

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 29th July, 1913.

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

QUESTION—PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER asked the Colonial Secretary: Will he lay upon the Table of the House, at the earliest opportunity, the recent report by the Chief State Electoral Registrar, Mr. Stenberg, on the subject of proportional representation?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: A copy of the Report will be duly laid on the Table of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly.

QUESTION—TRANSFER OF MR. WALTER, R.M.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER asked the Colonial Secretary: Will he lay on the Table of the House all papers relating to the transfer of Mr. W. A. G. Walter from the Resident Magistracy of Kalgoorlie to that of Cue?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: No; but they will be placed at the disposal of any hon. member who desires to peruse them.

QUESTION—STATE HOTEL, WONGAN HILLS.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Whether at the local option poll held in April, 1911, for the Irwin licensing district (in which is included the township of Wongan Hills) the following were not the results of the poll:—Resolution B—That the number of licenses existing in the district be in-

creased; negatived. Questions—(i.) Do you vote that all new Publicans' General Licenses in the district shall be held by the State; answered in the negative? (ii.) Are you in favour of State management throughout the district; answered in the negative? 2, Whether it was not one of the conditions of sale of the Wongan Hills township blocks that no license should be held in respect of them? 3, Whether the proposed State hotel is not situated on one of the said township blocks? 4, Whether the Government has taken the advice of the Crown Law officers on the question as to whether the State is entitled to hold such license in spite of the result of the above local option poll?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, No. The proposed hotel will be situated on land reserved for the purpose. 4, Yes. The resolutions do not affect the exercise of the discretion of the Court in the townsites, there being no licensed premises within a radius of 15 miles. (*Vide* Section 45.)

PAPER: STATUTES COMPILATION, CRIMINAL CODE.

The PRESIDENT: I have to lay on the Table of the House a compilation of the Criminal Code with amendments, also a certificate from the Attorney General certifying to its correctness.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, The Pearling Act, 1912, Regulations. 2, Game Act, 1912, Regulations. 3, Health Act, 1911-12: (a) Food Standards and Regulations; Amendment of Regulation. (b.) Leederville Local Health Authority, Amendment of By-law. (c) Tambellup Local Health Authority, By-law. 4, Inebriates Act, 1912, Regulations. 5, Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, Return showing membership of registered Industrial Unions. 6, Perth Public Hospital: Report of the Board of Management for year ended 30th June, 1912. 7, Report of Conference of Permanent Heads and Heads of Sub-Departments on the Public

Service Act and the Public Service Regulations. 8, Public Works Department—(1) Annual Report of the Department for Financial Year 1911-12. (2) (i.) Roads Act, 1911, By-laws of the following Road Boards:—(a) Beverley, (b) Claremont, (c) Mount Malcolm, (d) Wiluna, (e) Wyndham, (f) Yilgarn. (ii.) Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, By-laws of the following municipalities:—(a) Boulder, (b) Perth, (c) North Perth, (d) South Perth, (e) Subiaco. (iii.) Public Works Act, 1902—Fremantle Road Bridge By-laws. (iv.) Uniform general By-laws for regulating Motor Traffic and Standard Lights to be carried by all Vehicles. 9, Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department: By-laws of the following places:—(a) Busselton, (b) Derby, (c) Geraldton, (d) Goldfields, (e) Meekatharra, (f) Pingelly, (g) Metropolitan Water Supply. (10) Western Australian Government Tramways By-laws. 11, Government Railways Act, 1904—Reports and Returns in accordance with Clauses 54 and 83. 12, The Land Act, 1898, Regulations. 13, Parks and Reserves Act, 1899, Regulations. 14, Cemeteries Act, 1897, Regulations. 15, Public Works Department—(1) Roads Act, 1911—By-laws of the following Road Boards:—(a) Ashburton, (b) Brookton, (c) Capel, (d) Collie, (e) Goomalling, (f) Kimberley, (g) Marble Bar, (h) Marradong, (i) Mount Magnet, (k) Northampton, (l) Perth, (m) Phillips River, (n) Port Hedland, (o) Upper Blackwood, (p) Sussex, (q) Warren. (2) Municipal Corporations Act, 1906—By-laws of the following Municipalities:—(a) Albany, (b) Boulder, (c) Carnarvon, (d) Collie, (e) Fremantle, (f) East Fremantle, (g) North Fremantle, (h) Geraldton, (i) Leederville, (k) North Perth, (l) South Perth, (m) Victoria Park.

URGENCY MOTION—FOOD AND DRUGS REGULATIONS.

The PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter from the Hon. Mr. Kingsmill:—

I beg to give notice that I intend, before the commencement of this after-

noon's business in the Council, to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of urgency, namely, to consider the action of the Government in relation to Regulation 62 under the Health Act laid upon the Table of the House on June 26th, the subject of a notice of motion by myself for the disallowance of the same, and now proposed to be carried into effect by the Government though the Legislative Council has had no opportunity of discussing the same. I consider this is a matter of urgency, and if the requisite number of members stand up in their places I will allow it to proceed.

Four members having risen in their places,

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): It is with a great amount of regret indeed that I find it necessary to take this form of procedure, a form of procedure which I have never found it necessary to take before, but I think that when hon. members have heard the few remarks that I have to make on this subject, they will say I am fully justified in adopting practically any method to call the attention of Parliament and the attention of the public to what has been done in respect to these regulations. First of all in regard to these regulations to which objection is taken and in relation to which I have a notice of motion on the paper, you will remember, Mr. President, that I consulted you to-day and you ruled that this notice of motion could not be proceeded with until the debate on the Address-in-reply had been fully dealt with and finished, in which ruling I acquiesce and concur implicitly. In relation to these regulations it would be as well to remind yourself and hon. members of the provisions of the Health Act and the regulations which may be made thereunder. Section 271 of the Act of 1911 is as follows:—

All regulations and by-laws shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within thirty days of the making thereof if Parliament is then in session, and if not, then within thirty days after the next meeting of Parliament. This section has been amplified by the

addition to it under Section 8 of the Health Act Amendment Act, 1912, as follows:—

Section two hundred and seventy-one of the principal Act is hereby amended by the addition of the subsection following:—(2) Except in so far as they may be in conflict with the express provisions of this or any other Act, any regulations purporting to have been made under this Act and laid before each House as aforesaid shall, if not annulled in manner aforesaid, be conclusively deemed to be valid and shall have effect according to their tenor.

This is the legislation dealing with the question, and I think that that legislation is so fresh in the minds of hon. members that it is almost needless for me to state that the intention of that Act was, that whenever any regulations were made under that Act, both houses of Parliament should have the opportunity of saying whether they concur with these regulations or not and reasonable time should be given for either House of Parliament to express approval or disapproval of these regulations under these Acts. The whole gist of the matter lies in the term "when Parliament is in session," and by no stretch of imagination can it be said that regulations laid before Parliament for an hour and a half on the one day that Parliament sits before an adjournment of 31 days, receive the approval of Parliament which is a condition precedent to these regulations coming into force. But what do we find? We find these regulations among 70 others were laid on the Table of the House by the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. E. Dodd), the leader of the House being absent for a reason which we all deplore. These regulations were laid on the Table of the House at the opening of Parliament on an occasion which members know is purely formal, when members know that contentious debate is often somewhat hampered by the presence of the public in greater numbers than is usual at our meetings, and on an occasion when it would be almost out of place to introduce any such contentious matter before this House. The exact time members had

to consider this matter and make a motion without notice, if such a thing were possible under our Standing Orders, which I think it is not, was about two minutes. Mr. Dodd read out this set of regulations first among the very many regulations and papers which he laid on the Table. I must confess I was on the watch for them. As soon as he read them out I asked one of the clerks to pass them over to me. I examined them as quickly as I could, how hurriedly is borne testimony to by the fact that in my haste to stop an act which I deemed to be an injustice to the public, I gave notice of motion concerning the wrong regulation. I had not even time to pick out the right regulation. However, under the practice of the House, which enabled me to do so, I made a correction and my notice of motion appears on the Notice Paper as it should be. It would, I think, be straining the powers given to the Government under this Act to the very utmost if they were to put this regulation into effect, even if no notice of motion had been given, if this House had accepted in silence those regulations which laid on the Table for an hour and a half and then passed out of the ken of hon. members for a sufficient time to legally put them into force—it would have been a straining of the powers of Government if they had taken the silence of Parliament to mean consent under those peculiar circumstances. Words fail to describe their action when we consider that a notice of motion, disallowing this very regulation to which I object, that such a notice of motion should appear on the Notice Paper, which I claim should have acted as a caveat and secured the suspension of that particular regulation until the House had an opportunity of discussing and declaring upon it. That is all I want to do. If the Government are willing to observe the spirit of this Act, then the least thing they should have done was to withdraw this regulation temporarily and to re-gazette it when Parliament met, and so give this branch of Parliament, which had expressed through one of its members some doubt as to the spirit of

this regulation, that chance of criticising the regulation which is given to it explicitly by the Act under which this regulation is made. I do not intend now to go into the merits of the case, to debate in any way the substance matter of the notice of motion. I intend to confine my remarks purely to a criticism of the action of the Government in the constitutional aspect of the question, and leave the merits of the case to a future occasion, if that future occasion is found necessary. To impress upon hon. members the urgency of this matter I would ask them to consider what this regulation means. The regulation—I will not read it out to hon. members; they can read it for themselves—rendered as tersely as possible, the object of the regulation is to prohibit the sale of all patent medicines the contents of which do not appear on the label, or alternatively, the contents of which are not disclosed to the Health Department in formulae handed in by the patentees of the medicines. Let me say that a very great many of the patent medicines at present in use throughout the State will not have their formulae handed in to the Health Department; and it is obvious to anybody that it is the more successful of these patent medicines the formulae of which will not be handed in to the department. It is those which are most in public favour the formulae of which will be withheld from the Health Department. To bring it home to hon. members let me read a list of only some of the remedies which are in daily household use throughout the State, the sale of which will be prohibited in Western Australia, if it is not already prohibited, for I understand the regulation is being put into effect, because I have read in the Press that prosecutions are now proceeding under this regulation. The list is as follows:—Beecham's Pills, Cockle's Pills, Elliman's Embrocation, Eno's Fruit Salts, Collis-Brown's Chlorodyne, Horlick's Malted Milk, Kay's Essence of Linseed, Powell's Balsam of Aniseed, Sanatogen, Singleton's Eye Ointment, Antiphlogistine, Scott's Emulsion, St. Jacob's Oil, Pain-killer, Seigel's Syrup, Benger's Food, Bonnington's Irish Moss. Most hon. mem-

bers will realise what a serious thing the loss of the use of these remedies will be to the people in towns. To how much greater extent will their loss act upon those resident in the country and in the more remote parts of the State, where doctors are not available? I do not wish to pursue that avenue of debate any further. I only mention this to show how very serious this regulation is. What I want to know from the leader of the House is, do the Government intend to play the game fairly, or do they intend to take advantage of the technicality which apparently they are taking advantage of? Will they give this House what this House has undoubtedly a right to under the Acts which I have quoted, namely, an opportunity to criticise, to allow or disallow, this regulation which is of so much importance to the people of Western Australia? That is all I ask. I may say at once that the leader of the House has my deepest sympathy in the very awkward position in which first the impetuosity and now the obstinacy of one of his colleagues has placed him. He has my sympathy because I cannot believe that a gentleman as well acquainted as is Mr. Drew or Mr. Dodd with the remote parts of this State can for a moment endorse the action taken, an action which will re-act so unfavourably on the constituents of the hon. members I have named, and which is doing a very serious injustice in the remote parts of the State, and which can do a very questionable amount of good, if any at all.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: And which is driving business into the other States.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Quite so. If the hon. gentleman is willing to give the House an opportunity of criticising this regulation he will be acting as the Government should have acted in the first place. On the other hand if he refuses to give that opportunity he will be guilty of an act of what I can only characterise as very gross discourtesy. To myself as the member who gave the notice of motion it does not matter; it would be extremely discourteous if the Government refused me an opportunity of discussing the subject, but the discourtesy would be

much greater to this House. If the Government refuse to give such an opportunity, they will be flouting the Act, and they will be guilty of gross discourtesy to this Chamber. It all depends on the answer the hon. gentleman gives to my question as to what action I shall take in the future, but I may say it is my intention to proceed as far as the forms of the House permit with the notice of motion standing in my name. I beg to move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): I second the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): There is no doubt this is a most unfortunate occurrence. I can scarcely think the hon. member or any member of the House can come to the conclusion that the Government have been guilty of a trick.

