them in the cause of democracy. But I do object to a monopoly, whether held by the trades unions or by the capitalists. As an instance of the latter, let us take the State of Montana, where a big trouble occurred in the copper mines. One man



held all the copper mines in the district, closed them down, turned 10,000 men out of work, and practically paralysed all the industries of that State. That was an instance of capitalistic monopoly. Take the history of the telluride trouble at Cripple Creek, and the terrible results of the strikes there. That is an instance of the domination of unionism; and the same results will follow here if the trades unions are allowed to dominate Parliament. Parliament will then be dominated, not by the so-called Labour party, for they are no more a Labour party than we are. I claim that the gentlemen who sit on the Government side of the House are harder workers and more representative of the labour of Western Australia than are those who sit in Opposition. We do not represent, and have no desire to represent, trades unionism; but I say that in ten years the labours of Walter James will be more highly spoken of than those of members opposite; and that he will be looked on as the hero of Western Australia, when the whole of the so-called Labour members are forgotten.

MR. E. P. HENSHAW (Collie): I welcome this opportunity of expressing my opinions as to the Address-in-reply and the amendment. I am in accord with the sentiments expressed by our leader and by the member for Hannans (Mr. Nelson). I intend to take this opportunity of dealing with matters incidental to the recent elections and to the administration of the present Government. I do so in all seriousness. I wish to criticise the administration, and to leave alone extraneous matters. During the recent elections our party were attacked from many quarters, principally by the Premier, when he delivered what he called his policy speech in the Queen's Hall. That speech was mainly devoted to slandering the Labour party, and endeavouring to place them in a false position. We have also seen the Premier on the eve of a general election touring the country with a plea of becoming more closely acquainted with the electors. To me it seems strange that such an opportunity should have been taken by the Premier just on the eve of the elections. However, there is one complaint I have to make in connection with that picnic which the Premier and some of his colleagues had, that at various centres they

distributed what are known as "sops," granted with a view to influencing the electors. Ministers from their position of power were prepared to give away the funds of this State to win supporters.

MINISTERIAL MEMBER: Why not enumerate the sops?

MR. HENSHAW: I will enumerate one, and one that I say is a discredit to any Minister of the Crown, let alone the Premier. I have here a clipping from a paper published I believe in Pilbarra, containing a telegram sent by the Premier to the people of that district. It reads as follows:—

Intention of Government in connection with the Pilbarra railway remains as past session. After survey has been made, data obtained, applications will be called for construction to Government specifications and for working. We to guarantee interest on gross cost, to regulate rates, and to have the option of repurchase. We have sent geologists to report, and pushed on survey with those objects in view, and have in two years taken more practical action towards meeting your wants than for the past ten years.

THE PREMIER: Quite true. Where is the sop? I told the House that.

MR. HENSHAW: The telegram concludes:—

The Labour party have declared against borrowing, and will not do as much for you as we have done and are doing.

THE PREMIER: Where is the sop?

MR. HENSHAW: I contend that this wire was sent just prior to the election, with a view to assisting the candidature of Mr. Isdell; and I complain of that. I complain also of the fact that just prior to the elections the Premier, in one of his noted speeches at Kalgoorlie, distributed another sop there in the form of a promise of the reduction of fares and freights, with a view to assisting the candidature of his own supporters in that district. During this debate we have heard the Premier claiming credit for the liberal legislation placed upon the statute book within the last three years. I believe he claims considerable credit for passing the amended Arbitration Act, and he deserves considerable credit for it; but I say he cannot take all the credit, because it is members of the Labour party who for years past have been fighting for that principle, men who popularised the measure; and when it was popularised and public opinion

was strong enough to enable the Premier to place that Act on the statute book, then he gave effect to our wishes. I give him full credit for what he has done; but I ask him not to forget the sacrifices that workers in this State have made in popularising the principle.

**THE PREMIER:** Did I not urge it in Parliament before it was heard of outside the House? Do not forget that.

**MR. TAYLOR:** It was heard of before you were born.

**MR. HENSHAW:** I differ from the Premier. Before any reference was made by him to this subject, men had been making sacrifices in various towns in this State, and had been deprived of employment because they dared on public platforms to ask for such a measure. I wish to speak of a matter concerning the administration of our laws. We have on the statute book a liberal measure known as the Truck Act. Why has it not been put into operation? How is it that thousands of the wealth producers of this State have been allowed to suffer disabilities by the non-working or the non-administration of that Act? Can the Premier tell us that?

**THE PREMIER:** Under the Truck Act the offences are punished at the instance of the individuals who suffer—not by the Government. Any person who is aggrieved can lay an information—not the Government. How can the Government prove that there is a grievance if there be no information laid?

**MR. HENSHAW:** I cannot leave my friend the Premier go without another shot at him. I would like to refer to the dust he liberally threw in the eyes of the electors during the last elections. [**MEMBER:** "Bird-lime."] At Coolgardie on the 30th March the Premier is reported to have said "that he did not believe in a land tax, nor in putting any more taxes on the people; the customs tariff fell on every individual and was quite sufficient." At Donnybrook I had the pleasure of hearing the Premier laugh to scorn the Labour party for daring to propose to change the incidence of taxation by substituting a tax on unimproved values of land for the present system.

**THE PREMIER:** I would laugh that to scorn if they dared to do it.

**MR. HENSHAW:** The Premier also laughed to scorn the Labour party for

affirming the income tax. Within a few days of that, on the 10th June, at East Fremantle, the Premier is reported to have said: "In view of the diminution of the revenue through the operation of the sliding-scale, additional taxation would be necessary, and then an income tax would be imposed." This is the dust that has been thrown in the eyes of the electors, and yet we see the Premier rise on this floor in a fit of righteousness and ask that the battle be fought out on fair-minded lines. The Premier has stated on this floor that he desired to see the issue put clearly to the people. Is that putting the issue clearly to the people, with one policy in one district and an opposite policy in another? That is not all.

**THE PREMIER:** What about the hon. member's policy of Collie coal and the policy of the member for Coolgardie?

**MR. HENSHAW:** Again I want to make a serious complaint about the administration of the Electoral Act. One remarkable thing I noticed was that the officers appointed to issue postal ballot papers in the electorate I was contesting were chosen almost without exception from the most extreme supporters, the committee men of my opponent. Now I saw there was something very wrong in the administration of that Act, and I immediately journeyed to Perth and pointed it out to the Chief Returning Officer; but he was not prepared to take any action. If administration such as that is allowed to go by without rebuke, our ballot system, which has been fought for and dearly obtained, will soon become an object of distrust and contempt. I have gone farther in this matter. Many complaints have been made to me directly of these officers soliciting votes and influencing voters, although it is contrary to the Act. There have been men filling these responsible offices who have stood at the doorways of polling booths influencing voters and telling them how to vote. I put this matter clearly before the Chief Returning Officer; I gave him specific instances of it; but he has declined to do anything in the matter. I hope later on we shall have an opportunity of dealing with that matter. Now, I take it that the Ministry are condemned by their own actions. There are many members here who were

in the last Parliament, and who will remember to their sorrow the disgraceful introduction of the Collie-Cardiff *alias* Collie-Collie Boulder Railway Bill. We know how that was sprung on the House by one of the present Ministers. It was introduced on the second reading absolutely without any justification. I have *Hansard* here.

MR. MORAN : The late Minister for Works (Hon. C. H. Rason) knows something about it.

MR. HENSHAW : Yes ; I should like to refer to that second reading :—

**COLLIE TO COLLIE-BOULDER RAILWAY BILL.**  
Second Reading (moved).

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason) : In moving the second reading of this short measure, I desire to point out that the Bill provides for a continuation of the existing Collie line for a distance of some 5½ miles southward. The estimated cost of the line is £16,000. Not only will this extension develop the coal industry, but members will be aware that the two mines, the Collie Proprietary and the Wallsend, having amalgamated, there exists at the present time practically a monopoly of the output of coal at the Collie. At the Collie-Boulder—[the supposed terminus of this line]—to which it is sought to extend this line, there undoubtedly exist good seams of coal of first-class quality ; and it will be apparent to the House, seeing how large consumers of this coal the Government are, that it is highly desirable we should bring other collieries into competition with the existing one. I have little hesitation in commending this short measure to the House, and I beg to move that it be read a second time.

Naturally enough this provoked a good deal of comment, and the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) was not backward in following the Minister. I believe the most caustic remarks were delivered by the member for Murchison at that time (Mr. Nanson).

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : The Labour party supported it.

