

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 22nd July, 1903.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED

By the TREASURER: Regulations under Local Inscribed Stock Act, 1897.

By the PREMIER: Amended Regulations under Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Report on Fishing Industry for 1902. By-laws of the Municipality of Fremantle.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS AND RAILWAYS: Report on Railways by the Commissioner of Railways. By-laws under Goldfields Water Supply Act. Alterations to Railway Classification and Rate Book.

By Mr. SPEAKER: Special Report by the Auditor General on an alleged violation of the Audit Act.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

QUESTION OR MOTION—COST IMPLIED.

Notice given by Mr. TEESDALE SMITH (Wellington) to ask a question.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas) rose to a point of order. At the previous sitting of the House he (Mr. Thomas) had given notice of questions dealing with the Esperance Railway survey; and the Premier then objected that as the questions embodied matters of cost, such matters should be put in the form of a motion. The member for Wellington had now given notice of similar questions,

embodying matters of cost. Was he in order?

THE PREMIER: If they did so, the member for Wellington would have to give notice of motion.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH said he would give notice of motion.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, WANNEROO.

MR. JACOBY asked the Premier: Whether the Government were considering the advisability of constructing a railway, in the early future, to the Wanneroo District. If so, whether instructions would be given to have the necessary surveys made this year. Failing the probability of the Government undertaking this work at an early date, whether they are prepared to favourably consider the question of subsidising the Perth Tramway Company to extend their electric system from Osborne Park to the Wanneroo Caves.

THE PREMIER replied: The Government had not yet considered the matters referred to in this question.

QUESTION—TIMBER LEASE FORFEITURE.

MR. JACOBY asked the Minister for Lands: What steps had been taken regarding the application made by the residents of Parkerville and Lion Mill for the forfeiture of Gill and McDowell's timber lease (Eastern Railway), for non-fulfilment during several years past of the conditions of said lease.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: Notice terminating the lease (305/113) on 31st December had been given.

QUESTION—MUNDARING PUMPING STATIONS, FIREWOOD.

MR. JACOBY asked the Minister for Works: What was the approximate percentage saving effected by the use of firewood, in lieu of coal, in the furnaces of Nos. 1 and 2 Pumping Stations at Mundaring.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: While firewood could be obtained in the vicinity, the approximate percentage of saving effected by its use, in lieu of coal, in the furnaces of Nos. 1 and 2 Pumping Stations was 45 per cent.

**QUESTION—RAILWAY PURCHASE,
GOOSEBERRY HILL.**

MR. JACOBY asked the Minister for Railways: Why the Gooseberry Hill Railway was not purchased to its terminus at the Canning Mills, where there is considerable settlement?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The section of the Gooseberry Hill Railway between Pickering Junction and the Canning Mills has not at present been purchased by the Government, owing to the expense which would have devolved on the State in dealing with the branch timber lines on that section. The Government have, however, agreed to purchase and the company to sell (at the same rate as paid for the portion of the line recently taken over) within the next four years, some time during which period the use of the branch lines will be discontinued.

**QUESTION—RAILWAY LOADING,
SAWYERS VALLEY.**

MR. JACOBY asked the Minister for Railways: When the department proposed to provide the farther accommodation for loading urgently needed at Sawyers Valley.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Over £630 has been spent lately in constructing a loop and erecting a platform 260 feet long, with ramped approach. 2, About £400 would be necessary to further improve the loading accommodation. 3, There are many other stations of importance equal to Sawyers Valley which are much worse provided than that station is at present. 4, Due note has been taken, and when funds are available the matter will have attention.

**QUESTION—GOODS SHED AT LION
MILL.**

MR. JACOBY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether the Commissioner's attention had been directed to the packing case left by error at Lion Mill Station and labelled "Goods Shed." 2, Whether it was proposed to provide a goods shed at this station.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1. The residents at Lion Mill asked for a small goods shed. As funds were not available for any extensive work a shelter shed (portable) was sent up,

and it is understood that the portable shed is regarded as being of service to the Lion Mill residents. 2. As the trade increases Lion Mill will not be overlooked.

**QUESTION—EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE,
CARETAKER'S FAMILY.**

MR. CONNOR asked the Premier: Whether it was the intention of the Government to make provision to help the family of the man who lost his life at the Explosives Magazine, Owen's Anchorage, on Wednesday, the 15th instant, while in the discharge of his duty.

THE PREMIER replied: I would respectfully suggest to the honourable member that such a matter as that involved in this question is not one for Parliamentary interference, at all events at this stage.

**QUESTION—TICK BOUNDARY SURVEY,
KIMBERLEY.**

MR. PIGOTT asked the Minister for Lands: 1. Whether it was the intention of the Government to have a survey made of the proposed new tick boundary in the Kimberley district. 2. Whether the Government would take every possible means (by way of fencing gaps, etc.) to make the new boundary impassable.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: An estimate of cost was being prepared, and when completed the application for survey and fencing would be considered.

OBITUARY—THE POPE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): Before we proceed to deal with the Notices of Motion, I should like to say a few words to draw attention to the loss which has been sustained by the recent death of His Holiness the Pope. That, Sir, is an event of such importance, and causes sorrow to so many millions of people that I think I shall be expressing the wish of the House in placing on record our feelings of sympathy and respect. Members of the Catholic Church have lost a leader who shed additional lustre on the chair which has been occupied by so many saintly and distinguished men. The world is poorer by the loss of a great and striking figure, and to all classes and conditions of men of whatever church has

come a sense of sorrow and sympathy. I extend on behalf of the House, to those who mourn this loss, an assurance of our heartfelt respect and a tribute of our admiration of a life so brave, a character so noble, and a death so patient and pathetic.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved :

That the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 4:30 p.m., and shall sit until 6:30 p.m., if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7:30 p.m. onwards.

It had been the invariable rule to sit on the days and at the hours mentioned in the motion.

MR. HASTIE (Kanowna) moved as an amendment :

That after "Thursdays" the words "and Fridays" be inserted.

His desire was that the House should meet on four days of the week instead of three. After the first few weeks there was more work on the Notice Paper than could be attended to in the time set apart; therefore he wished to provide for four sitting days. As an experiment he hoped the House would look favourably upon it.

MR. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) seconded the amendment.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	...	...	...	9
Noes	...	...	...	30

Majority against ... 21

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Bath	Mr. Burges
Mr. Diamond	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Hastie	Mr. Connor
Mr. Holman	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Isdell	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Purkies	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Harper
Mr. Daglish (Teller).	Mr. Russell
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Hicks
	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. Illingworth
	Mr. Jacoby
	Mr. James
	Mr. McDonald
	Mr. McWilliams
	Mr. Nanson
	Mr. Oats
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Pigott
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Reid
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Stone
	Mr. Thomas
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) moved :

That the figures "4:30" be struck out, and "2:30" inserted in lieu.