Hon. M. L. Moss: No one suggests that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No one was more surprised than the Government when they saw an article in a metropolitan newspaper describing the action taken as a trick. It was not a trick, nor was it intended to be a trick, and it is very unfortunate that Parliament was adjourned for a period which did not permit of the consideration of Mr. Kingsmill's motion. At the same time I cannot absolve the hon. member himself from blame. He is well acquainted with the forms of the House, and with the various Acts of Parliament, and he knew perfectly well that if these regulations remained on the Table for 30 days they had all the force of law.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: How could he have stopped them?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He could have drawn attention to it when the motion was made for an adjournment for a month, and I am sure the leader of the House would have fallen in with the wishes of the hon. member.

Hon. M. L. Moss: But the remedy is so simple. You can revoke the regulation and republish it next week.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I did not receive intimation of Mr. Kingsmill's

intention until 3 o'clock this afternoon—too late to consult Cabinet, and too late for me to be in a position to give the House any definite assurance this afternoon. However, a specific motion has been made, and I am sure the Government will give it every consideration, and have the matter thoroughly discussed. Mr. Kingsmill wandered from his point, and proceeded to deal with the demerits of the regulation. Last session of Parliament the House agreed without a dissentient voice—if I except Mr. Connolly—to a Bill giving the Government specific power to make this regulation.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Rational power.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: No; not specific powers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. Specific powers, and on that occasion I clearly explained what the Government proposed to do. Mr. Connolly was the only member who spoke on the subject, and he mildly disagreed with the course we proposed to follow, but offered no strong objection to it, and the Bill went through, giving us all these powers with the knowledge of every member present. All I can do now is to submit the question for the consideration of Cabinet, and I shall do it at the earliest opportunity, and will subsequently make a statement to the House.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Will the hon. member recommend to the Government that the regulation be withdrawn and re-gazetted?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot state what recommendation I shall make.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (in reply): If no other hon. member wishes to speak I only have to rise to record my appreciation of the manner of the hon. member's explanation and my dissatisfaction with the matter of it. I wish the hon. member could have been a little more definite; I do indeed. He realises that this is a most unfortunate occurrence. He says that the Government have not been guilty of a trick. They can best prove that in the manner which has been pointed out by several hon. members, namely, by withdrawing this regulation and re-gazetting

it, in order that this House will have an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it, an opinion which will have some weight. I am very much dissatisfied indeed that the honourable gentleman did not give us a more definite assurance. Perhaps under the circumstances, and considering the fact that he had such very short notice—yet he must admit that as soon as I made up my mind to take this course, I took the earliest opportunity of informing him of it, although there is no obligation on me so to do, but I did adopt that course and he got the information of what I intended to do practically as soon as I had made up my mind. I hope that the Minister will lay this protest before Cabinet and that they will do nothing except what is absolutely right for them to do, not take advantage of what the Minister himself has described as an unfortunate occurrence, not let the public believe and confirm the impression which has gone forth that this is a trick on the part of the Government, but will withdraw the regulation and re-gazette it. If the Government, now that the aspect of affairs has been plainly pointed out to them, refuse to give this House an opportunity of expressing an opinion on this regulation, there can be no doubt whatever, in spite of what the hon. member says, that this is a trick and not an unfortunate occurrence.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: What about the prosecutions?

Hon. M. L. Moss: They ought to be stopped.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I know nothing about that. Those who are being prosecuted can look after themselves. What I want to maintain is the undoubted right of this House to what this Act gives it, namely, the right to annul or allow the regulation which we are now discussing. Under the circumstances, and again expressing my regret that the Minister cannot give us any more definite assurance, and again expressing the conviction that if the Government do not now withdraw the regulation and re-gazette it, it will be a confirmation of the public opinion that this is a trick on the part of the Government, I beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

MESSAGE—ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message from His Excellency the Governor received and read assenting to Supply Bill (No. 1), £1,324,130.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 26th June.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): From the Governor's Speech delivered something over a month ago, I have endeavoured to extract what might be designated the policy of the Government, but I have failed to find anything in the nature of a policy contained in the Speech with the exception of the reappearance of some old familiar friends which I will allude to presently. The rest of the Speech is so much padding. It may only be a coincidence that at the time the Governor's Speech was prepared the Labour Congress had not been in session and no instructions had been given to the Ministry as to what words were to be put into the mouth of His Excellency. Further than that, although some considerable time has elapsed since the Governor's Speech was delivered, and a Labour Congress has sent forth its fiat, there has been no pre-sessional speech by the Premier, so to a large extent we are groping in the dark as to what the future policy of the Government is to be. Since Parliament last assembled a most important matter dealing with the Government of this State has been the subject of considerable public discussion. I allude to the referenda proposals which were before the people of this State during the recent Commonwealth elections. It may not be out of place to remark that in 1911 these or similar questions were submitted to the people of Australia to pass judgment upon, and it is an extraordinary thing that in 1911 we found hon. gentlemen who are now members of the Ministry out in the length and breadth of this country opposing these proposals. They were then satisfied that the proposals were in the worst interests of Western Australia: they were then satis-

fled that the carrying of these questions would mean dealing a very serious blow to State government in Western Australia; they knew perfectly well at that time that the passing of these questions and the making of them part of the Federal Constitution would turn the hands of the clock back to a large extent in connection with the general work of the development of this country. But a great change came over these gentlemen between 1911 and 1913, for we found these gentlemen who were so strenuously opposed to this line of policy in 1911 vigorously supporting it in 1913. Is it a fair comment to make that between 1911 and 1913 they were compelled through the powers of an outside body, namely, the congress I have just alluded to, to give their whole-hearted support to these referenda proposals, not because they were in the best interests of Western Australia, but because the Labour party throughout Australia thought they were in the best interests of the Labour party of Australia? The benefits or detriment to Western Australia were never considered by these gentlemen in the support they gave to the referenda proposals in 1913. One hon. gentleman who adorns the present Ministry has been at great pains throughout this country to explain the reason for this political somersault. He stated that he had become converted on account of the obstruction of the Legislative Council. He was hard pressed for reasons when he was induced to turn this political somersault, but nevertheless, this was the reason assigned, that on account of the obstruction of the Legislative Council he had thrown over the policy he had advocated in 1911 and had in 1913 advocated a policy which in my judgment, and I am glad to say in the judgment of a large proportion of the thinking public of Australia was highly detrimental to State progress throughout the Commonwealth. The accusation against this House was unfounded as was well known by the person who made the accusation, and at the cost of a certain amount of repetition of arguments I have used in times gone by, I intend later on to recite a list of the various measures to which this

House has given its concurrence and which are now on the Statute book, and to point out how little this Chamber has obstructed the legislation of either party in politics and we will see the reasons which have actuated us in taking the stand we have taken. It is unfortunate that the majority of the people in Western Australia should have thought fit to vote for the referenda proposals, because if there is one part of Australia which will suffer seriously as regards this blow at State rights and State government, it is Western Australia. Situated as we are such a great distance away from the other States and represented as we are by such a small number of members in the House of Representatives, it is surprising to me that such a large number of votes were cast in favour of the referenda proposals. I can only attribute it to the fact that there is a large section of the public in this country who have very little interest in it beyond the fact that they draw wages. If certain industries peter out they would find it easy to get out of this State, and there is a want of sympathy between them and those whose lot is cast in the more settled parts of this country, and they give their vote with less regard to the consequences than do the people in the settled parts of the State. In speaking on the Address-in-Reply, I have not usually resorted to quoting a very large number of figures; I will not do so at any very great length this afternoon, but I think it highly necessary in the interests of this country that a few figures of great importance to the country should be prominently referred to at this juncture. The figures I am quoting from are in the latest monthly *Statistical Abstract*, and refer to the 30th June, 1913, the end of the last financial year. Our revenue per capita was £14 18s. 9d., and our expenditure per capita was £15 11s. 2d. We have, therefore, during the last year spent 12s. 5d. per head, man, woman, and child, over and above the revenue we have received. In the *Statistical Abstract* the population on the 30th June is shown to have been 313,428. In round numbers that means we are going astern to the tune

of £190,000 a year. These figures are to be found on page 6 of the *Statistical Abstract*. When the present Government took office in October, 1911—and these figures will be found in the twelfth table on page 6 of the *Abstract*—there was a surplus in the Treasury of £13,000. On the 13th June, 1913, there was a deficiency of £311,515. The Government or the country has gone astern in the 21 months that the present Government have been in office to the extent of £324,515, or we have gone astern month after month to the tune of £14,500. During this time our State revenue has largely increased. Our deficit for the year, according to these published figures, is £190,404, but I pause here to make this statement: In 1909 we amended the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act as a result of the authorisation of the construction of a dock at Fremantle. In that 1909 amendment of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, provision was made for the imposition of a harbour improvement rate of 6d. per ton on all cargo brought over the wharves at Fremantle. That rate was to provide interest and sinking fund on the cost of the construction of that dock, so that the Consolidated Revenue should not be burdened to the extent of one fraction while the dock was being constructed. The money raised by that harbour improvement rate was not put into Consolidated Revenue for a very good reason; it was there to be available as it was required for the purpose of meeting the obligations in connection with the construction of that dock. It did so, and it provided a surplus of some £30,000—I am talking in round numbers. That £30,000 remained presumably in a trust account in the Treasury, and if we examine the figures in the return dealing with the Fremantle Harbour Trust, we will find that the revenue has been very considerably swollen by this £30,000 being paid into Consolidated Revenue and the deficiency for the year, instead of being £190,404, is in reality £220,000. I quote these figures, because I think it is time the public men of this State did something to arrest this deficit which is being piled up month after month and year after year. It has been said by a Minister that the

present condition of affairs is largely due to the fact that land rents are considerably in arrear. That explanation will not do, because at the time the Budget Speech was delivered and the Estimates were framed, due provision was made for those rents remaining outstanding. The losses are occurring in this way: according to the Treasurer's estimate when he delivered the Budget Speech, and according to the business which the railways have done, the figures during last year are £78,628 less than the estimate, and the State steamers are responsible for a deficiency of £31,791 on the Treasurer's estimate. These two enterprises are short of the Treasurer's estimate by £110,419. The *Statistical Abstract*, in dealing with the railways, gives no figures beyond 1912, and the figures I last quoted have been obtained from the local Press. A very serious position arises, and hon. members who will take the trouble to look at page 27 of the *Abstract* will find that out for themselves. In 1911 the railways paid interest and sinking fund on the cost of construction and they contributed as aid to the Consolidated Revenue 1.87 per cent. on the cost of construction. In 1911 this amount of 1.87 per cent.—and that represented in figures £224,441—was of great assistance to the Consolidated Revenue, but in 1912 that had gone down to .77 per cent. and the £224,441 was reduced to £101,074. The 1913 figures are not given in the *Abstract*, but we know that the railway receipts were below the estimate by £78,628. What contribution can we expect in 1913 towards the other services of the State from the railways? Of course we know what has been largely responsible for this loss. The Government came into office pledged to raise the wages of unskilled labourers on the railways. I never would object to giving this increase if it would do any good to unskilled labour, but it is quite obvious that the cost of production increased also, and the result is that these men have not benefited because of that. The cost of production is increased and the burden has been passed on. This is a very serious position. The railways have been aiding the other services to the tune of nearly a quarter of a million, and those were the