MR. HENSHAW : The complaint was that there was no information given at the introduction of the Bill. I will admit there was a slight justification for the construction of the line—the only one given by the Minister—and that was that at the Collie Boulder, to which it was said to extend, there were good seams of coal. Would it surprise the House to know that not one ton of coal has been obtained from the mine? That £16,000 was spent to obtain accommodation for the mine from which not one ton

of coal has been obtained. I take the same stand as the member for West Perth and the member for Murchison did on that occasion. There was a want of information to justify their proposal.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : Your colleagues did not.

MR. HENSHAW : They may not have done so. I am dealing with the Ministers at the present time. I complain that there was no information given to the House in connection with that Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : Will the hon. member read the report of the select committee on that question?

MR. MORAN : That would not improve it.

MR. HENSHAW : I should like to point out that while this matter was under discussion the member for Murchison referred to a report given by Mr. Palmer two days after the introduction of the Bill, pointing out that there was no supervision over the line, although the line had been under way for about three months. Although it has been opened for something over twelve months, the Government dare not carry passengers over it.

THE PREMIER : Passengers are constantly carried over it every day.

MR. HENSHAW : I have endeavoured to get carriage over that line and could not. I have seen men dismount at Collie and walk half a mile over the dangerous ground.

THE PREMIER : That dangerous part is not part of this line. It is the old Proprietary line. Not one inch of that line which came under this Bill is dangerous, and the hon. member knows it. He should not mislead the House.

MR. HENSHAW : I say half a mile is dangerous.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : It is nothing of the kind.

MR. DGLISH : I rise to a point of order. The Premier is accusing a member of deliberately misleading the House. I think the hon. member is out of order in making a charge like that, and I ask that he be ordered to withdraw it.

THE PREMIER : The hon. member made a statement that since the railway authorised by the Bill has been constructed no passenger has been carried on it. The statement is absolutely in-

correct. I must say that. If the statement is improper I withdraw it.

MR. DAGLISH : The Premier accused the member of misleading the House.

THE PREMIER : If I said so, I shall withdraw it.

THE SPEAKER : I think the statement is in order. I must ask hon. members to refrain from interjections when a new member is addressing the House.

MR. HENSHAW : I was saying that I have gone to the Collie station and asked for a ticket to the terminal point, Cardiff; and I have been told to walk along the line, through the yard and over an open bridge, and to wait there until the train came. On another occasion I got into a train and was told I would have to sign an indemnity form if I desired to travel over portion of the line. Day by day I have seen people waiting at a point half a mile from the Collie station.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : The hon. member's statement is correct to a certain extent, but that is not portion of the railway covered by the Bill.

MR. HENSHAW : That makes the position worse. Why was not the Bill introduced as the Proprietary-to-Cardiff line and not as the Collie-to-Collie-Boulder line? I reiterate the statement that the Collie-Cardiff line is undermined for a distance of something like half-a-mile, and that passengers who desire to use the outer section of it have to traverse that line and an open bridge, a very dangerous place. The present Minister for Works has evidently condoned all this.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : The Labour party condoned it.

MR. HENSHAW : I take it that the Minister for Works agrees with what I say.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : I shall tell the hon. member later on what I do.

MR. HENSHAW : I am satisfied that actions speak louder than words. What I complain of at the present time is this. We all know that the Act for the construction of the Collie-Narrogin line has passed this House, and many of us know that the permanent survey has been undertaken and that a good few miles of the first portion of it are complete. The present Minister for Works has had this survey made over the dangerous

ground. He has admitted, in fact, that this line I have been alluding to is unsafe. He desires to duplicate it. This duplication is to form portion of the Collie-Narrogin line. This line, instead of taking a course direct to Narrogin, is going away from Narrogin, traversing dangerous ground, thus making the length of line greater than it would be under ordinary circumstances, and it is increasing the cost of it. I take it that it is my duty to protest against that kind of loose administration. The Minister for Mines knows full well the northern boundary of the coalfield. He knows that within a few chains of this Collie-Cardiff line, or the Proprietary-Boulder line, whichever they like to call it, there is no coal. He knows that the line is running parallel with the outcrop of the coal, and it is patent to everyone who knows the district that a shorter and safer route can be obtained than the present Government are proposing.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : What route are the Government proposing? You looked through the papers, so you can perhaps inform members.

MR. HENSHAW : I have looked through the papers and found the engineer has recommended, and the Minister for Works has adopted, the first section of that line going over the dangerous ground between the Collie and the Proprietary, which members of the Government have just complained about.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : What engineer?

MR. HENSHAW : The Chief Engineer, Mr. Palmer.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : Recommended which one?

MR. HENSHAW : He recommended that the starting point of that line be at Collie station, thence to somewhere between the Collie-Burn and the Collie-Cardiff leases, with a grade of 1 in 80.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS : Is that the only report?

MR. HENSHAW : The only one, I believe, which has any direct bearing, and the one you have adopted. What I am complaining about is that this proposition of the present Government is to take a line over ground which is undermined.

THE PREMIER : You suggest that the Engineer-in-Chief does not know his business?

**MR. HENSHAW:** The proposal is to take the line over ground which is undermined, and if the present line is unsafe, this new line, which is within a few feet of it in places, is equally dangerous. The Government have gone to great expense in having that field tested, and they have proof that within a few chains of the existing line there is ground which does not carry coal. If there are any Ministers present who know this district, they know very well that, by going round the northern side of the Wallsend and the Proprietary mines, they can escape the ground which is undermined, and they can get a more direct route without any engineering difficulty.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Are you open to an appointment as an engineer?

**MR. HENSHAW:** If this is a sample of your engineering, I say God help you. I owe my return to the maladministration of the present Government in that electorate. If it were not for instances innumerable, like this, perhaps I might not have been here, but I believe my presence here is a protest against that sort of thing. I recognise that if the present Government are going to make the Collie-Narrogen line as costly as it has been at the start, the line will not be built.

**THE PREMIER:** Will you defend Collie coal from the attacks of the member for Coolgardie? That is an industry well represented. You ought to know all about it.

**MR. HENSHAW:** A few days ago I had the satisfaction, or duty I suppose you would call it, of attending a deputation to the Premier, and I noticed when one of our speakers stood up the Premier continually badgered him, trying to throw him off his thread of discourse; and then later on, when the Premier was holding forth, he rebuked our leader for interjecting. I hope I shall be allowed to conclude without being diverted in any way.

**THE PREMIER:** You were sent to this House to defend Collie coal.

**DE. ELLIS:** Do you think it requires defence? I thought the Minister would defend it.

**MR. HENSHAW:** With regard to this I would just like to read the report given by Mr. Palmer. It may be some satisfaction to the Minister for Works to hear it, and perhaps the House will under-

stand more clearly why I am protesting against this maladministration. The report of the Engineer, dated 5th March, 1904, says:—

Seeing the Collie-Cardiff line is built on grades of 1 in 40, and it is undermined, and to remedy effects would cost about £8,000, it would be better to abandon the present spur line and utilise the materials on the new line in preference to using the former.

And he further recommends, I repeat, that the starting point be at Collie station, thence to somewhere between the Collie-Burn and the Collie-Cardiff leases, with a grade of 1 in 80. This section of the survey, as I said before, is completed. It is going over ground which is undermined; it is going over that portion of the field which carries the best coal and at a very shallow depth, and if that line is built, disaster will follow. There are places not very many chains away from this particular place where the surface of the earth has gone down, carrying trees with it. Yet the Government are seriously proposing to traverse this coal mining country. The reason I protest is because they can find a direct route away from the coal-bearing country, a few chains from it, and I think I should be failing in my duty if I did not bring this before the House. Some months ago the Trades and Labour Council, of which I have the honour to be a member, dared to criticise the construction of the public buildings that were being supervised by the present Treasurer. We had to reiterate this charge; we had to push it, and at last we were asked to name specific cases of discreditable work. We enumerated something like 24. We pointed out the discreditable nature of the work in the Supreme Court buildings, and we asked to have a commission of inquiry about it.

**THE PREMIER:** Are there not some others?

**MR. HENSHAW:** Yes, and I will deal with that presently. We asked for a commission of inquiry to be appointed, and after a deal of agitation it was appointed. The commission made an investigation, and I undertake to say it considered that our charges, or a large percentage of them, were fully substantiated.