MR. BATH (Hannans) seconded.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas) supported. The amendment just negatived had not met with his approval. Last session, when it became necessary either to meet at an earlier hour or to sit on extra days, the Premier asked members to sit on Mondays and Fridays; and he (Mr. Thomas) pointed out that a large section of the House—the country members who travelled hundreds of miles a week to and from Parliament—was entitled to consideration. The Premier then agreed that the House should meet at 2:30 instead of 4:30; and it was evident the Government had no cause to regret the adoption of that suggestion, for by meeting at 2:30 the House despatched a much greater volume of business than had ever been dealt with at 4:30 sittings. The proposal to sit on Fridays was highly objectionable to those country members who could not afford to devote the whole of their time to public business, to the neglect of their private affairs. Few could for this purpose reside in Perth during the session. With this statement every Labour member would agree; for although posing as great believers in "one man one billet," they had proved by practical experience that a member could not subsist on the £200 a year paid for his service by a grateful country, and that he must look for an additional billet to keep his home going. This applied to those who must come from such places as Geraldton, Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, or Coolgardie to attend the House. Hence 2:30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays was a more convenient hour of meeting, and would permit of closing the Session in a reasonable time, while giving country members an opportunity of despatching private business on Mondays and Fridays. To meet at 4:30 would probably necessitate a long session; and he appealed to members resident in Perth to acquiesce in meeting two hours earlier, for the quick despatch of business and for the sake of country members. As this plan worked well last session, it should surely meet with the concurrence of the Premier.

MR. PURKISS (Perth) supported the amendment. Each Parliamentary Session was begun in a most dilettante fashion, by sitting at 4.30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays; and then, after skirmishing along for months and almost playing the fool, a wearied House was compelled to meet at 2.30 on five days a week; and this continued till Christmas Eve. He would sooner see the House sit for four days at the start, at half-past two, to try whether we could not finish the Session by October. If we started sitting for three days in the week at half-past four, we would have the Ministry coming down two months hence and asking for an extra day's sitting at half-past two. We had to go on at high pressure, working late hours, with additional number of days right up to Christmas Eve, and the result was that some of the members were to some extent stale and jaded at the end of the Session.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): Every member would agree with a good deal that had been said by the last two speakers. All were anxious to have the work disposed of as quickly as possible, but his experience was that although individually we desired to get on with the work of the country, some members seemed to seize every opportunity of delaying it. The amount of work done by the House in the course of six months could be done just as well, if not better, in three months, sitting three days in the week. It was not altogether the amount of time that was available. If we met at half-past two on four days in the week for the first two or three months, we would find an increased volume of talk, but not necessarily that an increased volume of work would be done. It had always been found necessary, in this Parliament and in every other Parliament, to sit longer hours towards the end of a session. Those longer hours were fixed not merely because of the additional time afforded, but because members had to come early, and getting somewhat tired on account of the length of the sitting, became more anxious to get the work done. The fact that the Government had last year, as had every previous Government, to ask members to sit longer hours at the end of the Session was not because we sat short hours in the first instance. Hon. members would

recollect that this question came up for discussion during the early part of last Session, and it was pointed out then that whilst if we took a body of members who were paid an adequate sum or could live on the amount paid to them, it might be right to expect they should devote the whole of their time to the affairs of the country—[MR. HASTIE: Why not pay them?—]—we must bear in mind that members of Parliament were paid here only £200 a year for their services, a sum for which they could not be expected to devote the whole of their time to Parliament. He for one would decline to be a member of Parliament if it made such a serious demand on his time that he had to devote the whole of his attention to parliamentary affairs. But, eliminating the personal element, he would say that we always needed a body of men who found it necessary to earn their living outside of their parliamentary salary. We did not want to be controlled by a body of men who were able to live on their parliamentary salary alone, nor by those who had private means sufficiently large to enable them to devote the whole of their time to the public service. There was an intermediate class which ought to be consulted.

MR. THOMAS: What about the 40 per cent. who are country members?

THE PREMIER: One did not want to see the country controlled by any of the three classes mentioned, namely the class who could live on £200 a year, the class who had private means and could live on their own resources, and thirdly the country members. The class of members who had to earn their living outside of Parliament kept as far as they could to the work before them, and wasted no time in useless discussions and endless repetitions. If each member would realise that when he was speaking the whole country was not listening to his words, and if each one would get practically to business, then even with the limited hours we would be able to dispose of the business of the country within the course of three months.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	25
Noes	...	...	...	15
				—
Majority for ...				10

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burges	Mr. Bath
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Connor
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Holman
Mr. Harper	Mr. Isdell
Mr. Hassell	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Purkiss
Mr. Holmes	Mr. Reid
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Stone
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Taylor
Mr. James	Mr. Thomas
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Jacoby (Teller).
Mr. McWilliams	
Mr. Nanson	
Mr. Oats	
Mr. Phillips	
Mr. Plesse	
Mr. Pigott	
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Smith	
Mr. Throssell	
Mr. Higham (Teller).	

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved :

That on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and also on every second Wednesday, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and orders of the day.

Under the present practice, on Wednesdays private members' business took precedence until the tea adjournment. The consequence was that we had two broken days in the fortnight, and he thought it would be preferable to have one full day in each fortnight to be devoted entirely to private members' business.

MR. DAGLISH (Subiaco) moved as an amendment :

That the words, "and also on every second Wednesday," be struck out.

It was very important that private members should have a reasonable opportunity of bringing business before the House. The amount of time proposed by the Premier simply placed a member who was not directly associated with either of the leading parties in the House (the Government party or the Opposition) very much at a disadvantage, because without the assistance of either of those organisations a member had very little opportunity of bringing measures of importance before the House. The fullest opportunity should be given to private members to bring forward anything that might be of sufficient importance to secure debate; and the fact that a motion occupied some little time in its settlement

was evidence of its importance. We had seen in the past that instead of there being too much there had been too little time available for private members. For instance, the Legal Practitioners Act Amendment Bill, which was brought before the House last session by the member for Perth, failed to secure consideration during the session. The fact that a measure introduced thus early was absolutely slaughtered for want of time necessary for private members' business in this House was evidence that we ought to increase rather than curtail the opportunities of private members.

MR. HOLMAN (North Murchison) seconded the amendment.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result :—

Ayes	...	...	...	17
Noes	...	...	...	23
Majority against				6

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Bath	Mr. Burges
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Connor	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Hassell	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Hastie	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Holman	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Harper
Mr. Isdell	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Hicks
Mr. Pigott	Mr. Holmes
Mr. Purkiss	Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Reid	Mr. James
Mr. Stone	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Taylor	Mr. McWilliams
Mr. Thomas	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Jacoby (Teller).	Mr. Oats
	Mr. Phillips
	Mr. Plesse
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Smith
	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

PRINTING COMMITTEE—HANSARD REPORTS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved :

That the Printing Committee for the present session shall consist of the following members, viz. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gardiner, and Mr. Harper; to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members, and all papers laid upon the table, whether in answer to addresses or otherwise; and that it be an instruction to the Printing Committee to consider the desirability of curtailing the *Hansard* debates with a view of reducing the present cost.