figures for the year ended the 30th June, 1911, whereas to-day it is almost obvious that, with the big deficit that there was in 1912 and the loss in 1913, if the railways are paying interest on the cost of construction and sinking fund, it is as much as they are doing. Just a word about the steamers. These were, as hon. members know, purchased without Parliamentary authority on the eve of Parliament meeting. That was a departure the Government were not justified in making and so seriously did this House view the position that members took the extraordinary procedure of passing an amendment to the Address-in-reply last session. When a Government intends to embark upon new enterprises, clearly it is their obvious duty to come into the open and ask both Houses to give legislative sanction to the departure. That was not done in this case. They knew that this House would not agree to the Government embarking on such a scheme. Now we see where it has landed them. On the figures published up to the 30th June—and hon. members, in order to find that I am not misquoting them, can look at page 5 and Tables 8 and 9 of the *Statistical Abstract* and they will see them there for themselves—it will be seen that the expenditure in connection with the steamers during that year ran into £88,446 while the revenue received was £66,193. The loss on the basis of receipts and expenditure was £22,253. The House is aware that during last session an Act was passed called "The Government Trading Concerns Act," and in respect of certain matters contained in that measure I have to-day asked certain questions of the Government. That Act provides that interest and sinking fund on loan moneys expended in connection with these ventures must be charged in the balance-sheet against them, and that an amount must be allowed for depreciation of assets—a most important item when dealing with old steamers, charges for use of Government departments, interest and sinking fund to be charged on the capital provided out of revenue, and then ordinary outstandings in the way of liabilities; and I suppose against that there would be moneys that the Shipping Department received—these,

and other things, must be accounted for. You take interest and sinking fund on the money utilised in the purchase of these steamers, approximating £100,000—and generally 4 per cent. is allowed for the money and $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for a sinking fund, making £4,500—and I may say I am quoting people who know what they are talking about when I mention that for old ships at least 10 per cent. should be allowed for depreciation, which would mean another £10,000. That would be £14,500 to be added to the £22,253, which was the loss already quoted. I have discounted liberally the amount that should be allowed in respect of interest and sinking fund on these loan moneys and the depreciation of the assets, and having done that the total loss last year cannot be less than £35,000. That is roughly £3,000 a month. Here is rather an interesting extract taken from the *West Australian* on the 26th April this year. It was a speech made by Mr. Fisher in Brisbane, and it says—

At a meeting to-night in the Town Hall the Prime Minister briefly touched upon the land tax and announced that his Government, if returned to power, would continue its collection. He mentioned he had received a telegram in reference to the reported statement of Mr. Joseph Cook that the West Australian Labour Government had lost in one month £2,000 on the Government steamers and £6,000 on the State hotels. The acting Premier of Western Australia had been questioned on both and had replied that Mr. Cook's statement was untrue.

It is untrue in the sense that £2,000 is being lost, because on a low estimate I made it £3,000. Mr. Fisher denied that £2,000 a month had been lost. The fact is that every time the sun goes down and rises £100 is lost to this State in connection with the running of these boats, and when we think that this amount would find work for 250 men employed at 8s. a day it will be seen that it is an expensive luxury to the State. Is it not some justification for the step this House took last session, and would it not be strong justification for any Parliament to object to the Government embarking

on such a venture when this is going to be an annually recurring loss? Efforts were made by a contributor to the columns of the *West Australian*, who wrote under the name "Observer," to get information on behalf of the public with regard to the steamship service, and the Colonial Secretary stated this—

My critic says I was evasive. There was no evasion on my part but there was a straight-out refusal to supply him with any information which would help our rivals to gain an inside knowledge of the workings of the business. In that course I shall endeavour to persevere to the end.

I am not worrying about the rivals; I am worrying about getting definite information from the Minister for the purpose of satisfying hon. members in this House and the people in the country. It is too expensive a luxury altogether; it is costing us £30,000 a year or more, and the country can do with the expenditure of that money in other directions. Assuming for a moment that the figures I have quoted are wrong, I want the Minister, when he replies, to give us the fullest information, and not shield himself under the cloak that he is giving information away to his rivals. If the country embarks on undertakings of this kind we must know the worst, and it is the Minister's duty to give the information to the people. There is a Commission sitting, making certain inquiries into the running of the Steamship Department. It was only intended that they should inquire into certain transactions that Mr. Holmes referred to, but that is not the kind of inquiry which should be held. It may turn out with regard to Mr. Holmes' complaints that he has been barking up the wrong tree and the Commission then will, to a certain extent, have proved itself to be a white-washing machine. We should have an inquiry into the whole of the transactions of the department, but I want to say, with regard to the personnel of the Commission which is sitting now, that it was hardly fair that it should be composed of civil servants, with the exception of Mr. Frank Nicholas, and to expect these men to give a fearless finding

when they are really sitting in judgment upon the Ministry of the day. A Commission necessary to inquire into the operation of the Shipping Department I think should be an independent body, unfettered by Ministerial control; in fact, a Commission composed of persons from outside the State would have been better. That is the kind of Commission which should have been asked to conduct this inquiry. Why were these steamers purchased? In the *West Australian* of the 26th April there is a report of an interview between Mr. Scaddan and some person in London—or probably he was addressing some audience—and he stated—

The object of the steamship service is to bring down stock from the North-West of the State (which is about the same as bringing it from Russia to this country) and it is to break up a small combine of three or four firms who control the traffic and who have prevented other growers from sending down their stock, while at the other end they were able to control the price at which the goods were sold. With the three large transport steamers owned by the State and by the establishment of State butchers' shops and grocers' shops we have been able to reduce very considerably the price of meat and produce, and when we have control of the complete coastal shipping service we shall be able to go a great deal further.

We are only at the beginning of a very bad business. A complete coastal shipping service is the objective of the Government. It was in order to deal with the traffic and to break up a combine of three or four persons who are in control, and now we find that the Government's biggest customers are these very men.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: They are the only customers.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Yes, practically the only customers. It would not be proper for me to mention the names of the firms; but I know that the three or four firms the Government were hitting at are the best customers of the Government and without them there would be practically nothing for the Government to do.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Why do they travel by the Government steamers?

Hon. W. Patrick: They are much cheaper.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Sweating prices.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I cannot answer that question. These big men in the past were cattle owners and charterers of vessels and they were also retailers, but, with the operation of the Arbitration Act and the hundred and one regulations made to prevent them doing this thing and another thing with their employees, they came to the conclusion that it was impossible to run these retail shops at a profit, and it is well known that these big firms stopped running the retail shops long before the Government went into the business. The result is that in most of these shops men who were previously the managers for the big people are now the proprietors, and one has only to consult the *Traders' Gazette* to see that in many instances those former managers are running the business under bills of sale. The big men are supplying the cattle as in the past, and many of them, instead of chartering ships, find it more advantageous to send their cattle down by the Government boats. Now, what is happening at the present time is this: on Tuesday at Fremantle there is a sale of cattle by public auction, and on Wednesday in the same place there is a sale of sheep by public auction, and one of the conditions is that the purchasers must pay cash in three days. It is quite a common occurrence to find the little man bidding at the sales for his cattle, and the Government nominee competing with him in the same market. At Fremantle recently the Government opened one of their State butcher shops, and it would have been worth something to me if there had been a photographer close handy during the first few days the place was open, for I witnessed Copley's cart unloading carcasses of mutton and beef and carrying them inside for sale in the Government butcher shop. Thus not only are the Government carrying the big man's beef from the North, but they are going to him for supplies to sell in their own State shops. On the other hand the Government are competing

against the little man, who has to pay cash in three days for his meat, and if the little man cannot make it pay, the Government are not going to make it pay in the way they run these businesses. The result will be that the little man may go to the wall, and there will be a repetition in the State butcher shops of exactly what has taken place in regard to the running of the State steamers. No wonder there are proposals to increase the income tax in this country! Who are benefitting by the establishment of State butcher shops? A certain section of the public who are living in the vicinity of the shops and who choose to go to them and carry home their own meat will get a certain amount of benefit, but until within the last few days when shops have been established at Fremantle and Subiaco there was no State butcher shop outside of Perth; and is it fair that a small section of people should get their meat at a fair price when the whole State has to pay the loss that arises through the running of these establishments? The Government must intend in the end to run these shops in every settlement throughout the country, and it is necessary that a strong protest should be made; we can do nothing else. This business will not end at butchers' shops; grocers' shops are coming, and in the end we will all be down to the one level of Government servants drawing wages.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: True socialism.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Yes, true socialism. The steamers are making a loss. The butchers shops may result in a loss—we have not had the figures yet—and up to date we are benefitting only a few people in the populous centres of Perth and Fremantle. I do not wish to suggest that the Government started the shops in these big centres because there are more voters there, but it certainly looks as if that was the case. I think the Government have recognised by this time that it is not such an easy matter to supply the metropolitan market with butcher's meat all the year round. They have probably found out by this time that the large supplies are situated at one end

of the State and the large demand is at the other end. They have probably found out that there is no holding ground for the stock at this end, and that they have to sell their stock immediately it is brought down. What I am about to relate has arisen repeatedly and it will go on. When the "Kwinana" came on the coast to carry stock she replaced another boat, the "Junee," belonging to the Adelaide line. The Junee carried about 600 head of cattle and the "Kwinana" from 800 to 850. Now the market down here is of a very limited character. I believe that at North Fremantle to-day meat fetched an enormous price because there happened to be very little on the market, but the "Kwinana" will be in presently with 800 bullocks, and this is what will happen: There will be a certain number of cattle on the "Kwinana" belonging to the small man whom the Government are anxious to protect, and the result is that since that steamer has been carrying cattle on the coast the little men are getting much smaller prices for their stock than when they were in the hands of the three or four large firms.

Hon. E. McLarty: Some of them get nothing at all.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I have it on no less an authority than Mr. McLarty that some of these small men get nothing at all for their stock. Very well, then.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: That is as much as they had before.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: No, the hon. member does not know what he is talking about. I want to point out something else to show how these shops are being run. In order to cheapen the price of meat the "Kwinana" was sent to New Zealand with a load of jarrah, with the result that she came into the Kimberley season this year six weeks late, and in consequence the market was bare of stock and the cattle went up to £23 per head instead of £12. Many head sold as high as £20, and some of them during the absence of the "Kwinana" fetched £23. In due course the "Kwinana" returned to the coast and brought down in one shipment 850 head of cattle, with the re-

sult that prices dropped from the abnormal sum of £23 to practically a nominal price. While the ship was away she was docked, and one would have thought that having done that trip to New Zealand and having been docked in the Eastern States at great cost to the State she would have been fit to do her work, but when she reached Fremantle her boilers were in such a wretched condition that it took ten days to put her right before she went to Derby. Then instead of bringing down fat cattle for the market she brought "stores" for Yandanooka which the Government bought from Emanuel Brothers and Phillips. In consequence the market was again short of cattle, up went the price of meat, and the small retailer had once more to pay famine prices. Hon. members can understand who is paying the loss on the cheap meat that the Government retail to the public under these conditions. If a private company is running a ship she discharges her stock, and is off again the next day. There is no such thing as the vessel being left 10 days at Fremantle before going off on her work, but the "Kwinana" lost ten days at Fremantle, she was six weeks on the New Zealand trip, and was eight weeks late for the Kimberley season. I will tell the House later on what that means. Then again, the Government purchased three or four thousand bullocks from the Bovril Company. It is necessary when one wants to lift cattle from the Northern Territory that they shall be lifted before November, because they cannot be moved when the summer rains have set in. The Government steamers lifted 150 of these cattle and loaded them on to the "Kwinana," but when they were on the vessel a Government Stock Inspector pronounced them to be suffering from pleuro and would not allow them to be taken away, and they had to be disembarked. They had been allowed on to the boat with clean cattle, and had that occurred on a vessel owned by a private company, under the Stock Diseases Act the whole of the cattle and the ship would have been declared infected and placed under restriction, but this being a Government