**THE PREMIER:** Nothing of the kind.

**MR. HENSHAW:** As a practical man who has had a big experience in the con-

struction of buildings, I can tell the Treasurer and the Ministry that the Supreme Court buildings are a disgrace to the town. A practical tradesman who goes through there would get sore eyes on viewing the discreditable work. Can the Minister defend the act of placing these cover boards over electric light wires in the building?

**THE PREMIER:** Is that a matter for the Minister to see to?

**MR. HENSHAW:** If there were only a few items like this, I think it would be my place to keep quiet and render some assistance, but I see this sort of thing going on in so many cases. I have drawn attention to the scandalous work on the Coolgardie Water Works and the reticulation pipes. The attention of the Government was publicly drawn to the evasion of the specifications in relation to the manufacture of pipes and hydrants and other items. The flanges of the hydrants were supposed to be machined, so that the two would come together and fit well. Instead of that, these things were turned out in the rough and sent to the goldfields. These joints will not stand, and whoever administers the work there will have considerable trouble in the future. I challenge the Minister or anyone else to investigate this. I know also that there were inspectors of these works supposed to be passing pipes. As soon as knock-off time came those men got away; I am speaking of the inspectors. They were no sooner away than these pipes which had been passed were smuggled back, and those that were condemned and taken away put back in their place. The following morning the good pipes were passed for the second time, and the condemned pipes smuggled away to the fields. That has been made public, and no action has been taken.

**THE TREASURER:** It is wrong to say that unless you can prove it.

**MR. HENSHAW:** I think the Premier is in the wrong situation altogether. He is out of his element on that side of the House. The Premier framed a policy, the principles of which were taken from the platform of the Labour party, and qualified; but although they are qualified, has the Premier any hope of ever putting them into effect? Can he depend upon some of the conservative members on that (Government) side of the House

to assist him? I can only illustrate the position by a little anecdote that was told by Senator Pearce. He was referring to a person who went to America, I believe with the idea of lassoing bulls. The lassoer tied one end of the rope round his waist, and the other he threw on the bull. He caught the bull, and was dragged over all sorts of rough places, and when a friend asked him where he was going to, he replied, "Ask the bull." Supposing the Premier had a majority on that side of the House, he would be in the same position as that person who lassoed the bull.

**THE PREMIER:** Which would you rather be, a man or a bull?

**MR. HENSHAW:** There is cohesion on this side. I am not lassoed yet, at any rate. I would like members to consider the possibility of the members for Claremont, South Perth, Wellington, Murray, Toodyay and Sussex supporting the policy of the Premier as announced. Is such a thing possible as his party giving effect to it? I do not think so.

**MR. FOULKES:** We are free; you are not.

**MR. HENSHAW:** In regard to that interjection that they are free and we are not, there is not much in it. The position in which I am in I have entered voluntarily. I subscribed my name to the principles of the party because I am not ashamed of them, and I wish to give effect to those principles. Our party hold meetings, we call them caucuses, members can call them committees or whatever they like. Roads boards, municipal councils, and all bodies must sit in committee to give effect to their principles. It is the only business-like way of dealing with matters, and because our opponents have not cohesion in their ranks they like to ridicule our position. I now come to a question that has caused me a good deal of heart-burning. I wish to lay an indictment against the Attorney General, and I hope he will take the matter in a very serious manner, as others who are suffering are doing at the present time. The indictment which I lay against the Attorney General is a want of justice to the wealth producers who are being penalised at the present time by a misinterpretation of the Arbitration Act. I say that the Attorney General is standing idly by seeing this

unjust treatment meted out to thousands of the wealth producers; and he is turning the question aside by saying that these people are disappointed litigants. We know full well that when the Arbitration Act was put upon the statute book it was placed there for the purpose of bringing about industrial peace in the place of industrial chaos or anarchy. We know full well how the House fought on the question of the minimum number of workers to be recognised. The House determined that 15 should be the least number of workers to receive any status by that Act. We know that nonassociated workers, or even bodies of workers less than 15, were not recognised. As the secretary of a union who has had a good deal of experience in that court, I should like to relate the injustice meted out to us. Although the Act recognises associations only, disputes referred to that court during the last two years have been thrown back in our teeth, and recognition has been given to non-associated workers who have been placed in that position that they could determine the wages and the conditions under which the workers of the State are to live.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** An awful thing, is it not!

**MR. HENSHAW:** It is an awful thing that men outside the ranks of physical workers cannot appreciate. If the member for Greenough had to work with his hands for eight or nine hours a day—

**MR. GORDON:** Only eight, no nine: we won't have that here.

**MR. HENSHAW:** If some of the members of the Government had to toil for eight or nine hours a day physically, and had their pay reduced in some cases by 25 per cent., they would not take the matter quite so smilingly as they are doing now.

**THE PREMIER:** You are trying to do it now, a greater reduction than that.

**MR. HENSHAW:** To establish our contention that we have not been treated justly, that the principles of the Act have been departed from, that a condition of anarchy has been created, I should like to follow the history of one case through the Conciliation Board and the Arbitration Court, and then compare that case with one that travelled through the New Zealand Court. I shall draw members'

attention to an address made by Mr. B. R. Wise, the gentleman who framed the New South Wales Act and carried it through the Parliament of that State, and then I will ask the Premier if we are disappointed litigants. The first case that was referred to the Conciliation Board was dealt with pretty fully. Evidence was brought to bear on the evils of freedom of contract, with the result that the board stipulated that piecework (that is in our trade freedom of contract) be abolished, and that carpenters and joiners be employed on the daywork system. If piecework had been regulated we would have had no complaint to make about it. As members very well know, the recommendations of the Conciliation Board have not been accepted in all cases. It has been a rare thing for the recommendations of the board to be accepted. The case to which I am calling attention was referred then to the court, and the court heard evidence afresh, and the award again stipulated that piecework be abolished and that carpenters and joiners be employed on the daywork system. Again, Section 85 of the Arbitration Act states that no award shall be altered without the application of the parties to it. Yet we witnessed an alteration to an award when the parties to that award had not entered the court, and had never made any application. The alteration to the award I referred to just now reads as follows:—"The work shall be done on a piece, and there shall be no interference with the freedom of the master or men from the contract." In other words the individuals who received no recognition under the Act have the right to regulate the conditions under which the men in the various trades are to work, and we, the associated workers, were ordered not to interfere. To bear out our contention that these individual workers were not recognised by the Act, I will quote briefly the remarks of Mr. Bernard R. Wise, who says:—

The underlying principle of the Act is that an industrial dispute is a public nuisance which ought to be restrained by the State like any other breach of the peace. Differences between capital and labour can never be fought out at the sole expense of the combatants, but cause the greatest hardship to innocent victims—to the women, who, as the strike proceeds, see their homes stripped of every article which makes a home; to the

tradesmen, who are driven into bankruptcy through giving an enforced credit to the men on strike; to the children, who grow up with seeds of disease implanted by starvation, to be a burden to a future generation; and to all in an ever-widening circle who, in the mysterious interdependence of modern commerce, are affected by the dislocation of any industry.

He goes on to say:—

Granting, then, that the object aimed at is desirable, the question becomes one of method. Is it possible to substitute for the cruel, barbarous, and wasteful method of the strike or lockout the humane, peaceful, and reasonable method of judicial determination? Those who have passed this Act believe that the answer to this question must be in the negative so long as the idea prevails that each employer ought to be at liberty to make what terms he pleases with his workmen individually.

There we are borne out by Mr. Wise, who I contend is an authority who cannot be disputed. As farther evidence of our contention, we can follow a similar case through the Conciliation Board, the Arbitration Court, and the Full Court of New Zealand. The Chief Justice of New Zealand, in delivering judgment in regard to the appeal on the question of preference and other matters, gives the position clearly as to nonassociated workers and recognition by the Act. He says:—

In construing this Act the aim of the statute cannot be ignored. It does not, as I have said, propose to provide a means of settling disputes between employers and non-associated workmen. It has created a board in every district, and a court to settle disputes between associated workmen on the one side, and associated or single employers on the other. . . . "Industrial matters," as defined in the statute, seem to me to include every kind of dispute that can arise between an employer and his workman. All contracts regarding labour are controlled, and may be modified or abrogated. The court can make the agreement that is to exist between the workmen and employer. It abrogates the right of workmen and employers to make their own contracts. . . . The only way the Act can be rendered inoperative is by workmen not associating. . . . For as has been said, the statute cannot deal with unassociated workmen. . . . For the reasons I have given, I am of the opinion that the Court of Arbitration can, if it chooses, give the preference mentioned; therefore the appeal must be dismissed.