MR. BATH (Hannans) moved as an amendment,

That the words after "otherwise" be struck out [omitting reference to *Hansard* debates].

The power proposed to be given to the committee was altogether too drastic. During the past session the *Hansard* reporters were given the right to curtail the speeches of members in Committee, and the right of epitomising granted was not exercised in the right spirit. At least, many members who desired certain points to be brought prominently before the House found that when the reports were published these special points had been obliterated by the *Hansard* reporters. Many members relied on the publication of the *Hansard* debates to give their constituents a knowledge of what was done in the House, because the reports in the daily newspapers curtailed the speeches of most members, except those considered to be prominent in the House. The Labour members could not be said to occupy the time of the House unnecessarily. Long speeches took place, generally, on the second reading of Bills, and the Labour members usually reserved their remarks for the Committee stage—when special clauses came up for consideration; and having special knowledge applying to these clauses, they gave utterance to their views. When the reporters curtailed the speeches in Committee, the Labour members were not afforded an opportunity of placing their views before the public. If a motion were brought before the House that the speeches of members should be curtailed by excising the useless repetition and unnecessary verbiage, then such a motion would find enthusiastic support from members of the Labour party; but if power were given to the committee to issue instructions that the *Hansard* reports should be curtailed, it was not in the interest of members' constituents.

MR. PIGOTT (West Kimberley): Last Session a debate similar to this took place, and a similar amendment to that now moved was brought forward. He intended to support the amendment, as it was not right that the *Hansard* reports should be at the mercy of any committee of the House. It was not a fair thing that a committee of the House should have the right to say what portion of a

speech should be published and what portion expunged.

THE PREMIER: There was a misconception in the minds of members, certainly an entire misconception in the minds of the two members who had spoken. The words aimed at by the hon. member who had moved the amendment were: "That it be an instruction to the Printing Committee to consider the desirability of curtailing the *Hansard* debates with a view of reducing the present cost." The Printing Committee never made a report on that matter.

MR. JOHNSON: But the debates were curtailed all the same.

THE PREMIER: It was the opinion of the House that some suggestions should be made for the consideration of members as to whether the reports should be curtailed. The Printing Committee, however, did not make any report on the matter. It was an entire mistake to say that the committee gave instructions that all the *Hansard* reports should be curtailed. The only curtailment of *Hansard* last session was in regard to interjections, and the curtailment in that connection was not carried far enough. The rule should be that interjections should be excised unless there was good reason why they should be there. Interjections were better not reported.

MR. TAYLOR: Especially if they were against the Government.

THE PREMIER: Either for or against. When the honourable member interjected it was generally in favour of the Government. With the exception of the interjections, there was no curtailment of *Hansard*. He would be sorry to think there was already a curtailment, because, if that was so, judging by the two volumes of last session's debates, what would the result be if a full report were given? If there were four volumes instead of two, the country would be paying a far greater sum of money than the eloquence was worth for preservation. If some member did feel hurt because *Hansard* had not reported him verbatim—and all members, no doubt, thought they were entitled to a verbatim report—it was not because of the instructions from the Printing Committee, as no instructions were issued.

MR. BATH: Who gave them the power?

THE PREMIER: Suggestions were wanted with the object of reducing the

cost. There might be suggestions as to a time-limit for speeches or a time-limit for reporting, however long one spoke; but we should avail ourselves of the Printing Committee to bring before the House suggestions. Let members avail themselves of the existing machinery. He did not desire to do more than that, and the Printing Committee did not look on this instruction as giving them any power to interfere with the existing *Hansard*.

MR. DAGLISH (Subiaco) : The Printing Committee had power to do what the Premier wished, without any motion. It was perfectly open for the committee to consider the question, without having definite instructions, and to bring forward recommendations to the House.

THE PREMIER : This committee did not deal with the printing of *Hansard*.

MR. DAGLISH : Still it had the power to make recommendations. The trouble was that committees did not get an opportunity of going into the questions they were supposed to deal with, and in all probability this committee would be like other committees. The function supposed to be performed would be discharged without coming under the purview of the members of the committee at all. It was well understood that speeches made in Committee of the whole House were curtailed in *Hansard*, and in some instances the curtailment was important. On a recent occasion he went to a Minister to inquire why a certain promise made in debate in the House had not been carried out. The Minister said the promise had not been made, and referred him to *Hansard*. He (Mr. Daglish) had previously looked up *Hansard*, and fortified himself with the knowledge that the promise was not recorded. The Premier would probably be glad to have the privilege of omitting promises from the record.

THE PREMIER : In the New Zealand *Hansard* Committee speeches were not reported at all.

MR. DAGLISH : The *Hansard* staff should not have the responsibility of deciding what ought and what ought not to be reported in debate. That was too great a responsibility for them; for they, like many other expert shorthand writers, were very unskilful in epitomising debates. Some discussions in this House that had been epitomised in *Hansard*

were done as badly as it was possible to do them; and he had no confidence in the capacity of the *Hansard* staff to do the work which, if the motion were adopted, it was proposed to cast upon them. He would sooner see no reports of Committee discussions than reports which were, in many instances, misleading. Better have no report at all than a report which really falsified instead of indicating the nature of the debate. At present there were not sufficient grounds for casting aside the amendment of the member for Hannans.

MR. JACOBY (Swan) supported the amendment, with the object of asking the Treasurer, who had recently made some inquiries as to the cost of *Hansard* in the other States, whether he could indicate any method of curtailing the cost of the report without impairing its efficiency. It appeared that in some States *Hansard* was published in the daily papers, and subsequently bound by the proprietors.

THE PREMIER : Yes; in South Australia; and the reports were curtailed.

MR. JACOBY : Much good might result could the House secure the distribution of *Hansard* and also cheapen its cost, by publishing it under contract in one of the newspapers.

THE PREMIER : Let the House suggest that the Printing Committee consider that.

MR. JACOBY : The Treasurer might inform members whether the matter was worth considering.

MR. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie) supported the amendment. The chief complaint by members was against the curtailment of speeches in the Committee stage of Bills. Last session it was common for the Premier to tell other members that a certain Bill should not be discussed on the second reading, but that we should wait till the Committee stage. Subsequently, after the Committee stage, members found there was absolutely no report; and this was true of several Bills, notably the Police Act Amendment Bill and the Factories Bill. The Premier said the committee had not authorised such curtailment, but that it was practically a rule that speeches in Committee should be curtailed. If so, the amendment should be altered to instruct the reporters that when a Bill was not discussed at any great length on the

second reading, the Committee stage should be reported fully; for if members could not get their utterances reported in Committee, they must discuss each Bill clause by clause on the second reading, and that would occupy more time than under the present system.

MR. DIAMOND (South Fremantle) asked the Premier whether the Printing Committee could act without reporting to the House.

THE PREMIER: No. They were asked to make suggestions only.