steamer the cattle suffering from pleuro were just taken off again. Now with regard to the "Western Australia," perhaps the Colonial Secretary will contradict me if I am wrong in any of the following facts: This boat was fitted in the old country to carry cattle. Her fittings were constructed of soft wood, and I understand were condemned by Captain Rogers, the master of the ship, from time to time. The sanitary fittings of the ship are almost useless. A large number of men approximating 80, were employed on the ship doing necessary alterations and repairs, yet the Colonial Secretary last session stated that the amount spent on the vessel from the time of her arrival in Western Australian waters to the time at which he spoke was only £20. Will the Minister give a fair account of the expenditure on that ship from the time of her arrival in Western Australian waters to the present time? This was a ship which was lying in Copenhagen for two years before she was purchased by this Government, and it clearly indicates that she was a commercial failure when she was idle at Copenhagen for two years at a time when tonnage was in greater demand than it had ever been previously. It will be necessary very shortly to send the "Western Australia" to the Eastern States for docking, and it will be interesting to know what the docking will cost, and how much has been spent on her from the time she came here. The Speech indicates that we are to expect a Bill for the reform of the Legislative Council. We know perfectly well what is the objective of the Labour Party in that direction. Upon many platforms it has been stated from time to time that the franchise of the Upper House is to be reduced, with a view to the ultimate abolition of this Chamber. This Council has been accused of being a barrier against reform. Most unfair attacks have been made upon it, and they were continued with great vehemence during the recent referenda campaign. I have in the past recited in this House and elsewhere many of the proposals for reforms which were submitted to Parlia-

ment from time to time, and which this House has cheerfully given its assent to. Those people who are so ready to attack this Chamber always keep in the back ground the great strides the State has made in social reform, and the many important progressive measures that have been passed, many of them actually originating in this Chamber, and none of them capable of reaching the Statute Book if this House had not given its concurrence.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: One gentleman said this House had been forced to do so.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: As a very old member of the Chamber I am inclined to think that there are enough members in this House who have fairly strong opinions of their own not to be forced to do anything other than they believe to be in the best interests of the country. When we look at such measures as Industrial Arbitration, the Workers' Compensation Act, Employers' Liability Act, the Act that legalises trades unions, and enables provident societies to be started; the Electoral Act in this State has been amended and altered from time to time to suit the altered requirements of the country; there has been a redistribution of seats as the requirements of the country demanded, there has been payment of members and increased payment of members when asked for, laws giving exemptions in rent distress, the imposition of dividend duties at a time when there was no income tax imposed in this country, and when an income tax did come along it was imposed first with considerable exemptions, and afterwards it came along imposing exemptions, and a very heavy, crushing, sliding scale and as the incomes increased in amount so did the tax; there have been early closing laws passed, and Factories Acts, Acts regulating the mining industry and when the constitution under which the Legislative Council exists was given to us it was a nominee chamber, and it has become elective, the franchise has been reduced more than once, laws providing for the proper accommodation for shearers, the Workers' Homes Act and the Truck Act, and the Act providing for a lien for workmen's wages, and a

host of other measures that can be mentioned, is it a fair thing to state on public platform after public platform that this House is a barrier to reform? What are some of the things that this House has so strenuously opposed? We opposed the Esperance Railway.

Hon. J. Cornell: I hope you will not oppose it again.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: We opposed the Esperance Railway because I presume we considered it in the best interests of the country to prevent a wicked waste of money in connection with a work which was not required. We opposed last session an Amended Income Tax Assessment Act which contained in it highly confiscatory clauses, and clauses which were unfair in the extreme, a Bill which was intended to make taxation retrospective against companies when there was no income tax against private individuals. It would be out of place for me to refer to many scandalous provisions in the measure. I made a speech last session in support of throwing out the Income Tax Bill and I notice that we have an Income Tax Bill foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech, and if it is to be a repetition of the measure which was before us last session I shall use my influence, as no doubt other members will use their influence, to prevent the Bill finding its way upon the statute-book of this State. We prevented the establishment of a Public Works Committee which would enable the Ministry to appoint three or four more Cabinet Ministers and which would have added very much to the cost of administering the affairs of the country, and which would have been absolutely of no use. We opposed a Mines Regulation Bill, and I believe no one is more thankful, if they gave a candid opinion, than the members of the present Government themselves that the Bill was thrown out. It would have made it almost impossible to carry on the mining industry. Through an unfortunate disagreement between the two Houses the Irrigation Bill did not find its way upon the statute-book, but that is not the way which the matter has been put by Ministers when speaking throughout the country. One Minister said that through the Legislative Council

they had to stop certain works in connection with irrigation in the South-West. I am sincerely anxious, and I am sure a majority of members of this House is sincerely anxious, that this Bill shall find its way upon the statute-book. I hope that we shall be able to come to terms with another place. I shall be willing to concede a good deal in order that this important question shall be dealt with this session. It is a wrong thing in a country like this where water is such a valuable asset that the common law in regard to the rights of water should continue to prevail. The riparian owners on the streams have certain rights, but it is obvious that many millions of gallons of water are going to waste every year, and the common law in regard to the rights of water remains intact. I hope that we shall be able to place on the statute-book a law which will enable a board or somebody to deal with the matter in a proper manner. It is a serious matter. When we look at the figures we find that to-day we are still sending out of the country £812,470 per annum for bacon, hams, tongues, butter, cheese, eggs, and tinned milk, and in wheat, flour, oats, oatmeal, malt, bran and pollard, potatoes and onions £277,900. In round figures a million of money is going out of the country, which if half that is said about the South-West is true the whole of these products can be grown, and a great deal more if the water is conserved and used in a proper way. I hope the House will see that it is an important thing to concede something with regard to this Irrigation Bill. It will not do for this Chamber to demand too much and it will not do for another place also to stand too much on its dignity. There must be a reasonable effort made on both sides to put this Bill on the statute-book, and I promise the Government that I will do all I can to get the Bill brought into law. Among the measures projected is a new Electoral Bill. I shall say nothing about it until I see what the nature of the measure is. We are promised a Redistribution of Seats Bill. This Government before it became a Government, when it went to the electors complained of the measure passed by the last Parliament,

and part of the election pledges was that if returned to power the Government would introduce a Redistribution of Seats Bill, and one of the promises made was that the member for North Fremantle should be given his seat again in the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: To revert to the old state of affairs.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I do not know if we can do that the way in which the population shifts about in this country. I should be glad if North Fremantle could get its member. I stated in the West Province that the people only wanted just what they are entitled to, and I would do what I could to assist them. They do not want more and they should not receive less. It will be a difficult matter to give North Fremantle its member back again. If the district is to be bounded as it was prior to the Redistribution of Seats Act coming into force it will be necessary to take the district a long way into Cottesloe, Cottesloe Beach, and perhaps as far as Claremont. Still there will be a great disparity between numbers in the electorates. The West Province contains according to the monthly statistical abstract 4,126 voters and the Metropolitan-Suburban Province 12,000 voters and the Metropolitan Province 8,000 voters, and while, of course, this representation cannot be entirely viewed from the standpoint of a population basis—

Hon. J. Cornell: Do you believe in one man one value?

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I do not intend to answer that question now, but we can consider the matter when the Bill comes along. I point out to the Government the difficulty of carrying out their election pledges given before they became a Ministry. Then we have the Initiative and Referendum. We have had numbers of examples of important public questions being submitted to the people, and the people never understanding them. I state that 5 per cent. of the people of Western Australia did not understand the Federal Constitution when they voted on the question of joining federation. No one contemplated the wide powers that the measure contained and

not 5 per cent. understood the extent of the questions submitted to them during the recent Federal elections. In my judgment it is a bad thing indeed to submit to the people questions which are decided, not on the relative merits of the arguments adduced one way or the other, but according to the principles advocated by political parties. The right place for these questions to be discussed is in this Chamber, and in another place. After members have been before their constituents and have expressed their opinions you get the consideration of the measures which have been brought before the electors, and we have members' opinions subject to opinions expressed in the Press, and we have cool argument on both sides, and in that way the law should be decided and should not be submitted to the people. It is not unfair to say that when these difficult questions are submitted the people do not understand them.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The hon. member distrusts the people then.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I do not distrust the people; I say the questions are so difficult that a majority of the people do not understand them.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Then you do distrust the people.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Yes, I distrust their judgment. Will the member say that the people, or anything like a majority of the people, understood the Federal Constitution Act in all its bearings when they voted upon it. They knew that they were voting on certain large national questions, but, tell me, taking the Braddon Section, for instance as an illustration of what I am talking about, will you tell me the people thoroughly understood, throughout Australia, that after ten years the Federal Parliament could decide how much of the revenue should be given to the States, and that if it wished the Federal Government could deprive the States of all of the revenue. Of course a large number of the people did understand this point, but that is probably one of the questions easily understood. But the far-reaching nature of the questions which were recently submitted to the people, it is quite obvious to

me from a discussion with hundreds of members of the public that they did not understand them, and that they obviously voted on party lines. That is very undesirable in my opinion. In 1911 Parliament passed the present Licensing Act. This question of the control of liquor is a difficult question for any community to commence to deal with, but the Licensing Act of 1911 was considered a fair and legitimate compromise on the question. There was to be a postponement for a certain number of years of the question of no-license. There was to be, when that question of no-licence was voted on, a three-fifths majority in favour of total abolition. We are told now when only two years of the period has elapsed that this question is to be put into the melting pot again, and the proposal is that a majority of the people shall be entitled to decide, and presumably to decide at once, whether the question of no-licence is to be part of the law of the country. I think it very unfair indeed after a legislative compromise has been arrived at that any attempt should be made to deal with the question at this juncture. I am sure it must be a matter of great regret to everybody in the community to find that, after the trouble that both Houses of Parliament have taken to put what was considered to be the best possible measure dealing with industrial troubles on the statute-book, that measure has not yet had an opportunity of having a fair trial. It is a matter of great regret to me that judges apparently find themselves in the position they do. Mr. Justice Burnside has not up to the present been able to devote any time to the settlement of the disputes awaiting his consideration and the large number of breaches of awards that are alleged to have been made. I was glad, however, to see in the *Daily News* this afternoon that the civil service appeals are to be abandoned for the time being so that Mr. Justice Burnside may be able to go into the country and deal with these industrial disputes. It is a fortunate thing, with regard to the projected trouble on the goldfields, that the compulsory conference was able to deal satisfactorily with that matter, and I am

glad that colleagues of mine in this House were able to do so much to stop the occurrence of further trouble on the goldfields. As it was claimed that the Government came back from the country with a strong mandate from the people to put this Act on the statute-book, I did my best, with others, to make it as workable as possible, to eliminate objectionable features from it, and to come to a fair compromise with another place. I think some effort must be made to deal with these questions and to deal with them rapidly. One of the worst things that can occur is that justice should be meted out in a tardy manner; it should be dealt out in a speedy manner. I know the Government are alive to the necessity of these disputes being dealt with, and, although I do not think it is necessary to appoint a fifth judge to do it, even if the appointment of a fifth judge were necessary, the expenditure would be a small item in comparison with the dire results which will occur to this State if there is any serious industrial upheaval. I contended for a good many years in another place and here that the Courts of Quarter Session should be abolished, as they have been abolished long ago in other parts of Australia. At any rate, whenever a railway taps a district the judges should go on circuit and thus avert the expense of bringing the cases to Perth. If the Bench is insufficient to do that and attend to cases under the arbitration law, the expenditure in reinforcing it would be a small matter compared with the importance of preserving industrial peace and meting out justice. I consider the position in regard to the State Savings Bank is very serious. The excess of deposits over withdrawals for the year ended 30th June, 1911, was £502,968, or over half a million; in the year 1912 they tumbled down to £188,000; in 1913 they tumbled down to £34,000 excess of deposits over withdrawals. Of course we know where it has gone. The Commonwealth Savings Bank has evidently got the difference between £34,000 and something, in the vicinity of £700,000, seeing that our population to-day is greater than it has been at any