No recognition is given to nonassociated workers, yet we have the court departing from the precedent laid down. The position is simply this: these wealth producers have asked that their principles be

placed upon the statute book, they have agreed to forego their right to strike, and have asked for bread and the court has given them stones.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: What do you suggest.

MR. HENSHAW: I ask for proper administration. During nearly two years of industrial turmoil and anarchy, the Ministry have been drawing their salaries and doing nothing. The Ministry have sat idly by and seen the conditions under which thousands of wealth producers have been ill-treated and discouraged, yet the Government have taken no action.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Ministry cannot dismiss a Judge.

MR. HENSHAW: It is not a matter of dismissing a Judge. It is a remarkable thing that although it is nearly two years since we first raised a protest, none of the daily newspapers have combated our contention, yet we are borne out by legal authorities in New South Wales and by precedents laid down by the Arbitration Court and the Full Court of New Zealand. We have justice on our side, and I say that the present Ministry have failed miserably in their duty. They have seen men labouring under these disabilities and have remained silent. They are doing so at the present time, and confess their helplessness.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Suggest a remedy.

MR. HENSHAW: I take it that the party on this side are not desirous of obtaining office, but wish to give effect to their principles. Although we may not succeed we shall do more than the present Administration have done; we shall attempt something to remedy this matter. We were deluged with figures a little earlier in the day by the member for Coolgardie, and I believe most members realise that the figures relating to the Collie coal industry are mostly unreliable. I do not intend to deal with the contentions raised by the hon. member, but I point out that he practically attacked the Parliament and not the Administration for their action in the past in extending support to the Collie coal industry. I do not think this an opportune time to discuss the matter; but had the question been impartially examined by the member for Coolgardie, he would have told the House that the local product had



reduced the price of the Newcastle coal, in round figures by something like 10s. per ton, and further he would have mentioned the revenue derived by rent and royalties ; and if the decreased price had been set against the figures the hon. member quoted, I honestly think we should have seen that the State, instead of subsidising the local industry, has been reaping an immense advantage by the decrease in price. However, I do not now intend to go into that, because I hope in the near future to deal thoroughly with the coal question. I agree with the hon. member that this industry has been tinkered with since its inception ; I am just as anxious as he to see it put on a proper basis ; and as I intend to ask the House on the first opportunity to agree to placing it on such a basis, I am satisfied that I shall get the co-operation of the hon. member.

DR. ELLIS : Hear, hear ; anything for straight work.

MR. A. J. H. WATTS (Northam) : I must express my surprise that no mention of the Electoral Act or its administration is made in the Governor's Speech, though there has been so much dissatisfaction with that administration, particularly as to postal voting. The Premier and many other speakers have told us they are dissatisfied with the administration of the Act and with the results that have attended voting by post ; yet though we find this dissatisfaction exhibited wherever we have had a contested election, condemnation has been reserved for a Labour sympathiser or a supposed Labour sympathiser, who has been sacrificed on the altar of the country to satisfy the demands of justice. It has been remarked that one officer has unjustly used his position ; and the Premier asked in an interjection whether another speaker had heard of the case of that officer. Now we have heard that Ministerial supporters have grossly abused the rights and privileges which they enjoyed as officers taking postal votes ; yet this man alone has been prosecuted ; he alone has been held up to public opprobrium. Though much has been said as to canvassing for votes, we have an infinitely worse matter in the system of voting by post. So far as I can see, canvassing for votes is simply helping electors who wish to vote by giving them farther facilities for voting. But there is a gross abuse

of this Act which I have not heard mentioned, namely that it is possible for an employer of labour to stand over his men while voting, to see for whom they vote, and to use his position to compel them to vote as he wishes.

MR. THOMAS : That is not correct.

MR. WATTS : There is nothing to hinder anyone from watching a postal voter sign the name of the candidate for whom he votes in the presence of the officer entitled to take postal votes. I maintain that the Act does not provide against this.

MR. THOMAS : Such conduct would be a breach of the Act.

MR. WATTS : I say distinctly I have seen men standing near electors who have been voting by post ; and it has been possible for those witnesses to see the name written on the postal voting paper.

MR. THOMAS : Does not that apply to votes for all candidates ?

MR. WATTS : I do not care to whom it applies ; I say it is not right. It does not matter whether the voter be a Labourist, a Ministerialist, or an Independent, I say no man has a right to watch another man record his vote ; and this, to my mind, is one of the greatest abuses we have experienced in the system of voting by post. It should be made a misdemeanour that any man excepting the officer appointed under the Act should witness postal votes. Another matter on which I and my colleagues find fault with the Government is the purchasing of support by portfolios. We distinctly reprobate the idea that the influence either of Oppositionists or of the Press of the country should be purchased by portfolios ; and I maintain that the electors have spoken most emphatically on this proceeding. I hold that this alone has had more to do with the wrecking of the Government than anything else that could perhaps be named. That the Premier's purchase was justified we can quite believe from the statements in the Press for some time past. Undoubtedly the Premier made a splendid bargain when he purchased the support of a certain individual and a certain paper ; and that paper has done its utmost for his cause by in every way misrepresenting the Labour party, by altogether misrepresenting the opponents of the Government. Fortunately, the

days have gone by when intelligent people were prepared to have their thinking done for them by the Press of the country. No opportunity of misrepresenting the political Labour party has been lost; and I maintain that the Premier and his Ministers, in touring the country from end to end, have aided the Press in misrepresenting the Labour party, and have appealed to the prejudice of the party's opponents. The election campaign has turned not so much on the merits of the Government as on abuse of the Labour party. I had the pleasure of listening to the Premier in his own constituency; and I consider his speech was one of the best lawyer speeches I have heard for a long time. He is very capable in twisting arguments to suit his own convenience and in distorting facts as to the Labour party when that serves his interests. But the support given to Ministerialists throughout the country cannot be reckoned on as given for any love of the Ministry or of their supporters. In my electorate—and I believe the same applies to many if not all of the electorates—on account of the prejudice which people have against trade unionists, and the prejudice worked up by the Premier and the Press, many voted for Ministerialists. It was a question with many electors of deciding between the gentleman who is supposed to rule the infernal regions, and the deep sea. Those electors considered they had to judge between these two, and in some cases they decided to vote for the Ministerialists; but I maintain that the verdict of the country has been definite and decisive in favour of the political Labour party. So much has been said by the Premier in reference to the Labour party, to the so-called Trades Hall party, and to the domination of caucus over Labour members, that the least I expected when I came to Perth was that the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Daglish) would gather together the defence forces of Perth, present artillery and other warlike engines at my head, and ask me to sign some paper guaranteeing an unswerving allegiance to the political Labour party. Instead of this, I have never been asked by the caucus or by the leader of the party to pledge myself in any way to that gentleman. I have been pledged to my electors, and to my electors

only I am responsible. By their decision I stand or fall. On my actions I shall be judged by them, and no other party has any power over me. Hence we have a right to object to this misrepresenting of the political Labour party by the Press of the country. I myself resent it; and I think the time has come when this misrepresentation, this distortion of facts, should cease; that we now should get to the business of the country, though it may have been right to indulge in such misrepresentations at election time, in order to influence votes. Many things are considered right at a time like that; but now we ought to drop such tactics, and come down to truth and reason. Personally, I am not and never have been a unionist; yet it has been asserted that no candidate can be supported by the Labour party who is not a unionist.

MR. H. BROWN: Did you not sign the platform?

MR. WATTS: I do not consider I am any more pledged by signing the platform than the member for Perth is pledged.

MR. H. BROWN: Your supporters would not take your word.

MR. WATTS: You would not take a man's word for a promissory note at three months; you would not think much of the debtor's word unless he was prepared to put his signature to the bill. I take it that as in business matters men are required to make promises in writing, the electors have a right to demand written promises from those who are chosen to represent the country and to look after the business of their constituents.

MR. THOMAS: Your pledge goes farther than that.