MR. DIAMOND: Then he would vote for the motion.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	13
Noes	...	...	25

Majority against ... 12

AYES.
Mr. Bath
Mr. Connor
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Hastie
Mr. Holman
Mr. Isdell
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Oats
Mr. Pigott
Mr. Reid
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Jacoby (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Burges
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. James
Mr. McWilliams
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Purkiss
Mr. Rason
Mr. Smith
Mr. Stone
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Higham (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the PREMIER, other committees for the Session were appointed as follow:—

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Illingworth, and Mr. Harper; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE.—Motion made that the Library Committee consist of Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hicks, and Mr. Daglish, with leave to sit during any adjournment

and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council.

MR. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): Did these standing committees ever meet? How many meetings had the Library Committee held last session? He moved that there be added to the motion—

And that such committee meet at least once a month.

MR. BATH (Hannans) seconded the amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Probably the amendment would not have the slightest effect. (General laughter.)

Amendment negatived, and the motion passed.

REFRESHMENT ROOMS COMMITTEE.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Diamond, and Mr. Jacoby; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and during the recess.

FEDERAL SENATE, A VACANCY.

STANDING ORDERS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved:

That the following Joint Standing Orders relating to the election of a Senator to the Federal Parliament be agreed to, and that an Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor requesting his approval of the same:

1. Whenever Parliament has been informed by Message from His Excellency the Governor that the place of a Senator for the State of Western Australia has become vacant under Section 15 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, a motion shall be made that the President and Speaker do fix a day and place whereon and whereat the Council and Assembly, sitting and voting together, may choose a person to hold the place of the Senator whose place has become vacant as aforesaid. Such day shall be not more than 14 days after the date of such motion.
2. The President and Speaker shall, as soon as practicable, inform the Council and Assembly respectively of the date and place so fixed.
3. At the date and place so fixed, the members of the Council and Assembly shall sit together and proceed to the election of a Senator. At such sitting the President of the Council, or in his absence the Speaker of the Assembly, shall preside.
4. On any debate arising, the same shall be conducted according to the Standing Orders and practice of the Legislative Assembly. On all points of order the ruling of the President shall be absolute and final.

5. At such meeting the following regulations shall be observed: (a.) A member, addressing himself to the President, shall propose a person to hold the vacant place in the Senate, and shall state that such person is willing to act if chosen. (b.) If only one person be proposed and seconded, the President shall declare:—"That has been chosen to hold the vacant place in the Senate." (c.) If more than one person be proposed and seconded, the person to hold the vacant place shall be chosen by ballot. (d.) No person shall be proposed after the President has given directions to proceed with the first ballot. (e.) When the President has directed the first ballot to proceed, each member present shall be provided with a ballot paper, certified by the clerks of the two Houses, and shall write thereon the name of one of the persons duly proposed, and shall place the paper in the ballot box. (f.) The President shall appoint a member of each House to be scrutineers, who, with the clerks of the two Houses, shall ascertain the number of votes for each candidate. (g.) If any candidate shall have an absolute majority of the votes of the whole number of the members voting, the President shall forthwith declare such candidate elected. (h.) If on the first ballot no candidate shall have received an absolute majority of such votes, a second ballot shall be taken; but the name of the candidate who shall have received the fewest votes at the first ballot shall be excluded. (i.) Until one of the candidates obtains an absolute majority of such votes, successive ballots shall be taken, and at each ballot the name of the candidate who shall have received the fewest votes at the preceding ballot shall be excluded. (j.) If on any ballot it shall be necessary to decide between two or more candidates as to which is to be excluded from a subsequent ballot through the number of votes for such candidates being equal, a special ballot shall be taken, and the name of the candidate having the smaller number of votes at such special ballot shall be excluded from the subsequent ballot. (k.) As soon as any candidate obtains an absolute majority of the votes of the members voting, the President shall declare such candidate to be elected, and shall forthwith sign a certificate addressed to His Excellency the Governor in the following form: With reference to your Excellency's Message to Parliament enclosing copy of a notification from His Excellency the Governor General or the Honourable the President of the Senate of the Commonwealth, as the case may be, that a vacancy had happened in the representation of Western Australia in the Senate of the Commonwealth, I do myself the

honour to inform you that at a joint sitting of the Houses of Parliament of the State of Western Australia, held at Perth on the day of , 190 , the Members of such Houses sitting and voting together, in pursuance of Section 15 of "The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act," did choose (name in full, occupation, and address) to hold the place vacated by
(l.) The President shall in all cases be entitled to vote. (m.) The records of the proceedings and ballot papers shall be retained by the Clerk of the Parliaments of the State of Western Australia, who shall be the custodian thereof.

6. After the joint sitting, the President of the Council and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly shall inform the Council and Assembly respectively of the result thereof, and the same shall be recorded.

Members would recollect that in April last Senator Ewing, one of the Senators for this State elected in April, 1901, resigned his seat. Section 15 of the Commonwealth Constitution provided that if the place of a Senator became vacant before the expiration of his term of service, the power of electing a successor for the remainder of that term vested in the Houses of Parliament of the State, sitting and voting together; but if a vacancy occurred at a time when the Houses were not in session, then the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, had power to fill the vacancy. But the nomination by the Governor, with the advice of the Executive, lasted only until the expiration of 14 days from the beginning of the next Session of Parliament. Under that section, the Governor, with the advice of the Executive, appointed Mr. Henry John Saunders to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Senator Ewing. As members were aware, Mr. Saunders was one of the candidates who originally sat for election, and was eighth on the poll. By the terms of the section, Mr. Saunders's present appointment would cease on the 31st instant—14 days after the beginning of the Session. These proposed Joint Standing Orders were submitted for the purpose of providing machinery for electing a successor to Senator Ewing, and were the same as the regulations adopted in Victoria when the State Houses sat jointly for the purpose of electing a Senator to the vacancy created by the death of Sir

Frederick Sargood. On that occasion the two Houses met in the Queen's Hall, Melbourne, and appointed Mr. Robert Reid. The substance of these Standing Orders would be found in subclauses *g, h, i, and j* of Clause 5. These provided that a candidate must have an absolute majority of votes before he could be elected. If balloting became necessary, then in each ballot the name of the candidate who received the fewest votes would be eliminated until one candidate got an absolute majority. If, on the taking of any ballot, it was found that two candidates had an equal number of votes, the members would have to determine which of them should be eliminated, and this might be determined by a special ballot. The Constitution Act provided in Section 21 that whenever a vacancy happened in the Senate, the fact shall be notified by the President of the Senate to the Governor of the State. It was here proposed to set this machinery in motion on receipt by the House of a message from the Governor informing the House that a vacancy had arisen. When the House received that message, without a resolution the President and the Speaker should at once fix a day and place where the members of the two Houses, sitting and voting together, should choose a person to hold the place of the Senator whose seat had become vacant. Such time shall not be more than 14 days after the receipt of the notice. Then the President and the Speaker having fixed the time and place, at that time and place the members sitting and voting together should proceed to the despatch of business. A candidate had to be proposed by a member, and seconded. Any person was qualified to be proposed, whether he were a member of Parliament or not. No provision was made for any formal proposal of a man who, being outside Parliament, happened to be unable to obtain any member of Parliament to propose him. But that was rather an extreme case to contemplate, because if such person could not find a member to propose him, he was not likely to have a majority of members to vote for him. A candidate being proposed and seconded, then the ballot proceeded. At all joint sittings, the President of the Council, or in his absence the Speaker of the Assembly, would preside. Members would find

that the provisions of the Joint Standing Orders would cover all the contingencies that were likely to arise. Similar Joint Standing Orders had been adopted by the Legislative Council, and he now asked this House to adopt them.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) asked for the Speaker's ruling as to whether there was any constitutional reason why, as provided in Clause 3, "the President of the Council, or in his absence the Speaker of the Assembly, shall preside." Was it constitutionally necessary that this House should adopt that clause. Members of the people's House, the more important branch of the Legislature, should positively insist on the Speaker of this House having the precedence his position entitled him to.