other period of our history. In October and November of 1911 I begged the Government, when it was apparent that the Commonwealth Bank was about to be constituted, to remove the control of the Savings Bank from the post office, but nothing was done; the Government temporised with the Federal authorities. Nothing has been done up to the present moment. There is a certain amount of sympathy due to the Government in this connection because I realise that the post office is the one institution most suitable in order to enable this Savings Bank business to be transacted in the country. I realise the difficulties of changing the channel from the post office to some State institution, but an effort should have been made to preserve to this country the savings of the people. This money is borrowed by the Government at three per cent. The Government are paying on the market more than four per cent. It stands to reason that if in 21 months the excess of deposits over withdrawals has gone down from half a million to £34,000 a year, that presently, instead of there being an excess of deposits over withdrawals there will be a large excess of withdrawals over deposits. No Government can afford to look on with equanimity when the money in the Savings Bank is required for the purposes of the Agricultural Bank for financing municipal corporations, and for use in various other ways well known to hon. members; and when we know that on the 30th June there was £4,431,282 at the credit of depositors in this bank, all of which available money is wanted in the development of this country, the Government cannot afford to look on and let this money slip away. The new Federal Ministry are not certain that they can deal with this as a matter of administration. The position of the Governor of the Commonwealth Bank is that he can practically defy the Government unless Federal legislation can be brought in to alter the position—and we know what the position of the Federal Government is without a majority in the Senate. There is still time for the State Government to consider this matter and deal with it. I hope that Ministers have not lost

sight of it? I asked certain questions to-day as to whether the Government were perfectly satisfied concerning the safety of the bridges at Fremantle for railway traffic. The last thing I want to do is to create undue alarm in the community, but it seems that the time has now arrived to call out before some dreadful calamity takes place. It is, of course, obvious that there must be a large increase in the accommodation for shipping at Fremantle. Ships are getting larger and more numerous and with the opening up of our back country the export and import trade at Fremantle is going to increase by leaps and bounds. It becomes a matter of great importance that the Government should be somewhat in advance of public requirements and decide what is to be done in order to meet the difficulty when it arises. I believe it is a source of great satisfaction to know that the mining industry has revived to a certain extent. I have always realised that the mining industry has been the greatest factor in the progress of this country and no money asked for will be grudged for an industry that means so much to the prosperity of the country. If another good field were opened, what a fine era of prosperity would be in store for Western Australia! I hope the Government will relax no effort to make a discovery as it would bring people here in tens of thousands. I am glad to see there has been no attempt to stay the policy of the Government's predecessors in regard to immigration. I believe it is the most important thing that can be done for this country. A handful of people is a great menace to Western Australia; it is a menace to Australia and a menace to the Empire that a huge territory like this should be peopled so sparsely, and a great effort must be made to bring white population to this country. British people if possible but other white people if you cannot get them British. I know the Agent General, Sir Newton Moore, does his utmost to promote suitable immigration, and I consider the Government have done wisely in renewing his appointment to a position in which he has done so well. If the Government keep on with their policy of immigration

there need not be much alarm in regard to the expenditure that has taken place in public works. I always contend that immigration and public works should go hand in hand. Our one weak spot to-day is the per capita debt on the people of this State. We should do our best to reduce that as by reducing it we are able to go on the market and borrow to much greater advantage than when the population of this country is much smaller than it ought to be. We should continue the policy of immigration and public works, and the policy of finding more mineral wealth in this country, so as to induce foreign capital to come to it. I am against the Government doing everything. I objected to the purchase of the Perth trams because I did not want to see half a million of foreign capital replaced by half a million of debt, and I believe that if the words of wisdom uttered by Mr. Colebatch had been listened to, the Bill for the purchase would have been rejected, and it would have been better if it had.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Not foreign capital, British capital.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Well, capital employed in the State. Notwithstanding all the socialistic enterprises of the Government, and there have been great losses in connection with them, this is a good country. It is a country that probably can stand all these reverses. I have enough confidence in it to believe that no matter what Government is in power, Western Australia must go on along the road to prosperity. It is a country of great mineral resources, great agricultural possibilities and great timber wealth. It is a country which, if population is brought to it, the result cannot be in doubt. I hope the Government will go on without relaxing in this policy of immigration and, if they do that, notwithstanding the mistakes they may make in other directions, that part of their policy will be fraught with good results.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): Mr. Moss seemed inclined to deprecate the

silence of the Government over the defeat of the referenda. Now, had the Government been in power two years ago, there is no doubt they would have warmly congratulated the country on its escape from the invasion of State rights. That was the individual view of most of the present Ministers two years ago; and they might have gone further and congratulated the country on the stoppage of the extravagant regime from which it has suffered for three years. I mean the Commonwealth as a whole. But, as Mr. Moss went on to explain, there is a very strong reason why Ministers should take a different attitude to-day. Congress has determined that the referenda would form a very direct short cut towards unification and the getting rid of what is regarded as conservative safeguards in the State constitutions. There is no doubt that the members of the present Government have accepted that attitude to-day. Well, I am not so much troubled about their non-reference to the referenda, but I cannot, for the life of me, understand why the chief burden of their song of 18 months ago has not had a single mention in the Governor's Speech, not a word about cheapening meat; not a word, I suppose, because the fact is that meat is dearer than ever. And not a word about the steamers because, I suppose, the leader of the House, at all events, knows that the steamers are almost on the rocks to-day. I can understand that no one would more gladly see the fiasco ended, if it could be withdrawn from with any face at all, than the leader of the House. He is in the middle of the trouble, and no one knows better than he the hopelessness of this venture into State socialism. Possibly he will say presently that he regards it as delicate to refer to the matter whilst this precious Commission is sitting; but surely he must know that is a huge joke. In so far as the manager's fitness is under consideration, it is surely a joke to select for chief judge the man who appointed him, and to select for the other judges men who have not an atom of acquaintance with steamer management or steamers at all. The thing is such a huge joke that no responsible Minister could seri-

ously stand up and say a word in defence of it. Now, I am not going to detain the House with this or any other of the Government's socialistic enterprises further than that I would seriously advise Ministers, while so much statesmen's work awaits them, to drop these twopenny half-penny interferences with trade and commerce. Let them take this broad view of it: Is it a fair thing, is it a business-like proposition for Ministers to use the taxpayer's money to compete against the personal business of the taxpayers who find the money? Is this a sound attitude for a Government to pursue? Surely it is possible to have a monopoly of the sale of meat or of anything else if some other sources can be drawn upon than those of the exploiter. If some other source defines the margin between the cost and the price fixed meat can be given away on those terms. When one comes to think of it seriously, it is a matter to laugh at. Ministers of the Crown neglecting their proper, grave duties to go dabbling in little butchers' shops selling pounds of sausages and of tripe. The thing is a humiliating farce. I hope the Ministers, when they are older in office, will discover that there are far greater services to be rendered to the country. How can a Minister do his greater work while he is bartering with twopenny matters of petty trade? Amongst other serious omissions in the Governor's Speech is the absence of reference to the Government land policy. Now, this is a fundamental matter. How is it that "Bath's baby," that futile Land Leasing Bill, found no reference in the Speech? When the Minister for Lands introduced it, he treated it as the most revolutionary thing that could be proposed. It was to revolutionise the whole land question. But now, not a word about it. That Bill was ignominiously thrown out by this House, and the Government sit down and say not a word about it. I submit that a responsible Government ought to have something to say about this rejection of what was the main plank of their policy when they last met Parliament. If they are going to accept it is as final, then I say they should have announced their withdrawal from their

enforcement of leasehold with regard to town properties. The two things, surely, hang together. If the Government accept this House's rejection of the Land Leasing Bill, applicable to rural lands, certainly the Government should withdraw their high-handed action in refusing any further sales of town lands. I submit it is not only high-handed, but illegal. The Government have power to lease lands in towns, certainly, and those who want leases should get them. But the law gives no power to shut down on the sale of town lots, and any regulation that may have been put through without being noticed by members of this House, is *ultra vires*. They have no power to refuse sales of town lands. If any would-be purchaser to-morrow chose to fulfil the law and put down a deposit and ask for a certain allotment to be put up to auction, he could get a Supreme Court mandamus to have it put up. But, of course, law is a costly thing, and no would-be buyer is going to that trouble. Towns are blighted because men who want freeholds are waiting and waiting for a change of administration to give them freehold. Numbers of would-be buyers have come to me for advice, and in each case I have said. "Apply for your lease, take up the land, and there will be no trouble about getting the conversion of the lease into free-hold later on, when the country come to its senses." I would like to refer to a couple of things that the Government propose to do. There seems to be some strange obsession of mind in connection with the Esperance railway. That line which has been, I think, thrice rejected in various forms, is to be brought on again hot foot to please some people. Possibly it is to please a large section of its goldfields supporters. At all events, it is to be brought on. I wanted to hear the leader of the House on this matter before speaking, but he is lying low. I think it would have saved time if the leader of the House had answered Mr. Moss. He would possibly have satisfied hon. members on many points, but the Minister is lying low, and I will have to assume his attitude towards the Esperance railway.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Did you not read his lengthy report which was published in the papers?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: No; I am sorry to say I did not.

Hon. M. L. Moss: He was excited over his picnic.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: You missed some valuable information.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It was almost a poem.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I asked the Minister if he had visited the Phillips River district to the westward of the Esperance belt of country, and he informed me that he had not. But one of his colleagues, Mr. Collier, had visited the Phillips River district, and has brought up an excellent report on the agricultural lands in that district, quite apart from its mining resources. It is not a breach of confidence to say that at the opening of the Ongerup railway on Wednesday last that Minister, who is Minister for Railways, expressed himself in this way: that so important were these agricultural lands and so futile seemed to be the attempt to give them transit to market by way of Hopetoun, that it was essential a road should be made to connect Phillips River with the Great Southern railway, either at Ongerup or Nyabing, or some other point. He made this statement publicly, and I interjected, "Why not a railway?" If hon. members know the country they will appreciate my interjection. The Minister immediately replied, "The railway will follow the road." I followed him and I expressed a view that I had put forward several times before, that the real solution of the Esperance lands problem will be by an east and west railway, and not by a railway north and south.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What will be the port of the district—Bunbury or Busselton?