MR. WATTS: My pledge binds me to advocate and to do my best to further the principles embodied in the political Labour platform; and I consider that every honourable man is bound just as much by his word as he would be by signing. [MEMBER: Why sign it?] I have no objection to signing my pledge. If a man comes to me and wishes to buy a horse, saying "I will pay for it in three months," if he is not prepared to put his name to his promise I will not trust him; and so I will not ask the electors of this country to trust me or anybody else. I

am quite prepared to sign what I am prepared to do. It has even been asserted, and it has become a by-word, that political promises are like pie-crusts, very easily broken and made to be broken. It has been held up to members that persons promise one thing at election time, and that when it comes to assembling in the House, they do just the opposite. The political Labour party by their pledge guard against anything of that kind. We are not the kind of men who wish to be held free from a pledge. We are honourable; we expect to do what we agree to do. We do not want to sneak off from our pledges, and are quite prepared to sign our names to what we agree to do. I care not whether this party is called the Labour party, the Liberal party, the Democratic party, or any other party. So long as they stand for liberal measures and good government, I am prepared to give that party, if called by any name, my unswerving support, if I am convinced they are prepared to do their best for the country. The very fact that they have signed a pledge is to me an inducement to join their ranks. I am sure that by doing this they will be held to that pledge and be expected to do as a body of men what they have signed to do. I would like for one moment to compare the Ministerial supporters with the members of the Labour party. One of the so-called Ministerial supporters says that he is prepared to support the Government on some political measure; another member is directly opposed to this measure, and he will not support the Premier in regard to that particular measure; and so on. We cannot find two of them, I think, that are agreed to support the Premier right through his proposals. When it comes to getting solid work done we do not know where we shall be with such men as that, or what legislation we are likely to have placed upon the statute-book. In regard to the political Labour party, I would just like to mention some English papers. In referring to the political Labour party the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a conservative organ, has stated that "the thieving commercial class which had been in power in Australia had made a mess of it, and the Labour party should come into possession and take power." Some of the leading English organs have

expressed themselves in a similar manner; and I think we are quite justified in taking the stand we are doing at the present time on this account. Another matter which has been referred to is that the Labour party are opposed to borrowing. It is true, with a qualification: we are opposed to borrowing except for reproductive works. We are not opposed to borrowing, if it can be shown that it is to the advantage of the State that we should borrow; but we object to this State being placed in the same condition as the Eastern States, utterly discredited in the eyes of the British investor. Organisation has been credited to the Labour party, and it has been said that to our good organisation we owe the numbers that have been returned at the head of the polls. The Labour organisation has been good; but I would ask members to remember that the Premier and the Ministers of the Crown travelled throughout the length and breadth of the State for the purposes of organising also; and so far as my electorate is concerned, they organised quite as much and quite as hard as the political Labour party. Although they worked on the prejudices of the people, and although so many were opposed to them and should have voted against them if there had been anyone else but a Labour candidate standing, yet we find that they were unable to return their candidates. With regard to the administration of the present Government, I consider the State has progressed in spite of the Government. Land settlement and the development of the agricultural resources of this State have progressed in spite of the administration of the Government. With regard to agricultural constituencies, a few members are found at the present time on the side of the Government; but hon. members should remember that, until very recently, most of the members for the agricultural constituencies of this State sat in opposition to the Government. This alone, to my way of thinking, shows that the land settlement policy of the Government has not met with favour in the agricultural districts; and I would say that lack of knowledge of the requirements of agricultural constituencies and of the agricultural districts of this State has been shown by the gross administration of the Lands Department in this State.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** In what way?

**MR. WATTS:** I shall show directly in what way. I would as soon appoint to the position of manager of a dressmaking department a brickmaker, as I would appoint to the administration of the Lands Department the hon. gentleman placed there, who had as much knowledge when placed there of the requirements of the agricultural districts of this State as perhaps a brickmaker would have of the requirements for managing a drapery establishment. The Minister for Lands has travelled throughout the State to get this knowledge: perhaps the brickmaker would travel a year or two to get a knowledge of drapery, but I would not like to be the man owning that drapery establishment during the time the man was gaining his knowledge. The opportunities the Government have had of settling people on the land have been greater than the opportunities enjoyed by any other Government in Australia since responsible government in these States. As to the requirements for the sale of any property, we find that first of all there needs to be the article to sell. We have enormous tracts of land equal to anything in the Eastern States, equal to any land which is there, varying in quality and capable of growing almost every kind of cereal or produce that can be grown in the Eastern States. We have had the land; but the inducements to settle have been great, greater perhaps than they will ever be again in the history of this State. We have had lines of railway extending through the country in all directions, and this splendid land has been situated within easy carting distance of these railways. That has been one of the inducements to settle on the land. We have had, secondly, a climate than which there is no better in the world for wheat-growing purposes and general agriculture and the growth of cereals. It was referred to a short time ago by a gentleman visiting us from Canada as being altogether superior to the climate of Canada for the growth of cereals. This is another of the very great inducements that should encourage people to settle on the agricultural lands of this State. The third inducement, and perhaps the greatest of all, has been the splendid market which we have had on

the goldfields of this State and also in the coastal towns for the produce which we have grown. Also, outside the State, the drought in the Eastern States has brought about the high prices which are ruling for produce, so that as far as the market for produce is concerned no better could be got; and I maintain this should be responsible for a very great influx of people on to the broad acres of our State. The prices of stock that could be raised by the farmers have been as good as possibly could be reached. We find that all kinds of stock throughout Australia have been dear, and particularly in Western Australia. These are all inducements to encourage the people to settle on the soil.

**MR. THOMAS:** The goldfields are not going to continue to pay these prices.

**MR. WATTS:** A very good thing for the goldfields if they do not.

**THE SPEAKER:** The hon. member for Dundas is out of order in interjecting out of his seat. Hon. members should not interject except in their own seats.

**MR. WATTS:** With regard to buyers, never before in Australia have such opportunities presented themselves to get buyers for the lands we have now for sale. In the Eastern States severe droughts have squeezed and starved the people off the land. Right throughout the Eastern States men have been starved off the soil, and they have been only too ready to find fresh fields and pastures new. Western Australia should then have been the first place they would have sought for fresh land. Our goldfields population, which has been large and prosperous, to a great extent has also furnished a number of buyers, and a very great number of people who have had a knowledge and an experience in agriculture. These men also should have been placed upon the land in large numbers; but in spite of the facilities which the Government have had for settling people upon the soil, we find there has not been that settlement which should have taken place. By no means have we the settlement on the land we should have. We certainly have had selection, and the figures for land selection have been bolstered up in an extraordinary manner; and one would think, to look at the reports of the Lands Department, that a very great settlement

indeed was taking place on the agricultural lands of this State.

MR. BURGESS: What about the Great Southern Railway?

MR. WATTS: I know as much as the member for York about these matters. I happen to have occasion in my business to travel down the Great Southern Railway very frequently. I happen also to have visited the agricultural districts there. I have travelled for miles and miles, and I assert that the member for York cannot point out to me any locality where you cannot travel for miles without seeing only a scattered patch or two of cleared land. I mean that the whole of the land which has been taken up along the Great Southern line, or comparatively by far the greater portion of the land has not been settled. We have had selection of the land and people have been holding it, but as to actual settlement on the land we have not had it. [Interjection by Mr. BURGESS.] As I stated just now, I think the opposition of so many of the members for agricultural constituencies to the Government is due to the fact that they fail to see the reason for this. That is the explanation of the attitude they have adopted towards the Government. The member for York seems, according to his interjections, to have travelled a little. I doubt very much the amount of his travels down the Great Southern line; at any rate the knowledge he has gained. Perhaps he has been one of those he talks about who sleep. He seems to know all about that sort of thing. I dare say the hon. member has gained his knowledge from the Minister for Lands and from reading the papers.

MR. BURGESS: When I get up I will tell you.

MR. WATTS: At any rate most members for agricultural constituencies who do not happen to live in such a district as the member for York, who owns most of the land around where he is situated, and such large tracts that it takes him some time to walk out of that area to see what is being done—most of the members for agricultural constituencies will agree with me that very large areas of land have been taken up and a great many selections have been made on which there is no settlement whatever. I believe that even the mem-

ber for York will bear me out that many selections have been held for years and have not been settled to the present time, and little or no improvements have been made to those holdings. Although we have had enormous figures of land settlement from which it appears that great numbers of people have been going on the land, I should say that forfeitures for 1903 alone bear out to a great extent my statements. The forfeitures and redemptions for that period were in relation to 105,069 acres; most of these were forfeitures for non-compliance with the conditions of settlement. This would not have been done if people had been on the land, as they were supposed to be; and I assert that although in a few cases forfeitures have been made, there have been many more instances in which the land was liable to forfeiture. I believe that if the last six months' statistics for land settlement were available we should find that the amount of forfeiture for that time would be a great deal higher than it was even in 1903, because it was only about that time that the Minister for Lands got up and had sufficient experience to know what to do with regard to land settlement. The bolstering up of the figures of land selection in this State has been done in this way: free passages have been issued to those wishing to select land, and thousands of pounds have been scattered in this manner. Free passages have been issued to people who wanted a holiday. Those who got tired thought it a good time to come down to these districts at the Government expense. Those men came from Perth and from various other localities and had their drive round in the four days allowed them, and in order to get a free pass back again they spent a pound or a few shillings in taking up a piece of land. With regard to the free homesteads which we hear so much about, and in relation to which it is contended there is evidence that the people are taking up land for genuine settlement, we are told of a person not being allowed to take up a freehold homestead if he already holds land, and that the fact of his taking up a homestead is evidence that he is a genuine settler. The position is, as I say, that people who like to go down and get back again on free passes spend

one pound on taking up a homestead farm.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Then it is the intention of your party to abolish free passes?