THE SPEAKER: No constitutional question whatever was involved. This House, or the other House, could make such a provision as this, if it wished. He did not think that in Victoria, at the time an election for a Senator was held, there was a Joint Standing Order previously approved, stating that the President should take the Chair in the joint sitting. His recollection was that a motion was made by the Speaker himself that the President should take the Chair in the joint sitting. However, it was a matter for this House to decide, on the motion made. There was nothing unconstitutional in proposing that either the President or the Speaker should take the Chair, in a joint sitting.

MR. DAGLISH moved, as an amendment, that the words—

"President of the Council, or in his absence," be struck out.

He regarded this House as being the more important branch of the Legislature because it was representative of the whole community of Western Australia; therefore its presiding officer should be honoured by taking the highest position at any joint sitting. It was our duty as members of the more important branch of the Legislature to insist on this as one of the rights appertaining to the House; and he hoped the House would see its way to affirm the principle embodied in the amendment.

MR. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie) seconded the amendment.

THE PREMIER: It was to be hoped members would not agree to the amend-

ment. These were Joint Standing Orders, and if we put in any amendment here the effect of which would be that the Speaker of this Chamber was to preside, in joint sittings, then naturally the members of the Legislative Council would object.

[MEMBER: Why should they object?] They had just as great respect for their Chamber as we had for ours. However great we might be in our own eyes, however strong we might believe ourselves to be in the affections of the people, the fact remained that the Legislative Council occupied constitutionally a relatively higher position than the Assembly.

[MEMBER: Question?] The Legislative Council was known as the Upper House. It was the place in which the Governor delivered his Addresses to Parliament, and the place at the bar of which members of this House stood to hear the Address. There was the same distinction between the Houses in this State as between the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Even if it were true, as had been said, that members of this House were so strong in the confidence of the people, yet this was one of those matters in which we should not take up an attitude which would invite friction. He was confident that the Legislative Council, if we passed this amendment, would insist that the President of their Chamber should preside at a joint sitting of the Houses. That was exactly what we should do if we were in a similar position: we should object to an amendment of this kind.

MR. DAGLISH: No. We knuckled down every time.

THE PREMIER: This was not a question of knuckling down. What was done in Victoria might well be done here. He hoped the motion would be adopted, because if it were not, friction would be caused.

MR. JACOBY (Swan): We relied on the practice of the old country to guide us in this country. The Premier was relying on what he presumed to be the practice in England, that the President of the House of Lords always took precedence of the Speaker of the House of Commons. But it should be pointed out that it was competent for a "commoner" to sit as President of the Lords, and according to *May*, when a "commoner" occupied the position of President

of the Council, the Speaker took precedence. We were guided by the practice of the old country, and he failed to see why we should not follow it here. In all public functions here the Speaker of the Assembly should take precedence of the President of the Council.

MR. HASTIE (Kanowna): In the absence of the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran), the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) had given a good dissertation on the constitutional aspect of the question. But that was not the most important aspect. It appeared that we had no precedent for the President of the Council presiding at a joint sitting, and we were called on to make a precedent. The Premier had asked us to make a precedent by putting the President of the Council in the chair. Why? He had given us no reason whatever. The other Chamber was representative of a comparatively small section of the community. The Speaker of the Assembly was the chief figure in the most representative body of the State. This was a time when we should make a precedent for future guidance. We all expected there would be a number of joint sittings, and in spite of the learned eloquence of the Premier, the fact remained that this was the more important House: it dealt with money, and the other House did not. Now was the time when we should accentuate the position of this House and declare that the Speaker, and not the President, should be chairman of these conferences.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	15
Noes	...	...	...	20

Majority against ... 5

AYES.		NOES.	
Mr. Rath		Mr. Burgess	
Mr. Butcher		Mr. Diamond	
Mr. Connor		Mr. Ewing	
Mr. Daglish		Mr. Gardiner	
Mr. Foulkes		Mr. Gordon	
Mr. Hastie		Mr. Gregory	
Mr. Holman		Mr. Hayward	
Mr. Isdell		Mr. Hicks	
Mr. Johnson		Mr. Holmes	
Mr. Oate		Mr. Hopkins	
Mr. Purkiss		Mr. Illingworth	
Mr. Reid		Mr. James	
Mr. Taylor		Mr. McWilliams	
Mr. Thomas		Mr. Nanson	
Mr. Jacoby (Teller).		Mr. Phillips	
		Mr. Piesse	
		Mr. Rason	
		Mr. Smith	
		Mr. Stone	
		Mr. Higham (Teller).	

Amendment thus negatived.
Question put and passed.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

ELECTORAL BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

FACTORIES BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

BOILERS INSPECTION BILL.

Introduced by the MINISTER FOR MINES, and read a first time.

SUPPLY BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending appropriation from revenue and loan funds for the purposes of a Supply Bill, £1,000,000.

Standing Orders suspended.

The House resolved into Committee of Supply, and Committee of Ways and Means, formal resolutions being passed preliminary to a Bill.

Supply Bill introduced, and read a first time.

SECOND READING.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner), in moving the second reading, said: I would like to say to the House that last year I made a promise that I would try and get the Estimates laid on the table as soon after the commencement of the session as I possibly could. With that intention I went to a good deal of personal trouble to try and get the views of members as to the wants of their constituencies. As the result of that, a large proportion of our Estimates were actually ready on the 30th June; but we felt that the House had a right to expect there would be some distinct attempt on behalf of the Government to carry out some of the recommendations of the Public Service Commission, without which the Estimates for the present year would not be complete. We are now threshing these out as hard as we possibly can. We have all the Under Secretaries at the work day after day,