Hon. M. L. Moss: Not Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Esperance lands comprise a long strip estimated at 100 miles in length, but very narrow.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Who made the estimate?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The strip is only about 30 miles in width. That is

on the line running north and south, such a line as is proposed for the Esperance railway. That line would run across the Esperance belt and only meet an area of, say, 15 miles on each side of this 30-mile line. My proposed solution, and I impress it on Ministers most conscientiously, is this: before they go further they should investigate this view of the question, whether it would not be better to run a line from the eastward end of the Esperance belt right through the middle of the belt giving access to the whole of the belt, no part of which would be more than 15 miles from the railway, right through to the westward end, and through the Phillips River area, which is really a continuation of the same belt with more or less sandplain between, but it is the same belt of good country, only with immeasurably better conditions for the farmer.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What port will you have?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I am coming to that if the hon. member will listen for a moment. I would continue on through the Phillips River lands, and connect with the Great Southern line either at Albany, by traversing the coastal country as near as the conformation of that country will admit, direct to Albany, or by taking the short cut of necessary construction to Ongerup or to Nyabing. The distance from Phillips River to Ongerup or Nyabing would not be more than 50 miles, and the greater part of it would be through good country. There would be a couple of strips of sandplain but the greater part would be good country, and with sufficient rainfall for agricultural purposes. If the Government persist in bringing on their new Bill for the Esperance railway, and if it arrives at this House I shall ask hon. members to insist on an investigation of this aspect of the question before coming to a decision on the matter. I have looked at the Government's proposals further than this Esperance railway in the way of railway construction, and I am sorry to say they are far from adequate. Why, in the province which I have the honour to represent, or to help to represent, there are

openings to-day for half a dozen railways, which would open up splendid country. There is the extension of the Katanning-Nyabing railway, which the Government have already made a survey for, and which I have no doubt they will carry out. There is the proposed extension of the Tambellup to Ongerup railway through Needliup in the direction I have spoken of. One of the best stamp of farmers we have in the country attended the railway opening at Ongerup on Wednesday last. He was formerly an old English land holder, a South African farmer, and is now farming at Needliup, 20 miles away from railway communication. His sons are public school boys, his wife and daughter are Oxford graduates, and they are away out in the middle of the bush, the finest stamps of settler the country could have, happy and contented, asking only for this extension of the railway. This authority, who is reliable, says that around his holding there are 300,000 acres of good cultivable land. No further argument is needed for the 20 or 25 miles of railway extension from Ongerup to open up such a belt of country. This is No. 2 proposal. Then there is the long-talked-of line from Mount Barker to Bridgetown. That line must be constructed, and the sooner the better. The Advisory Board recommended that the line be carried on as early as possible, for about 20 miles. Then there is the proposal recommended by the Advisory Board for an extension from Tenterden westward and a better proposal for a line westward from Tambellup. All these lines would open up splendid areas of country, and soon become payable propositions. But of far greater importance is the line regarding which the Governor's Speech is entirely silent, namely, the connection of Albany through Denmark with the South-Western railway system. This has been projected for many, many years. The line would run its whole length through rich country, and it would open up magnificent belts of timber. Why do the Government pass over that line, and rush this Esperance proposal? Is it that the Min-

isters are not well acquainted with the south-west? It cannot be. Their responsible servants are always telling them about the immense latent wealth in the south-west, and yet there is not a word about the south-west, and not a word about the Albany harbour improvements to open the way for the export of the products of the south-west and the Great Southern districts, for which Albany is the natural port—not a word about it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What do you mean about rushing the Esperance proposal? It has been before the country for 16 years, and was surveyed ten years ago.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The hon. member will no doubt champion the Esperance railway himself.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I did not correct the hon. member when at Norseman though.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The hon. member is hardly accurate. I organised the league which secured the Coogardie to Norseman railway, but, if the House will allow me to add, I was very careful to warn the Esperance people to lie low or they would have damned our railway. They wanted to join our league and attend on deputations and I said, "Not on your life; lie low." I did fight hard for the railway to Norseman, and that is all I can say. For a long time past early dates have been fixed for the completion of plans for the Albany harbour improvements, but the plans have not seen the light as yet as far as Albany knows. Will Ministers in this House make a note of this, and urge the Government to push on with the Albany harbour improvements? I am not fighting for Albany as against Fremantle—that would be childish and futile—but I am fighting for Albany as the port for the Great Southern and South-Western part of this country. It is the natural port, and it is the finest natural port the West can boast of, and with moderate expenditure it can be made a great source of wealth to the whole country. I urge the Ministers to see to it that the necessary works are not much longer delayed. I want to speak particularly of the need for dealing in a friendly

way and in a sympathetic way, with the people who are already in the southern part of this State. My colleague, Hon. C. McKenzie, is more familiar with the details of the claims of the people than I am, but still for years before I entered this House I did what I could to champion the cause of Denmark and the country lying between Denmark and Albany. It is splendid country, but I want the Ministers to realise that to-day a large number of splendid settlers there are up against an almost hopeless proposition. I want the Ministers to realise this. So dire is the need at the present time that the Agricultural Department officials have been encouraging the people to form a dairying scheme and to start dairying. Most of them have lost the whole of their potato crop, the whole of their revenue for the year, and the officials of the Agricultural Department have encouraged them to go in for a dairying scheme, and in the early stages they really placed what looked like a good scheme before them. Personally I do not believe in Government cows a bit. I do not believe in going to the Government and asking them to buy cows for a man. A practical dairyman would do it ten times as well as a Government official. The Government official will generally get all the culls and dead-beats palmed off on him, but not so the practical dairyman. The people entered into this scheme with the Government officials, and all well until, like a thunder-bolt, when the settlers were looking for the cows, the department wrote that only the settlers on the Denmark concession could get the cows. They are only a few of the people who were moving in this dairying scheme, and furthermore every applicant must start off with five cows. The Government official does not believe in the Scotch idea of one cow; it is to be five cows or none. And now the whole scheme is thrown into confusion. I want the Minister to see his colleague at the head of that department and ask him to get his officials to work and not let this scheme be given up. If a man wants one cow, let him have it, so long as he can enter into a bond to pay for it as he is prepared to do. Denmark is a big scheme

for which this Government is not in any way to blame. The Governments before this are to blame, and to-day nearly all the settlers on the Denmark concession are up against a hopeless proposition. They can never win through. I speak from an intimate knowledge of the matter. At first the Government gave double the value for the land, the railway and the tumble-down houses; then, instead of throwing the land open to people who understood it, they sent down a number of unemployed, wasted piles of money on them and added it to the price of the land. They said, "We have spent so many thousands of pounds on the land, therefore the land must be so many thousands of pounds better and we will add that value to the price." Men who were fit to tackle that country would not look at it. To-day nearly all who are there are in a hopeless state. Men who bought houses there expected to live on the settlers, but there are very few settlers to live on, and they cannot pay for the houses they bought. The purchasers of suburban areas cannot utilise them because there is no local market. As for the settlers, the prices they contracted to pay are utterly ridiculous; running up for partly cleared land to £14 an acre. Ridiculous, utterly ridiculous! When the Government agent quoted this to me, I said, "Excuse me, you mean shillings." "No," he said, "pounds." It is obligatory on the Government to revise the contracts of these settlers. There is a grand future for the southern end of this country, but up to this the Government has not properly or effectively dealt with it. I am sure Ministers will admit that I have not spoken in any wrong vein or offered unfair criticism. It is really a secondary consideration to this House what party may be in power. This is a non-party House. I insist on that and I shall always take that attitude. All that this House demands is that the affairs of the country shall be administered wisely, economically, and soundly. I want, in conclusion, to urge upon Ministers to drop little wasteful excursions into State socialism. They are only wasting time. Ministers should address themselves to the great matters on which the life of the country depends.

Win population of the right kind. It really will not cost too much whatever concessions are made in the way of passage money. Win population as rapidly as you can; open up the lands both by making it possible for industrious settlers to acquire them, and give these people access to markets.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Except Esperance.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Go on with the education of the people. You cannot err too much in the way of generosity to the people whose children need schooling. I wish the Minister for Education were here because I want to say to him that the process of granting schools is too slow. Correspondence is drawn out for months between the demand for and the granting of the services of a teacher. That ought not to be. Wherever there are eight or ten children it will pay the country to put up a school, especially where that eight or ten are settled on an area that is sufficiently promising to support a town in the future. Never be afraid to open a school in a new settlement. Half a dozen places in my province that I have visited lately have had the experience of having to put up with months, and in some cases years of correspondence. Some little detail has been overlooked or some condition of little importance has not been carried out to the letter and the school has been delayed and the boys and girls have grown to such a size that they are ashamed to go to school. I desire to say that I for one have no intention of taking part in any factious opposition to the administration of the Government. To all their proposals which to me seem to be workable I shall give my utmost support from my place in this House.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE moved—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion negatived.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): I regret that the House did not agree to my motion for the adjournment of the debate. I have a good deal to say, not altogether on the Governor's Speech, but on many things which are exercising the minds of the public at the present time. I, for one, look upon it that we are in

for a very strenuous time. Things are not going quite to my liking, and I am sorry to say that my own fears in regard to land settlement have to some extent been realised; that is, I think that people have been sent out too far into the Eastern belt. I think that the Government have gone too far in their neglect of many big questions. The Government should exercise caution in everything that they do, because the immediate outlook does not appear too bright. I do not like to take a dark view of things, because whatever difficulties the State may experience, they will exist, I am confident, for only a few years. The resources of the country are so great that with a short period of good management I am certain we shall be booming again. At the same time, we need to exercise great caution, and it is on one or two matters in regard to which that caution should be displayed that I wish to speak. My friend, Mr. Cullen, has talked about opening up fresh country in the south-western corner of the State. I am with him in that respect. There is a lot of attention being paid to the Eastern wheat belt even into what I consider the dangerous zone, but we cannot retreat now, and all those people who have been induced to go far away into that almost waterless country, I consider should be given railway facilities. Faith should be kept with them as far as possible, but while the Government are doing that they should also bear in mind that there are other parts of the State which require attention. Some might think that I am going to barrack for Bunbury as Mr. Cullen barracked for Albany, but I shall set myself right straight away by saying that my policy is that every port in the State should receive its due. That is to say, I believe the cost of production has got to such a pitch at the present time that the cost of transit from any one place beyond the nearest port is such that there can be nothing but loss to the producer. My object is that in every instance we should see that products are carried by rail to the nearest available port, I care not whether the port be Fremantle or Bunbury.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Or Esperance.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: We will deal with that question later on.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Esperance is not to get the trade that belongs to it, but other ports must.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: Anyway, my idea is that the Government have gone rather too far in their neglect of these things. We should establish good settlers on the land. These are the people who have kept the State going, and the result of their work will last for all time. What I want to say, and I do not say it in a cavilling spirit, is that money would have been far better spent in opening up new places than in trying some of the doubtful ventures the Government have gone into. But I am not going to find fault with what the Government have done in that direction. We will take the port which I have the pleasure to represent at the present time. It is an admitted fact that that particular port sends away more tonnage than any other port in the State, and in that respect, I think it stands fourth or fifth in the Commonwealth. I say unblushingly that I often wonder whether there is anything that place has had that has not been fully justified. I cannot think of any single thing, unless it is that bit of a railway which has been constructed from Bunbury to the racecourse. When we consider the volume of shipping that there is to that place we must admit that the time has come for the Government to do something not only for the benefit of Bunbury, but the benefit of the State generally. I will give one instance. A few steamers are calling in there at the present time for a bit of coal, but I want to say right here that there are thousands of tons of coal that should be supplied from Bunbury, if that port had its due, viz., sufficient depth of water. I say, on the best of authority, that there are large steamers going by Bunbury, whereas if there were a sufficient depth of water they would call in there and get fuel for their bunkers instead of going somewhere else. Therefore, I contend in that respect we are losing a lot of trade, not only to the port of Bunbury, but to the State at large. There is another matter that has been

particularly before the Government very frequently, and that is in regard to a railway in another much neglected corner of the State. Members have seen in the lobby an instance of what can be grown in that coastal district. My idea is that it is absolutely necessary to have railway communication there, and I go so far as to say right here that if the Government are not prepared to build the railway which has been asked for by the settlers in the South-West, the least they can do is to allow private enterprise to do it. If the Government say that they are not prepared to carry the line out, it will soon be found that there are private people who are prepared. I once attended a deputation to a Minister of the Crown, and amongst other things which were brought under his notice, was the fact that there is an immense quantity of tuart timber in that area, and the only answer was that the Government would want it all. Now, I say there is enough tuart in that district to supply the Commonwealth, and if they cut it out there is plenty more growing. It is time these things were gone into. There is too much delay altogether. The same remark applies to another scheme which the whole of the South-West badly wants and that is irrigation. It is one of those things to which I have turned attention of late, and I say emphatically that the Government should get to work without delay. Every time there is an agitation about irrigation there is an officer sent to report. That is all that is done. After some time there is a further agitation and another report is made, but nothing else is done. It may be said that I was one of the greatest opponents of the Rights in Water and Irrigation Bill, which was before us last session. That I emphatically deny, and I say, without egotism, that I know as well as any member in this Chamber what is wanted in the South-West. The settlers do not want a Bill of that nature, and I am prepared to support the carrying through of a Bill that will give the Government all the powers that are necessary. That being so, I hope the Government will get to work at an early date and see if they cannot put through a