**MR. WATTS:** To put an end to the way of granting them which has been adopted in the past. I think allowance might be made for out-of-pocket expenses, if desired. After a person has paid a greater amount of rent than the value of the free pass—say he has spent £5 on land settlement—let him be allowed to have the £3, or whatever the value of a free pass may be, back again; but when a man has only spent £1 it is ridiculous to let him have a free pass; it is not a business proposition at all. By this means thousands of pounds have been lost in railway fares, and thousands of pounds have been spent in land guides to drive these men around the country for taking up land simply to get a free pass back again. If a man is not sufficiently interested in land settlement to pay his fare down from the fields or to the coast, and sufficient money in his pocket also to do that, he is never going to be a settler on agricultural land. We shall see that my statement is correct, that hundreds, perhaps thousands of these homestead farms which have been selected will never have the conditions of improvements complied with by those who have taken them up. In fact it is notorious that down the Great Southern Railway line, which the member for York knows about, these men have taken up blocks of land for the very purpose of getting their free pass back.

**MR. BURGESS:** Supposing they had mills down there?

**MR. WATTS:** That has nothing to do with free passes. Whilst help has been given to genuine settlers, I say that to bolster up the figures of the Lands Department a system of State robbery has been in existence for a short time past, which I think is altogether a discredit to the Government and to the administration of the Lands Department. This system of State robbery I refer to takes place under the second and third-class conditions of selection. A person may perhaps come here from the Eastern States seeking land. Those who have had any experience in Western Australia know that the land is patchy; that

you get perhaps two or three hundred acres of good land, then perhaps a thousand acres of second-class, and then perhaps a thousand acres of third-class land. A selector comes along from Victoria; he applies for this land, and with the expedition which the Lands Department gives to granting approvals of selections he may have to wait for months before he gets his approval. This I maintain is altogether wrong. I consider that approval should be given reasonably early rather than that a man should have to waste months of valuable time, going back to the Eastern States without knowing whether he will get the land or not. A man selects land in this way. He goes back to the Eastern States and finds that a fixed value has been placed on the second and third-class land he has selected, and, unless he takes the land valuation which has been put upon it by inspectors who have little or no knowledge of West Australian soil, he has to forfeit his deposit. Are we so impecunious in this State that we need to rob a man who is a genuine selector, and who proves he is a genuine selector by selecting two or three thousand acres of land and paying, not a paltry pound for a free pass, but several pounds as a guarantee of his *bona-fide* desire for land, paying rent for the first year or half-year as the case may be? When a man has proved himself to be a genuine selector we have a right to give him approval of his land in reasonable time, to enable him to get his land before he returns to the Eastern States, and to know whether he is to have the land or not. In any case I think it a scandal that men have been appointed as inspectors who have little knowledge of the land, and that their opinion should be taken as to the value of land rather than the opinion of practical farmers who have had experience of land for years. The member for York would not like some draper, grocer, or tradesman of some kind, or anything of that sort, to value his land, and for him to be compelled to take the land at a valuation put upon it by incompetent persons or forfeit his deposit.

**THE PREMIER:** Why do you not name one of these incompetent persons?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Name one of the drapers.

**MR. WATTS:** By this means the figures for land selection have been

bolstered up. It appears that very much land has been taken, and people do not take the land which they are credited with having selected. The figures are not as great as the Lands Department would try to make us believe.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The figures are issued after approval.

**MR. WATTS:** We get the figures of applications made very constantly and very regularly from the various lands offices throughout the country, and one would think, to read the newspapers, that an enormous amount of settlement is going on.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** So there is.

**MR. WATTS:** We are told that many people are trying to get it, scurrying along after it as if they had struck a gold mine.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Many of them have.

**MR. WATTS:** And many of them have not. I maintain that no legitimate attempt has been made to settle the great proportion of agriculturists who have experience on the land. We hear the Government crying out about wanting an influx of agricultural settlers, persons with a knowledge of agricultural work: at the same time we have a number of men here with good experience in the State, and there are practically no facilities for these men of small means to take up land and work it.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Can you name any other country that offers the same facilities?

**MR. WATTS:** It requires several years before a man can get a living from the land. It takes at least three years before a man can keep himself on the land here. By the time he has ring-barked his timber and has waited for it to die, and clears the land in an expeditious manner, it is three years before he is able to live on that land. Perhaps five years would be nearer the mark; but I wish to put the lowest estimate, and I say it takes three years before a man can get a living off the land. I think most farmers and members for agricultural constituencies will say that it takes five years before a man can get a living off the land; in some districts it will take ten years.

**MR. N. J. MOORE:** In your district men have got a return within 12 months.

**MR. WATTS:** Yes; off repurchased estates, improved land.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** On virgin land.

**MR. WATTS:** One cannot take up land in the Eastern Districts that is timbered unless one is prepared to go to the expense of £2 or £3 an acre to clear off the green timber. It will take three years before any one can get a return from that land. In order to encourage settlement on the land some inducements should be offered, for we have a large class of men here with limited capital who have the right to insist that some system of clearing the land in advance should be adopted, that the timber should be ringbarked and a small portion cleared to enable them to get a living on the land from the start.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** You did not know that was being done?

**MR. WATTS:** It is being done on a very limited scale indeed, but it should be done in a general way throughout the agricultural districts of the State.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** That is the best thing you have said yet.

**MR. WATTS:** I would not think for one moment of condemning the repurchasing of large estates where situated adjacent to railways. I cannot understand why there should be an objection to spending 5s. per acre on Crown lands and adding the cost of the improvement to the value of the land. This would be preferable to paying 20s. per acre for repurchased land. If the Government spent 5s. per acre on land in clearing it, that would be far preferable to asking a selector to pay 25s. per acre for repurchased land.

**MR. N. J. MOORE:** The Government did that in Mr. Richardson's time.

**MR. WATTS:** They are not doing it now.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Yes, they are.

**MR. WATTS:** What is being done now should be carried out in a general way to enable settlers with small means to go on the land. Those who purchase land on our repurchased estates must be men of means, for they have to meet high payments and high annual rent. It is impossible for a man of small means to take up land on repurchased estates. By the Government spending a small

amount of money per acre on Crown lands a man with £100 would be able to get his living from the land in the first year. That would be better than importing agricultural settlers, for we are not going to import men of large means—I presume the Government are not looking for such.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** A great many are coming at the present time.

**MR. WATTS:** I am aware some are coming, and it is a good thing for the State. I am not saying anything against that. I do not wish to hinder anyone with money from coming here, but it is better for the State to get ten men, each with a small capital, than one man with a large capital. With regard to selection, I have another complaint to make. Men are allowed to select farther land, when they already hold land and have not complied with the conditions under which the land has been taken up. Land selection has been going on here, and in many cases large holdings are being taken year after year by men who have not complied with the labour conditions imposed on lands previously taken up by them; and I say that more land should not be granted to a man unless the inspectors are satisfied that the holder has complied with the improvement clauses for the lands previously selected. While this is being allowed we find that selectors of small holdings and free homestead farms, and men of small means who are not able to take up large areas, are being harassed because they do not live on the farms they have taken up. It is not altogether living on the land that we want, especially as it takes several years before getting a living from the land.

**MR. N. J. MOORE:** You do not want men to live on the farms?

**MR. WATTS:** Unless a man lives on his farm all the time he has to carry out double the improvements.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Is that not desirable?

**MR. WATTS:** It is not desirable in many cases. If a man chances to live 20 miles from his farm, the Government should allow him to do a small amount of improvement on his farm.

**MR. GORDON:** You advocate dummying then?

**MR. WATTS:** If a man happens to be poor and cannot get a living from his 160

acres, and has to work in town to live, he is asked to carry out double the ordinary improvements.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Can you give me an instance?