letting the other work of the departments practically stand still. I trust to be able to make my Financial Statement about the end of August. That will be nearly three months earlier than the Estimates were on the table last year. It has been said, and very rightly said, that as far as possible we should spend the revenue provided by Parliament on the works sanctioned by Parliament; yet so long as these Estimates are passed as late as December, and in them are involved questions that have to receive the assent of this House before they are finally dealt with, it must be apparent that it is almost an impossibility for us to actually spend the money which has been passed by Parliament during the currency of that year. On looking back I find this has, to a great extent, been the difficulty, except in those years when the Estimates have been passed early; and I think that if we bring the Estimates up early—we are endeavouring to save all unnecessary work of detail in them, so that members may see for themselves at a glance in many instances exactly how things are—there is no reason why they should not be passed possibly by about the end of September or the beginning of October. That will enable the State to spend the money passed by Parliament within the financial year. I may say that so far as the other States are concerned, especially in Victoria, two months are generally given after the close of the financial year for Parliament to spend the money passed in the previous year. Whilst we show a pretty substantial amount—an amount I think, roughly speaking, about £150,000 or £160,000—we have entered into obligations for the expenditure of nearly the whole of that sum. I think the House will agree with me that much of the unnecessary delay can be obviated if we have the Estimates down as quickly as we possibly can after the meeting of Parliament. It is rather difficult to bring them down much before the end of August, for two reasons; one, that we rarely know the exact result of the financial operations of the year until the 14th or 16th July, and in addition to that we have to rely to a great extent for our information as to the Estimates for the coming year upon the Federal Treasurer. He is in possession of a good

deal more detailed information than is at the disposal of the State Treasurers, and ought to be able to make more accurate statements. Consequently we have, to some extent, to hear his Financial Statement before we feel absolutely justified in estimating the receipts from the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Treasurer is to make his Budget Speech in about six or seven days. Then I shall go to work and prepare my estimates of revenue, much of which work has been done now, and I hope at the end of August to put the House and the country in possession of the actual financial position of the State, and of the anticipations and intentions of the Government as to the expenditure during the coming year. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Bill passed through the remaining stages, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION—AUDIT MATTERS.

THE TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardner): With the kind permission of the House, I desire to make a personal explanation. I shall ask the House to bear with me for a few moments while I try to put members as fully as I possibly can in possession of the facts. We have here a special report by the Auditor General on a "Violation of the Audit Act, 1891." Now, the report states fairly accurately the circumstances of this matter; and in order that the House may more clearly understand the position, I will read the Treasury file, showing all that has occurred in connection with this vote; and that members may thoroughly grasp the facts, I will try to explain what occurred. In the Estimates of last year there was a vote for, I think, £26,350, item 939, "Replacing Obsolete Engines." There is some legal quibble, or rather some legal technicality, as to whether this should have been charged as rolling stock or as engines. I shall not go into that question, because, while not aspiring to represent entirely the views of the House, I should like to say that I think

the general intention of the House was that the vote should provide for replacing obsolete rolling-stock. It was found that although we had ordered this stock it would be utterly impossible for us to have it in the State before the end of the financial year, and to pay for it; consequently the Commissioner for Railways, Mr. George, waited on me and said, "How can I manage this?" I said, "There is only one way. It will mean that I shall be reported to the House; but I do not think the House will raise a great objection when I explain the intention." This £21,000 worth of stock was ordered. It had not reached the country on the 30th June; so the £21,000 was taken out of the railway revenue—seeing that the railway revenue had been debited with the amount for the year—and was placed to the credit of a trust account to pay for the stock when it arrived. Here is the correspondence; and I wish to say that the interview which the Auditor General says took place occurred in his imagination only. The first communication is from Mr. George to the Auditor General, asking whether he could provide a straightforward way out of the difficulty. The Auditor General sends the communication to the Under Treasurer, and mentions the everlasting and ever-recurrent "Form J." The Under Treasurer then writes to me on the subject, as follows:—

The only way that a vote can be provided for this purpose is by Form J, as suggested by the Auditor General; but inasmuch as the expenditure will take place during the currency of this financial year, the vote would lapse; and in accordance with the provisions of the Audit Act, the amount would have to be re-voted on the Estimates for next year. The Commissioner of Railways gives very good reasons why he wishes to take the money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund this year. The creation, however, of a suspense account, as suggested in paragraph 5, is not in accordance with the letter of the Act. Under the old Audit Act a suspense account was provided for, but the transactions were so abused that the Treasurer did not consider it advisable to adopt the principle when the present Audit Act was framed.

And the Under Treasurer makes this suggestion:—

A book entry, debiting the Consolidated Revenue and crediting a suspense account, which means that no cash passes, certainly places the Treasury in an unsatisfactory posi-

tion ; but as this appears to be a very special case, could not Cabinet instruct me at the end of the financial year to debit the amount to the Consolidated Revenue and credit the suspense account under trust funds, and then take out a fixed deposit with one of the banks on account of the trust fund? It seems to me that this is the only way of carrying out the object Mr. George, the Commissioner of Railways, has in view.

I put that to Cabinet. As a rule, Ministers do not care about publishing the views which they individually place before Cabinet; but this is what I said :—

First, I think the money was intended to keep our rolling-stock up to the standard, and to my mind it does not matter which department is short—carriages, engines, or trucks. Second, personally I think Mr. George's proposal a good one, which is to put this sum apart (as the goods will have been ordered) to pay for them on arrival. By this means the heaping up of debits next year will be avoided, and we shall have genuinely kept to our Estimates, and any profit on the railways will be clean. Therefore I will be pleased if Cabinet will consent to paragraph 2 of the Under Treasurer's suggestion.

Cabinet did consent, and the usual course was then followed. Now that is the truth with regard to the transaction; and while I know that I have offended against the Audit Act, I venture to say there is not a business man in this House who will not pardon my having broken that Act when my object was to keep our finances as clean as possible, and to show clearly the expenditure that ought to have been made from the railway accounts. Now we come to what to me is a rather painful paragraph in the Auditor General's report, paragraph 4 :—

I may mention that I was invited to attend a conference in the Colonial Treasurer's office in regard to this important matter, and there were present the Colonial Treasurer, the Commissioner of Railways, the Under Treasurer, and myself; and after the Commissioner of Railways had fully stated his case (verbally this time), I was asked by the Minister (Mr. Gardiner) what I had to say to that. I replied that I desired to have it all in writing. He then said, "Never mind about writing; I want your opinion." "Very well," I said, "you have asked for it verbally, and you shall have it." I then gave my opinion that the requirements of the Commissioner of Railways were illegal, being in direct contravention of the Audit Act. The Minister then replied in these words: "We don't want any of your b——y legal technicalities here."

Hon. members know what that hiatus suggests.

And this, I respectfully submit, is treating my office with contempt for simply discharging my duty in guarding the undoubted rights of the Legislature.