measure that will be satisfactory to the people there. I want to see the irrigation scheme put into operation. It does not affect me personally much, but I do want a Bill that will be acceptable to the people, not only in the South-West, but in every district where land is capable of irrigation. I look to that as one of the things that will make this State hum. Now, with regard to other necessary measures, we have in the South-West any quantity of timber, and the time is coming when that timber will be more difficult to get. At first the timber-getters took all the timber that was on the ridges and other easily accessible places and left behind that in the gorges and in other spots where it was difficult of access. There is now a much greater expense in getting the timber, and I have been told that it is proposed to adopt flying foxes. At any rate, the cost of getting the timber has increased from day to day and we want all the facilities for handling that stuff and shipping it at a minimum of cost, in order that the industry may go ahead. Another question that is always being raised is in regard to the supply of trucks for Collie coal. I cannot say that the Government have given much cause for complaint on that account. Special trucks for the handling of Collie coal were provided, but the demand for bunker coal is not sufficiently steady and continuous to keep the trucks constantly in work, and the Government have found that they are very handy to send to the Goldfields. The chances are that just when the trucks have been sent to the Goldfields they are wanted in Bunbury. As soon as proper harbour facilities are given there, that difficulty will be overcome; there will be a steady demand for bunker coal, and the trucks will always be available there. I have very little to say to-night, and, as I remarked before, I very much regret that I have not had an opportunity of speaking on the various things that are of so much importance to the State at large and to the South-West in particular.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The PRESIDENT: The adjournment of the debate cannot be moved until the

lapse of 15 minutes, and it is hardly time yet.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): It seems to me an extraordinary state of affairs that after the statements which have been made by the two or three speakers who have preceded me, there are no explanations from the Government side of the House in any way. I should have thought it would have curtailed the debate to a very large extent if some of those remarks, whether true or not, were answered in order that members might know whether they have any substance in fact. I am astonished by the extraordinary silence of those who represent the Government after the strong statements and charges made against them. There are, perhaps, many things in the speech I propose to make which I should not have referred to had one of the members on the Government side spoken, and under these circumstances, I may have to take up a little more time than I otherwise would. Of course, I naturally propose to deal with the situation as we find it at the present time, and if I am a little longer than I otherwise would be, the members who represent the Government have only themselves to blame. In the present economic and financial position of the country, I deem it my duty to make some remarks in regard to the existing state of affairs, and whilst I am bound to be critical in doing that, I shall hope that any remarks I may make will not be taken in any hostile spirit. I propose to judge what has been done entirely upon its results and anything I say will, I hope, be founded on fact. I still maintain, as has already been said to-night, that this is in no way a party House, and I am prepared to say that any measure, no matter what Government it emanates from, has the very fullest consideration; and, in those circumstances I again repeat that this is in no way a party House, beyond the fact that there are a few members who are pledged to the destruction of it at some time or other, in the interests of one party. Now I propose to refer to the Speech itself, and I find that there are no less than 38 paragraphs, after reading which I must admit that never in my

life have I read such a speech. I can only say that His Excellency the Governor had my whole-hearted sympathy when he enunciated such a speech from the Chair. I have in vain tried to look for anything important in it. I also carefully read the remarks made by the proposer and second of the Address-in-reply. These, however, shed no additional light on the policy of the Government or the future methods to be adopted to remedy the state of affairs that exist. I think it must be admitted on all sides that the State is suffering from severe depression financially. I do not think this can be contradicted. Business is stagnant, money is scarce and tight, the cost of living is excessive, and there is a serious deficit in the Government finances, whilst a very great loss in stock and produce has to be made up by the pastoralists and the farming community. In the face of these things, there is no mention in the Speech as to future financial arrangements. No suggestions were made for reducing the cost of living and no methods for restoring confidence in business. On the contrary, we find the Government sheltering themselves behind the unfortunate bad season we have had, to account for their very large deficit, a deficit which I consider is most inexcusable. In the way of legislation we have amongst other comparatively un-important Bills, an amendment of the liquor laws. Now this is by no means urgent. Then we have the Initiative and Referendum, absolutely unnecessary legislation. Next we come to the establishment of a Parliamentary Committee of Public Works, and what does this mean? Simply finding appointments for members of Parliament and adding to the cost of administration. This proposal has twice been up before us and twice been rejected, and now it is once more submitted for the consideration of this House. Then we are promised an amendment of the Land and Income Tax, which no doubt will mean additional taxation and will certainly add to the cost of living. When we look through the Governor's Speech to find a remedy for the existing state of affairs, and we are offered this

legislation, we may surely say that in asking for bread we have been offered a stone. I will refer briefly to the paragraphs of the Speech. I am quite in accord with the statement that it was a very advantageous arrangement for the Premier to visit London, not because for one moment I think he would be capable of influencing the money market. The financiers and money lenders of Great Britain are far too well up in their business to be influenced in any way or to be guided by the more or less specious remarks of any Premier from Australia who is hunting for funds. But I think a visit like that must broaden the mind and open the eyes of any man, and I am quite certain that what experience he has gained, in connection with the tramways, electrification of railways, and other matters, will be of great value to himself, and of benefit more or less indirectly to the State. I see that it was found necessary to extend further consideration to the wheat growers and settlers in the wheat-growing areas. No doubt this did some good, but why was it limited to the people in the wheat-growing areas? They are not the only ones who have lost in the recent bad season. Why was no assistance offered to any of the pastoralists? There are hundreds of pastoralists who have suffered more perhaps than the farmers, but we hear of no offer of assistance to them. They are quite as much entitled to it as others. The Government might as well be consistent, and if they are relaxing conditions to the farmers they might as well do the same in regard to the rents of these pastoralists who have been so hard hit. In a paragraph further on in the Speech I am pleased to find the Government are prepared to exercise caution with regard to the areas outside the rain belt. The mistake of putting people too far out on country that is experimental can only end in disaster if it is continued. I hope the Government will give this matter careful attention. I congratulate them upon having given some attention to it already. Another matter, and it was referred to by Mr. Cullen, is the endeavour to get settlers to go on to the country before they are fitted to undertake the work. It requires men who

have experience and knowledge to make them successful, and even with a full knowledge of farming these men cannot hope to be successful until they have learned something of the climate and conditions. It is just as reasonable to expect a farmer, even an experienced one, to come out from England and to be successful at Mullewa, Wickepin, or somewhere else, as to expect a "cockie" from Australia to go to England and make a success of farming there. All these matters require knowledge and experience. There is, I think, only one profession that does not require any, and that is the profession of politician. I think that anyone can take that on, and the newest aspirants will say that they are most fitted to be Ministers. Reference is made in the Speech to the manufacture of agricultural implements, and the State sawmills venture. These are in addition to the butchers' shops, the steamers, and other matters already entered into. I am extremely sorry that the Government think it part of their duty to enter into these industrial enterprises. It requires experienced men who have been thoroughly brought up to the trade to make them a success, and in many cases even then they are not successful; so how on earth can the Government possibly hope to be successful, especially when we remember that the workers they employ are really the masters of their employers. As the Government have been put into power by the workers, and are maintained there by the workers, how can they possibly resist any demand for increased wages? In industrial undertakings of this kind they cannot possibly resist demands under those circumstances, especially in view of the fact that an election is pending before very long. It has been said to-night, and I am sorry to have to mention it again, even at the risk of repetition, that I do not consider the Government have any right to use the taxpayers' money to enter into industrial competition with the very men who pay the taxes. It is not part of their business. This money is found for the good conduct and good government of the country and not to go into speculative enterprises that are most difficult to carry on, and I am still unconvinced that

the members of the present Government are fitted, either by training or experience, to conduct industrial enterprises, especially in competition with men who have specialised in them. I do not say that in any offensive way, but simply contend that anyone who undertakes a business in competition with other people must have training and experience, and I do not see how these enterprises can end in any way except in disaster, carried on as they are. We heard a statement from Mr. Moss concerning the losses that have been incurred, and I hope to hear from the Honorary Minister, or someone with knowledge of it, that it may be contradicted. In that case it would save my making any further reference to the matter. As, however, it is allowed to go without being contradicted, we must only assume that the statement is correct. Clauses 19 and 20 of the Speech refer to railways, and it is stated that we have 256 additional miles of newly opened lines, and 476 miles of railways in hand. I think that for a State with a limited population like ours, this is a very large amount of work, and I had this in mind when I heard Mr. Cullen's suggestion just now with reference to railways all over the country. Where is the money to come from, and even in the event of our being able to get it, how are we going to pay the interest? The interest on this work alone must amount to a very considerable sum, and it is not long ago that I read in some paper a speech made by a responsible Minister to the effect that many of the railways recently constructed and opened were not paying, but in fact were being run at a loss. In addition we have to pay for those under construction at present, and when we take the interest accruing on these, we see it is a very serious amount that we have to find, and must run away with our revenue to a very large extent. I also notice that the construction of abattoirs is in progress at North Fremantle, and Midland Junction. I am glad to hear that abattoirs are being erected, but I am of opinion that North Fremantle is the wrong place at which to erect them. I think it is a great mistake that the works and yards were ever put at North Fremantle. The proper places

—and my opinion is borne out by those with experience in meat supplies—to erect slaughter yards are Midland Junction and Robb's Jetty, the former to deal with all the stock that comes down from inland, and the other to handle all stock brought by sea. Those places are most suitable for dealing with stock with the least trouble and delay. The next thing is that railways should be constructed from Midland Junction to Fremantle on the other side of the river, and such a line would be able to relieve the whole of the traffic on this side of the grain and live stock traffic. We know the lines on the north side of the river are often congested. This line would provide relief and I think would pay on its merits. At the present moment it is not to be denied that constantly the delays which take place in getting live stock from Midland Junction to Fremantle are serious and inflict a great deal of loss not only upon the owners of the animals, but also upon those who purchase them, and all parties concerned. I must once again refer to the results that have been achieved by the present Government during the two years they have been in office. I find that so far as I can gather we are labouring under many of the following drawbacks. In the first place we have an enormous deficit, which I think on the 30th June last was something like £311,000, secondly money is scarce and tight, and interest is high and rising, there is severe commercial depression, there is the exceptionally high cost of living, we have severe taxation, including income tax and land tax, and on top of it the Federal land tax, there are heavy municipal rates, most excessive cost of building, scarcity of dwellings all round the City, general unrest among the workers, and we had a very bad season up to the 30th June last. I do not want to cry stinking fish, but I would defy anyone to contradict one of those statements, and perhaps members will bear with me a little while I elaborate some of them, and I do so more in sorrow than in anger, in the hope that the Government may see their way to take such steps to do away with the great disadvantages which the commercial section of the community and many others, in fact,

nearly all, are labouring under. I am afraid that the whole of it is due to the policy of the Labour party. It has been insinuated, if not actually expressed, that the bulk of the deficit is attributable to the bad season, and the fact that the Government have had to supply the farmers with seed wheat and manures, and relax their demand for rent. This has been said, and perhaps it may account for some of it, but I do not think it will account for anything like the major part of it. The great fault that I perceive is bad administration. The administration of the finances and of the offices is to blame for the greater part of this deficit. One of the first acts of the Government on coming into office was to increase the rate of wages of one section of the community something like 1s. a day, which amounted in the aggregate to £32,000; and since then I have read and heard stated in various places that the total increases in wages to different portions of the public service have amounted to something like £120,000. This is an enormous increase, and whilst I believe in paying good wages to all that we possibly can, paying as good wages as any industry or department can afford, at the same time I think it should be done with prudence, and to my mind it was distinctly imprudent to start making these vast increases before it was discovered whether the revenue would stand it. I suppose this first rise was made almost before Ministers took over the government of the country, and the consequence is that these continual rises have together accounted in a large measure for this deficit. Another thing, I do not know if the Government have any right to make these large increases unless they are in a first-class position to do it; because they are placed there to administer the public funds to the advantage of all parties, and not to the advantage of any one section of the community. In this case we find these large increases given to a section that help to keep Ministers in power, and whilst I think that everybody should look after themselves to a certain extent, at the same time the position of Ministers is one of such high trust that they should be very careful of the administration of