**MR. WATTS:** I can give you instances at Narrogin.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I say the statement is incorrect.

**MR. WATTS:** The regulations provide that double improvements have to be carried out.

**MR. ANGWYN:** Quite right too.

**MR. WATTS:** The man with plenty gets everything, while the man with a small capital gets nothing. If a man is complying with the improvement conditions, I do not care if he is living on the land or not, he has no right to be molested. He should not be expected to do double the improvements that the man who can afford to live on the land has to do. The man who works in town for a living and who finds it impossible to get a living from the land right away, if he puts in reasonable improvements, should be allowed to retain the land, no matter if he resides on rural lands or not.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** That is [a special feature of our Land Act.

**MR. WATTS:** If it is a special feature, then it is not conducive to the encouragement of the man with small means. I am not objecting to help the man of large means, but I think we should give encouragement to men of small means as far as we can.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** That is precisely what we are doing.

**MEMBER:** The Agricultural Bank will help.

**MR. WATTS:** The member for Bunbury ought to know that such a man cannot get help from the Agricultural Bank.

**MR. N. J. MOORE:** I did not say anything.

**MR. WATTS:** Whoever made the interjection ought to know, if he knows anything about the Land Act, that such a man cannot get assistance from the Agricultural Bank. There is a farther matter that I have to complain of. The Lands Department has been advertising lands on the other side of Goomalling, at Cowcowing. For some time past agents have been sent to the Eastern States to



lecture, and a large amount of money has been spent in advertising the lands of the country. I know of several complaints which have been made to me by those wishing to select land at Cowcowing. Men have proceeded to the place, and when they have come back and put in an application for land, they have found that they could not get it. I cannot for the life of me understand where the sense comes in with such a system, squandering the people's money in that way, and discouraging men who would be genuine settlers on the land. I say this is being done, and those in charge of the department should know that it is so, and should prevent it. I know people who have gone out to take up land, who have wasted their time and have come back so disgusted with the whole matter that they refused to waste farther time, and have gone back to the goldfields, or wherever they have come from, without taking up land. This occurs in the face of spending money to get people to take up land. There is another matter as to water supply. Very little has been done by the Government towards supplying new settlers with water.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** In what districts?

**MR. WATTS:** In any district. I know of one tank, perhaps two.

**MR. N. J. MOORE:** But there is a general cry amongst the new settlers that there is no adequate water supply provided for them.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** In what district?

**MR. WATTS:** Cowcowing.

**THE MINISTER:** A man has been sinking wells for over six months there.

**MR. WATTS:** Take the land along the Eastern line and almost all the land in the Eastern districts. I would like the Minister to name to me a few of the places where the water is provided.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I would like you to state where a water supply is not provided.

**MR. WATTS:** North of Grass Valley.

**MEMBER:** There are no inhabitants.

**MR. WATTS:** What has been done regarding that district between the Eastern Railway and Goomalling?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I will tell you when my turn comes.

**MR. WATTS:** Such statements are very well; but residents in those districts hear the frequent complaints of settlers, and can judge for themselves. Another matter which should receive the attention of the department, and one in which they have not shown wisdom, is that of land boards. Where several applications for land are in dispute, a board should deal with the matter, not as hitherto with closed doors, allowing but one witness at a time to attend, but with all witnesses present, as in the Eastern States. Our system shows a want of knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the East, as regards both water supply and land boards, the latter being wrongly constituted and conducted.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I thought your party wanted allocation by ballot.

**MR. WATTS:** I can tell you what has been done in the past in allotting your lands.

**THE PREMIER:** Do you say that our administration is not up to date, and that people in the East are ahead of us?

**MR. WATTS:** I say that we are behind Victoria in some provisions for land settlement.

**THE PREMIER:** Your party do not say that.

**MR. WATTS:** I do not mind what any party says. I speak from personal knowledge of those districts.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Quite right. Your party are not reliable.

**MR. WATTS:** As to the Agricultural Bank, it should be removed from political influence, and a number of directors appointed to manage its affairs. While the Government are advertising lands at Narrogin and establishing a colony there, encouraging people to settle at Nangeenan, they are refusing to grant people in that district facilities for dealing with the Agricultural Bank. What right have we to encourage people to settle in a district and not give them accommodation from that bank? Doodlekine is the limit beyond which advances will not be made by the bank; hence settlers in the district to which I have referred are denied advantages enjoyed by settlers in other districts.

**MEMBER:** You have no Agricultural Bank in Victoria.

**MR. WATTS:** No; there is a Credit Foncier Bank, which is much better, and

its methods might well be imitated by our Agricultural Bank in giving facilities to settlers, rather than by acting in an inquisitorial fashion, as it does when inquiring into an applicant's existing liabilities before advancing him money.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Of course no other bank does that?

**MR. WATTS:** I say that when the security is good enough, the bank ought to advance the money just as it would be advanced by a private bank or by the Credit Foncier Bank in Victoria.

**MR. DIAMOND:** Would you lend a man money without ascertaining his financial position?

**MR. WATTS:** Certainly; if the security was good enough. I should not care what else he owed.

**THE PREMIER:** Who ought to be the judge of the security?

**MR. WATTS:** The directors.

**THE PREMIER:** Would you make the director's position political or independent?

**MR. WATTS:** Independent.

**THE PREMIER:** Well, blame him; do not blame the Government.

**MR. WATTS:** I say the present state of affairs ought not to exist. The bank should deal in liberal fashion with settlers.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Ask them to come in and help themselves.

**MR. WATTS:** That is done by the Ministerial side. We (Labour party) do not expect to help ourselves on this side of the House.

**THE PREMIER:** But you always do so.

**MR. WATTS:** Agricultural colleges have been mentioned in the debate; and I say that any man who advocates their establishment here has not thoroughly investigated their working in the Eastern States.

**MR. DIAMOND:** No one would dream of copying the Eastern States.

**MR. WATTS:** Nearly every agricultural college established there has been proved to be of little use for the purpose intended; and although many thousands of pounds have been spent in this way in the Eastern States; yet a system which is eminently satisfactory to all interested is the system adopted in the East of sending round lecturers to various agricultural districts at opportune times, to give information to the farmers. Boys

sent to agricultural colleges waste their time, and when they leave college forget all they have learnt; but by sending lecturers to the farmers themselves who are interested in the subject, they, by attending the lectures, can get the information they require. The agricultural industry is second to none in this State. It is one of our great primary industries which should receive every encouragement; and yet, with splendid and unprecedented opportunities, the Government have failed to settle people on the land, and we have not had the actual settlement we had a right to expect. We ought to give every facility for placing men on the soil, so that land now returning nothing may yield a large profit both to the occupants and to the traders who reap their profits from farm produce. When a genuine settler produces thousands of pounds worth of foodstuffs from land which has previously produced nothing, and when those products are multiplied by hundreds, the country receives an enormous return; and the industry should be fostered by helping men of experience, not only men with means, but any men who are prepared to take up and work land. We are told that in Canada land is granted for five years free to any man who cares to work it. Let us get the people on the land; never mind the means. Every man we get on the land is a valuable asset to the country, and is providing national wealth while taking it out of no man's pocket.

**OPPOSITION MEMBERS:** Question.

**THE PREMIER:** Some members have left this evening, assuming that the debate will be continued to-morrow. I shall be glad if any members now present who have their speeches available will deliver them, if thought necessary.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Minister is out of order. I must put the question unless the debate is adjourned.

**MR. A. J. DIAMOND** (South Fremantle): I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion put, and a division taken with the following result:

Ayes	...	...	...	17
Noes	...	...	...	22

Majority against ... 5

## AYES.

Mr. Brown  
Mr. Burges  
Mr. Cowcher  
Mr. Diamond  
Mr. Foulkes  
Mr. Gordon  
Mr. Gregory  
Mr. Hayward  
Mr. Hopkins  
Mr. James  
Mr. Layman  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. N. J. Moore  
Mr. Nanson  
Mr. Reason  
Mr. Frank Wilson  
Mr. Quinlan (Teller).

## NOES.

Mr. Angwin  
Mr. Bath  
Mr. Bolton  
Mr. Connor  
Mr. Daglish  
Mr. Ellis  
Mr. Gill  
Mr. Hastie  
Mr. Heitmann  
Mr. Henshaw  
Mr. Horan  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Moran  
Mr. Nelson  
Mr. Scaddan  
Mr. Taylor  
Mr. Thomas  
Mr. Troy  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. A. J. Wilson  
Mr. F. P. Wilson  
Mr. Holman (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

[A pause ensued.]