I have the Under Treasurer's and Mr. George's permission to state, and I make my own assertion, that never did we have a conference with the Auditor General on this question at all. I knew that I was to be reported to the House; and when I found that the matter was not mentioned at all in the Auditor General's report presented last Wednesday, I went to the Under Treasurer and said to him, "Go to the Auditor General with my compliments, and tell him to have that special report presented to Parliament, in order that he may be protected, no matter what opprobrium falls upon me." The Auditor General has presented that report, and I here say unhesitatingly that he has invented a conference which never took place. He has also invented or rather misquoted what may have been said, although it was not said in language so strong as he has indicated. The conference did not take place over this question, as stated in his report; but it did take place on another question. Probably the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse), and certainly the member for East Fremantle (Mr. J. J. Holmes), who were Commissioner for Railways, will remember that for years a case has been proceeding with regard to what power the Government have to sell sleepers; and the Auditor General and the Crown Solicitor hold the view that the proceeds of whatever is sold, *plus* the cost of truckage, should be paid into revenue, and the expenses of the sale debited to the department. Well, it can be easily seen that such a process would result in the heads of departments not troubling themselves at all about our old stock; in fact, it was for that reason that the change came about. We found that a man would purchase £1,000 worth of old rails; and he would say, "I want these shipped to Perth, or transhipped to some other place: I will pay you the expenses of that"—which were added to the cost of the sleepers, and the whole proceeds were paid into general revenue; but the expenses would be debited to the department of the Engineer for Existing Lines, or to some kindred department. The House can perceive the effect that

such a course, seeing all these departments are worked on percentages, would have on the heads of departments, an effect directly opposite to that which the Government wished it to have. On the 10th September, 1902, I wrote to the Under Treasurer :—

I to-day had an interview with the Auditor General, and he agrees that the railways, ourselves, and he should meet and thresh this matter out. You might arrange with Mr. George when he has a convenient period.

As a result of that, a conference did take place, attended by the Auditor General, the Under Treasurer, the Commissioner for Railways, and myself.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

THE TREASURER (continuing) : When the House adjourned, I was saying a conference had been arranged between the Auditor General, the Commissioner for Railways, the Under Treasurer, and myself; and that conference took place on the 14th of November, 1902. I say it is the only conference that has ever taken place between the four of us, and since my return from South Australia in January I venture to say the Auditor General has never been in the Treasurer's office. Probably some members of this House have had conferences with the Auditor General. The Commissioner for Railways and myself were prepared to state our case. All we could get from the Auditor General was the fact that he was the watch-dog of the public purse, or he was the brake that regulated the machinery of the State; that he was the man "on the box," or something of that kind; and the result that we came to was nothing definite. The result of the conference is embodied in this memorandum which I wrote :—

Auditor General and Commissioner for Railways had interview. Result: Commissioner for Railways to give a distinct case; I to ascertain the usage in the other colonies; Auditor General to state what provision in the Act blocks the way, and to suggest a safe course which would be an encouragement, not a deterrent, in getting rid of our old and useless material.

The member for East Fremantle (Mr. J. J. Holmes) will bear me out, and I think the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) also would if he were in his

seat, that this very action of the Auditor General was actually stopping all the officers of the Railway Department who were trying to get rid of old and useless stock. I have stated the case very fairly and distinctly upon which the ultimate decision was given, and which probably led to my expressing myself in fairly strong terms. The Under Treasurer wrote to the Auditor General :—

Will you now take action as necessary ?

The Auditor General in reply said :—

In order to enable me to comply with the request of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, it is necessary that the Commissioner of Railways should state in writing a distinct case, as promised at the interview.

He says in this report that he asked that a statement of the case should be made in writing. It is true that he did, but it had nothing to do with that report at all, because there was absolutely no necessity for anybody to do anything in the other question till the 23rd of February, whereas this actually took place in November. I remarked :—

The Auditor General must know why he gave his ruling (see page 7). Therefore he can give either the section of the Act or the Regulation under which he arrived at his decision.

Then he goes on to quote the case and brings it before Mr. Burnside, who practically agrees with the Auditor General. The latter next writes :—

I now forward the opinion which I have just obtained from the Crown Solicitor on the point raised in this correspondence, which you will observe supports my ruling in the matter. I may add that the only legitimate means to comply with the wishes of the Railway Department is to amend the Audit Act Regulations.

In this particular instance I do not care whether the Auditor General or the Crown Solicitor said it was wrong. There was no justification either in the Audit Act or the Regulations which enabled them to stop the sale of this material. The Under Treasurer then states what he thinks, and this is how I summed the question up :—

Let all parties agree as to the case upon which we are arguing, which I understand to be as follows :—The Treasury and the Railways contend that we can sell old sleepers and rails, and the proceeds, since they have been previously debited, can be credited to the Consolidated Revenue Account, but kept in suspense until the cost of delivery is ascertained, such cost of delivery, etc., to be

charged against the gross proceeds, after deducting which the net proceeds of the sale to be credited to revenue. The Auditor General and the Crown Solicitor claim that any expenditure in delivery should be charged against a Vote of Parliament, preferably construction purposes. I now want to know under what clause either of the Audit Act or the Regulations they arrive at their decision, because if their contention is correct an alteration must be made, as it is a direct bar to any effort being made to get rid of any of our old material (which does not improve by keeping), and in this way prevents us from selling it. The working of the railways is all done on average. If an officer's department is to be charged in the year's vote with all the expenses of shifting, carting, and handling old material sold, and for which he may have been paid and the proceeds gone to revenue, naturally it would swell the cost of the administration of his department and lead to probably scathing comments on his extravagant management. Naturally, therefore, he abstains from getting rid of his old material. The Government's object is to encourage men to cheaply and economically administer their departments, and not to have that administration penalised because they try to get rid of old and useless stock. If this is the case, then let it be submitted to the Crown Solicitor, and I will then, if he still says his ruling is correct, submit for confirmation to the Attorney General, and if necessary get the alteration of the Audit Act made.

After years of struggling, when I put this case and ask the Auditor General to subscribe to it he admits that it is the case for both sides; but he declines to subscribe to it, and unreservedly "climbs down." He says:—

I have again discussed this matter with the Under Treasurer, and have read your minute dated the 9th inst. I freely admit that the Government has the right or legal power to sell the old sleepers and rails in question. The proceeds of sale, as previously ruled by me, should (in full) be credited to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The cost of delivery should be charged to and paid by the purchaser, and the amount thereof credited to railway receipts. The cost of lifting the old sleepers and rails is, in my opinion, a legitimate debt against the Railway Vote, whether a sale has been effected or otherwise. The only object in carrying the proceeds of sale to a suspense account, I take it, would be to ascertain the freight charges, which should be known at the time. The whole question hinges upon the terms entered into at the time of sale, and each transaction should be dealt with separately. I may add that the Crown Solicitor is engaged at the Supreme Court, and consequently I have been unable to discuss the point with him.