moneys entrusted to their charge. Of course, as I have said before, they have my entire sympathy, because it is impossible to do anything else where the workers are the masters of the employers. I next come to the subject of money being scarce and tight, and I think no one can contradict me on that point. The causes of it are not far to seek. It is due to three principal causes. First was the note issue, the next was the Commonwealth Bank, and the third was the opening of the Commonwealth Savings Bank.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is money not scarce and tight all over the world?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: No. To show how plentiful it is, and how willing are the financial authorities to lend it, I may point to the Chinese loan. It does not look as if money were tight all over the world when the Chinese managed to secure a loan of 25 millions; and not only was the loan over-subscribed, but it went to a premium.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But the wars have taken place since then.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: But we could not get the money, where they did.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: We got two millions.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: We got two millions out of five, and we had to pay a big price for it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Not so big as they had to pay in South Australia.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I am coming to that. The other States are just in the same position as we are, which goes to show that the money-lenders of Great Britain are not quite in accord with the methods and policy of Labour Governments. All I want to point out is that the Treasurers and Premiers of these States have been to England to try and get money for their respective States, and in no case have they been able to get as much as they wanted, and in every case they have had to pay excessive rates; while the Chinese Republic asked for 25 millions, and it was over-subscribed and went to a premium, whereas ours was down a half per cent. long before it was put on the market. I want to show some of the rea-

sons why we cannot get money in Australia. When I was interrupted I was trying to explain why it is that money is tight, and I say it is owing to the note issue and the Commonwealth Bank, and particularly the Commonwealth Savings Bank; and for these reasons—although I was going to add that our Government are not to blame for it, notwithstanding, I believe, they are in sympathy with the policy of the party who are to blame for it—the State is labouring under a deficiency in money. When the note issue came out as law all notes, as you are aware, belonging to private banks were recalled. These had to be all bought up by the different banks. For instance, if a bank had £150,000 in notes in circulation and, say, another £150,000 in gold, when it became law that no private banks could issue notes, and not only that, but they had to recall them, the private banks had to call up a lot of their advance in gold to purchase their own notes. Thus, to buy up £150,000 worth of notes they had to withdraw from circulation £150,000 worth of gold. Having bought out their notes, which they had to burn, then if they wanted £150,000 in notes they went to the Federal Treasurer to get it. That, of course, made no difference, but it was the first payment of £150,000 which represented a loss to this country. Among the six or seven banking institutions we have here, I am of opinion that it took £130,000 out of circulation. I calculated that the Savings Bank would take another £250,000 from circulation, but if it takes anything like as much as we have heard to-night it shows that this money must be going away somewhere at a very rapid rate. At any rate these are the causes which account to a large extent for the tightness of money in Western Australia. You will see for yourself what a difference it must make to the farmer and the storekeeper, and the business man who is in the habit of relying on this advance to carry on his business. Farmers are unable to meet their bills, and merchants have to renew them, and we find ourselves in Western Australia confronted with the worst shortage of money that has occurred for many years. It has naturally caused a very

severe commercial depression, and it came at one of the most inopportune times, when the worst drought we have had was raging, which made it worse than ever.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I suppose that is the cause of the fall of British Consols also.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I am speaking locally. These are the actions which have had the sympathy of the present Government, even if the present Government were not directly responsible for them.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is money not tight all over the world?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: No, the Chinese got it easily.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: What did they pay for it?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: That is not the point. On top of all this comes the most severe taxation; and everybody must admit that Australia is the highest taxed country in the world. If it is not, it must be a very wealthy community elsewhere which can stand higher imposts. There are very heavy customs duties, nearly all of which go to the Federal authorities to be used for old age pensions, maternity bonuses and defence, and most of the money flowing out through the two first-named channels is paid to people who do not want it. Then we have income tax, two land taxes, or with the municipal rates, three land taxes. Of all the short-sighted, ill-advised taxes to impose in a country like Western Australia the land tax is the worst. The very thing you want developed—the land, which of all things you want money spent on to bring it to a high state of production, you start to tax. It seems to me suicidal, and I cannot understand any thinking people doing it. The development of land everywhere is of primary importance, and every inducement should be given to people to spend money on it. I am not opposed to the income tax. Tax under that as much as you like, because everyone who pays through that tax pays from something he has received; but numbers of people who pay the land tax pay when they are making losses, and I do not think you need go beyond 1912-13 for a great many

examples of this. Then we come to the cost of living, which, I think, is undeniably high. There are many causes which contribute to it, and none more than the recent drought. One of the chief causes is the high cost of meat, and that nobody could help, because the drought was so severe that it destroyed large numbers of stock. Hundreds of thousands of stock have been lost during the drought, and no one will be able to calculate his losses until after shearing, for it is impossible to collect poor sheep in those huge paddocks. The Government undertook to supply cheap meat, but I do not think so far they have been very successful. I have not gone into the subject of the retail supply very closely, but from what I hear they are not very successful. I do not see how they can be successful unless they were to sell below cost, in which case the general taxpayer would have to make up the difference. One of the best ways, I think, of getting cheap meat would be for the Government to erect meat works at Wyndham. I think their own experience will show them now the tremendous loss there is in shipping. If meat works were erected at Wyndham they would get the stock from the Northern Territory, and the Kimberley cattle, and I think the venture would pay. At all events, it would do away with the great loss experienced now. I must correct one remark made by Mr. Moss in which he referred to the Government starting to bring down 120 head of bullocks that had pleuro among them. Now, I happen to be in a position to state that it was nothing of the kind. The 120 head of cattle delivered to the Government had an inspector's certificate and were perfectly clean. The cattle were taken delivery of by the Government's representative and put on board the steamer perfectly clean, but for some reason best known to the authorities, they were taken off the steamer. They were still clean, and there was no pleuro in them at any time after the Government received them. In those circumstances it was wrong to insinuate that the Government were having anything to do with diseased cattle, because I know that the greatest care is taken to prevent diseased cattle coming

down from the North to Fremantle. Another factor in the high cost of living is house rent, and that is caused to a large extent by the high municipal charges. Whether it is the increased cost of work or not, I cannot say, but the municipal charges are extremely high, and more recently we have had the additional cost of sewerage connection which also is excessively high. In fact, it is something enormous, and I know of one case where the cost of putting in the sewerage connection to nine small houses adjoining was £400. Now, the owner of a house as a rule calculates to receive from 6 to 8 per cent., and he is lucky if he gets 5 or 6 per cent. As these additional charges come along—the high municipal charges, the sewerage connections and rate and the increased cost of labour for repairs—he is forced to raise the rents to enable him to get his 5 or 6 per cent., because no one can expect an owner of property to take less than that when we remember that if he sits still and does not put his money into houses he can get 5 per cent. without any trouble or responsibility. It is these causes that make house rents go up and add to the cost of living so much. As I have said, the Government must be very easily pleased if they are satisfied with the results and the prospects of affairs as they are now, after two years of office. It is being found increasingly difficult to borrow money for our wants and needs. It is very easy to talk about extending railways and doing all sorts of harbour works and making improvements in all directions, but unless we are in a position to get money this talk is futile. In addition we have to estimate whether, with our small population, we are in a position to pay the enormous amount of interest together with the other responsibilities we have to bear. A proof that our conditions are not such as appeal to the moneylenders is the fact of the difficulty of getting money. People do not lend us money readily and they want a high price for it, and I need only refer again to the extraordinary instance of where people like the Chinese can get any amount of money, have their loans over-subscribed and at a premium, while

we are told that money is hard to get at 4 per cent. apart from all the costs of flotation and underwriting. There is another way of looking at the matter, and that is we cannot expect money-lenders to look with a very favourable eye upon the Commonwealth. We go to them for money for the development of the country by the Government, for the development of land and pastoral areas by individuals, and for the carrying on of large industrial enterprises, and then we turn round and treat them as absentees, charging them 50 per cent. extra because they do not live in the country. I am one of those who thoroughly believe that anybody who has made his money in the country and then goes away to live beyond a couple of years and spend his wealth elsewhere should pay more taxation, but to tax the professional money-lender, the very man whom we want to lend us money for the development of our country, is suicidal and ruinous, and I know is resented very much in financial circles.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: How can you discriminate between the two?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: It could be done without much trouble. The Government have another twelve months of office, and they have any amount of time in which to convince us that their methods for efficiency and good government are satisfactory and that they can put all these matters right.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Only twelve months more?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Until there is another election, which possibly may make some difference to them, but they have that twelve months with their present majority in another place to convince those of us who have still open minds, that they are able to carry on the business of the country to the advantage of all concerned, and to do away with the objections which several speakers have enumerated to-night. I again repeat that I have not made these remarks this evening in a hostile spirit or in a spirit of opposition. I am trying to show what I consider the unfortunate state of the country at the present time, in the hope

that something may be done to ameliorate it. The Government have twelve months before an election in which to do this. Were matters reversed I should be only too pleased to award my meed of praise in the same way as I have given a certain amount of blame this evening, and I hope that twelve months hence I shall be able to do that; but I must say now that from what the Government have achieved so far I am forced to the conclusion that they do not believe in the old biblical adage "that our barns may be filled with plenty and that there be no complaining in our streets."

On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th July, 1913.

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

ELECTORAL—FORREST CON- STITUENCY.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to report that during the recess—on the 17th April—Mr. P. L. O'Loughlen resigned his seat as member for Forrest and was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Moore on the 28th April. On the 17th June Mr. Moore resigned his seat, a new writ was issued, and Mr. O'Loughlen was again returned.

The Clerk announced the return of writ for the election of a member for Forrest, showing that Mr. P. L. O'Loughlen had been duly elected.

Mr. O'Loughlen took and subscribed the oath, as required by statute, and signed the roll.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By Mr. Speaker: 1, A compilation of "The Criminal Code Act, 1902," with its amendments.

By the Premier: 1, Report of conference of permanent heads and heads of sub-departments on the Public Service Act, and the Public Service Regulations.

By the Minister for Education: Regulations of the Education Department.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Uniform general by-laws for regulating motor traffic and standard lights to be carried by all vehicles (also subsequent amendments). 2, Fremantle Road Bridge By-laws—Amending By-law No. 4. 3, By-laws for the water supplies of—Busselton, Derby, Geraldton, Goldfields, Meekatharra, Metropolitan, Pingelly. 4, By-laws of the Municipalities of—Albany—Building By-law No. 37. Albany—By-law No. 38. Boulder—Hat pins. Boulder—No. 38. Carnarvon. Collie—No. 56. Fremantle—Stands for carts. East Fremantle—Hat pins. North Fremantle—Discount on rates. Geraldton. Leederville—Amendment to building. Perth—No. 31. North Perth—Buildings. North Perth—Loan Poll. South Perth—Games in Parks. South Perth—Loan Poll. Subiaco—Building By-law No. 67. Victoria Park—Advertising hoardings. 5, By-laws of Road Boards—Ashburton. Beverley—Amended By-laws Nos. 57 and 60. Beverley—Valuation on annual value. Brookton—Trespass and poundage fees. Capel—(General). Capel—Trespass and poundage fees. Claremont—Building. Collie—Heavy traffic. Goomalling—Valuation on annual value. Kimberley—Valuation on annual value. Marble Bar—Valuation on annual value. Marradong—Damaging roads. Mount Magnet—Common reserves. Mount Nalcorn. Northampton—Verandahs. Perth