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): I am very sorry it has been forced upon me at this comparatively late hour of the night to continue the debate; and I must express my surprise that such a demand has been made practically to stifle discussion. [Opposition dissent.] If the members of the Labour party would get on their legs, instead of interjecting senseless remarks, it would be better.

MR. THOMAS: We had enough senseless remarks the other day to last us for six months.

MR. DIAMOND: I made use of the expression "stifle discussion," and I repeat it. This is the manner in which an attempt is being made to stifle discussion, instead of a clear indictment being made against the Government at the commencement of the debate.

THE PREMIER: By rail-sitters.

MR. CONNOR: Exploiters.

MR. DIAMOND: Instead of continuing the indictment, we have members who are deferring to make their statements until Ministers have closed their mouths, to continue the indictment afterwards. From my personal experience, as well as from what I have read and witnessed, I submit that this is not fair play for the other side of the House to adopt. It has been made clear that a number of members on the other side of the House are not here to make indictments, but are here to listen. Apparently it is the duty of practically every man on the other side of the House to continue this indictment, and why, in the name of common sense and fair play, they are frightened to get

on their legs and continue this indictment and allow those they are speaking or arguing against to make their defence afterwards, I do not know. Why they should force Ministers of the Crown to continue the debate with the axe hanging over their heads [general laughter], knowing that there will be a fresh set of indictments brought against them to which they will have no opportunity to reply, I do not know. I appeal to the sense of fair play in the House whether this should be the case at this early stage of the first session of this Parliament. We have in the Governor's Speech a wish for the continuance of good feeling. I submit that the attack of the Opposition to-night is not good feeling.

MR. TAYLOR: We have put up four speakers to the Government's one.

MR. DIAMOND: Judging by what we have had already, if we could multiply the four by five we should just have as much nonsense as we have already had. I am not grumbling about anything personally. I am talking about fair play, and am trying to induce members on the other side of the House to see what is fair play and to act upon it.

MR. DAGLISH: The Government have three or four members over there. Let them be put up.

MR. DIAMOND: There are certain gentlemen on the cross-benches on the Opposition side, sitting there for the express purpose of interjecting, who will not stand up like men and say why they are opposing the Government, and why they have joined in an unholy combination to oust the Government. Surely some reason must be given for that.

MR. ANGWIN: They were sent here by the electors.

MR. DIAMOND: Members in this House, I fearlessly say, who sat in the last Parliament would say there has not been one member in this House more consistent than myself.

MR. CONNOR: No one less consistent.

MR. THOMAS: No one more inconsistent.

MR. DIAMOND: Talk like that is easy from those who will not stand on their feet, and who make an accusation without giving a man a right of reply. That is not the way to have a fair debate

or to let the country progress, or to inculcate and teach that good feeling which the Governor's Speech indicates. It is the duty of those who have still farther indictments to make against the Government to make them. So far the indictment made against the Government is the weakest I have ever heard of, witnessed, or read. I have been compelled to speak at this late hour by the absence of several members from this side of the House who, in the belief that this debate was to be extended until to-morrow, have left the House. I do not think it is a fair thing to force a division without hearing both sides on this question. People on trial in a court of law always hear the indictment before they are called upon to defend themselves. Apparently a number of members in this House want to keep the indictment back until those on trial have had their say, and then to make the indictment afterwards.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think it would be wise if the hon. member would address himself to the amendment.

**MR. DIAMOND:** I have been trying to do so, but really it is hard. Of course, I shall oppose the amendment. First of all, I do not approve of the principle of it, and secondly it is stupid and unnecessary. The only thing required and necessary from that side of the House is to vote in direct negative to the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply. Of course I do not pose as a great constitutional authority, as do the member for West Perth and that most profound student of constitutionalism, the member for somewhere down South—Dundas, I think. I really think we are not having fair play; I think that the mover of the amendment has caused a great waste of time, and that the amendment has been calculated to lengthen out this debate, for what reason I do not know. We have heard to-night several speeches, most of them given in a very earnest manner, apparently with the greatest possible belief on the part of the speakers in their fancies. With reference to the member for Coolgardie and his avalanche of figures, I think I can safely leave him in the hands of another member who will no doubt continue the debate later on—to-morrow, I suppose, under the grace of our friends on the other side; but I must

say that he succeeded in confusing me in the matter of figures.

**DR. ELLIS:** That was not difficult.

**MR. DIAMOND:** I yield to no man in the matter of figures. I will take a sheet of note paper at any time with the hon. member and give him a trial. For the first time in my life a gentleman has succeeded in making the issue he wanted to bring forth absolutely obscure to everybody but himself; and I question very much whether it is not extremely obscure so far as he himself is concerned. I do not think the hon. member expects the House to take him seriously. I do not take him seriously.

**MR. NELSON:** We are not taking the hon. member for South Fremantle seriously.

**MR. DIAMOND:** I am sure it is a question whether the hon. member takes himself seriously.

**MR. THOMAS:** What is the hon. member talking of?

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member for Dundas.

**MR. THOMAS:** The member for Dundas would certainly not waste his time tackling things of that sort.

**MR. DIAMOND:** With all due respect to the member for Coolgardie and his figures, I shall leave him to a more competent authority than myself. The hon. member expressed his ignorance of figures and his ignorance of Labour matters, and he was careful to inform the House that Labour members were entirely ignorant of railway matters. I must say he abundantly proved his case for himself. It is not my province or duty to go into his figures, because I have not got them all before me. I really believe the hon. member started the compilation of these figures the night after the election, with a wet towel over his head, and he has been at them ever since. If the House will adjourn for a month and give me time to go through the same figures again, I will also drown him in a sea of calculations; but as the House is not likely to extend that consideration to me, I shall have to leave the hon. member alone. As far as I am concerned I should like to have waited till the end of this debate, as I had the right to do, because I moved the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

MR. MORAN: You still have the right to reply as mover of that Address.

MR. DIAMOND: Thanks very much. I did not know that, and I am glad to have the assurance of so great an authority. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Needham) is the only member in the House who honoured me by referring to my remarks. I was beginning to take silence for consent. I presume the hon. members opposite were so satisfied of the justice of my remarks last Thursday, that they thought it better to leave me alone. The member for Fremantle—I am sorry he is not here—a friend of mine, a very good friend too—charged me somewhat on the fact that I reviled or derided or condemned the opposition to me at South Fremantle, also the opposition to the hon. the Premier, and sarcastically compared us to a statue placed on a pedestal in a museum with a card saying “visitors must not touch.” Possibly the new statues—you were speaking about the living statues—are likely to scratch and bite or hurt when they are touched, so there is no necessity to put a notice to the public not to touch them. However, the member for Fremantle was so kind to me and my remarks generally that I have no serious fault to find except this, that he assured me, as I have been assured over and over again since the election, that next time the member for South Fremantle will see what will happen. I said then I was ready, if the hon. member for Fremantle or anyone else thinks we did not have a fair fight at Fremantle, and he thinks he can alter the result. I have had this said to me over and over again privately in this House and in the streets at Fremantle, and I still live, breathe, and have my being. I do not think these threats will result in any injury to me whatever. I could have wished that this disquisition on the Collie Railway by the member for Collie (Mr. Henshaw) had been delivered in the presence of his constituents at Collie. Probably he will hear from them on the subject later on. He condemned a railway which does not exist, I believe; at any rate the route he spoke about does not exist. A portion of the line which he particularly referred to is a portion of another line altogether, and consequently he succeeded, after the member for Coolgardie (Dr. Ellis), in fogging me. The

member for that district also gave us a disquisition on the administration of the Electoral Act. It appears to me that, according to the Electoral Act, the remedy always lies in the hands of the aggrieved party. It was in their province to lay an information for any breaches of the Act, but instead of doing so they come to this House and whine about all sorts of imaginary doings which we hear went on during the late election. As far as I am concerned, I say that in the four electorates of Fremantle not one single complaint has been published that I know of, and I do not believe that anything was done to any large extent in any of the districts in contravention of that postal section of the Act. As I understand the leaders of the House have, in their united wisdom, agreed to an adjournment, I will close my remarks.

On motion by MR. HOLMAN, debate adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at seven minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next day.

### Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th August, 1904.

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THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAFERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Roads Act, 1902, By-laws of the—1, Lawlers Road Board; 2, Kimberley Goldfields Road Board; 3, West Guildford Road Board; 4, Buckland Hill Road Board; 5, Greenbushes Road Board; 6, Mount