This dispute has been going on for years, and the officers have put the question on

one side and said the sale of old material could not be done. I knew that, as a result of this stupidity, the sale of thousands of pounds worth of railway material, that could have been sold and that was deteriorating every day, had been blocked, and naturally I felt indignant. As a Minister of the Crown being constantly brought into contact with what the Government lose through red-tapeism and technicality and officers sheltering one another, I did feel indignant; and as to the expression I used then, I am not going to attempt to shelter myself at all. It has been suggested that I frequently used the slang word "bally." My comment, when the Auditor General brought that in to me, was this: "See what your damned technicalities have cost the country!" There are occasions which practically justify the use of language of that kind. There are some words that are more expressive and fit the point more exactly than probably the best English can do it; but no man likes to see those words afterwards in cold print, used against him. I say I did not use the words there, as attributed to me; but I do admit candidly that I used the other expressive word I have mentioned; and I do say now, taking the circumstances into consideration and knowing that the very clause had barred the sale of thousands of pounds worth of old stock, that I had a right to express myself in stronger language than one usually meets with in refined phraseology. A continuation of that report says:—

As the Colonial Treasurer is now my Minister—

I may inform the House that up till now I am not his Minister. No Minister controls him. He is the servant of this House and the servant of another place. What is below all this? The Premier, practically without consulting me, said: "I am going to put the Audit Department under you." Why? Because no Minister has probably complained in stronger terms of the Audit Department than I have. I may say that at present I have been the means, as far as possible up to date, of getting the Audit Department investigated by practically the best man obtainable in Australia, Mr. Percy Whitton; because he has a knowledge of all the Audit Departments of the various States. No matter whom the Auditor

General is placed under, he is still no Minister's servant. No Minister can control him. If I had used the words that are attributed to me, and I had controlled the Auditor General, then no Minister would have permitted those words to be made public in this way. It is not a fair thing for him to put in a remark like that, and allow it to go broadcast throughout the length and breadth of the land. I do not want to control the Audit Department, but if I did take control of it I should want to know that the officers were competent to carry out the work which is intrusted to them. Almost every page of the reports of the Public Service Commission contain reflections on the Audit Department of the State. These are the clean facts of the case. With regard to the interview, as I said before, the Under Treasurer and the Commissioner for Railways can tell you that the interview never took place. There was no necessity for an interview. I knew what I was doing, and I took the risk of being reported to Parliament. I was not afraid of having myself reported to Parliament, because I think Parliament only want us to do these things in a clean and businesslike way. When any Act is bound up too much with red tape—I admit, at the same time, that it is an unwise thing to give unlimited license—while there is behind it the censure of Parliament, then when I do such transactions and bring them straightforwardly before Parliament, I have nothing to fear from the consequences of the act. To show how I acted, and under what good faith I acted, on Wednesday I went to the Under Treasurer and said: "There is no mention of that £21,000 in the Auditor General's report. Go to the Auditor General and tell him to send in a special report to protect himself." The Auditor General sent in a special report, to protect himself—but I venture to say, trying all he could to stab me in the back and make me ridiculous in the eyes of the people of the State. Whatever expressions I used, they were the language of just indignation. To think this State has been worrying on under one continual effort of red-tapeism, makes one who has not been used to it rather annoyed. If one is occasionally forced to use certain language, that is no justification for

having it published far and wide. I ask the House to believe that I have told a straightforward and honest story. Behind that story is the supported admission of the Under Treasurer and Mr. George that this conference never took place, but that the circumstances of that conference refer to another thing, whereby the State was losing thousands of pounds of money. I have to thank the members of the House for permitting me to make this explanation.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SECOND DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous Thursday.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley):

It is no doubt gratifying to all sections of the community, on reading the Speech of His Excellency the Governor, to know that such good progress has been made in this State with our mining, pastoral, and agricultural industries. It appears to me from the tone of the Speech that the present Ministry are at least beginning to lose, I might almost call it, that want of confidence they have had for so long a time in the future welfare of the State. It appears to me that the opinions which they previously held with regard to the State, and which caused them to be known by many people as "croakers," is beginning fast to disappear. That they have not quite lost these pessimistic views is quite evident from the fact that they have not included in the public works policy that they are putting forward two works which have been asked for so long a time now—two most important works, namely the Esperance Railway and the Marble Bar Railway, works which undoubtedly, when constructed, will prove very great factors towards the future development of both the mining and agricultural industries. Any proposals that are laid before the House tending towards the improvement of our educational system will, I have no doubt, meet with the solid approval of all sections of the House, as also will the proposition already made for the foundation of a University in this State. It is satisfactory to hear that the Government intend making some reduction in those exorbitantly high rates of freight which hitherto were charged on goods going from Fremantle to the goldfields; but

in my opinion the Government should have gone a little farther and made some mention of the possibility in the near future of doing away with the present Interstate duties which we now collect under the sliding scale, and which in my opinion could be abolished without any serious loss to the Treasury, at the same time relieving the heavy burden from those people who have to bear it, and who we must acknowledge are least qualified of all people in the State to bear it. The Bills that are to be brought forward to amend the Constitution Act and electoral law will no doubt be received in this House gratefully; but I hope when these measures are brought before us it will be found they have been framed in such a manner as will insure some prospect of being approved of by members in another place. It appears to me that if these Bills are brought before this Chamber in anything like the same shape as they were brought before us last session, the consideration of them will be, to a great extent, a waste of time, because if there has been no change in the constitution of these Bills, in my opinion there is no prospect whatever of their becoming law.

THE PREMIER: Do you think they ought to become law?

MR. PIGOTT: If they were framed in the way that the hon. gentleman opposite could frame them, they could become law.

THE PREMIER: What are the objections?

MR. PIGOTT: The hon. member is going into detail: we will consider the details when the Bills are before us. I think the Factories Bill and the Early Closing Bill might well have been left out of the programme. The Premier might have taken his cue from that great object-lesson which was so lately demonstrated in the sister State of Victoria, and made up his mind that during this session no class legislation should be introduced. We are told that recourse will be had to the money market for a loan; and undoubtedly the only way to carry out a policy which includes any great public works is to raise loans. But when these moneys are raised I hope the Treasurer will bear in mind that the Savings Bank depositors have the first call upon them, and that he will, at the

first opportunity, repay to a most indulgent class of creditor those moneys which he found so conveniently at hand, and of which he availed himself so liberally in a time of financial difficulty. There is in the Speech one item which, to my mind, appears so vast in its possibilities as completely to overshadow all other subjects brought before us. There can be no doubt that if the idea of preferential trade which has been mooted in the old country is carried to its natural conclusion, it will result in binding together, with indestructible bonds, the mother country and the whole of the colonies. In the propositions laid down by that most eminent and most popular statesman, Mr. Chamberlain, a route is opened up to us which, if travelled by British people throughout the Empire, will at some future date lead them on to so magnificent a position as practically to place in their hands the future destinies of the world. I notice from the tenor of the Speech, and from the remarks of the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes), that the people of Western Australia are welcoming with open arms this proposal for preferential trade. In the other States, also, it has been said that the whole of the people of the Commonwealth will gladly welcome any proposition which will conduce to that end. But I consider the people of Australia will have to alter vastly their present ideas before the people of Great Britain or of other parts of the Empire can believe that Australia has any intention whatever of co-operating in such a manner. It appears to me that if the Australian people are welcoming these proposals, they have a peculiar way of showing their joy; for while we must acknowledge that one of the first stepping-stones towards preferential trade is for Britishers to set up protection against the rest of the world, and freedom of intercourse within the whole of the Empire, we have written on the first statute-book of our Federal Parliament an Immigration Restriction Act and a Tariff Act which are undoubtedly diametrically opposed to all the principles of freedom. That being so, I think it plain that Australia does not at present wish to enter into any scheme of preferential trade; and though in my opinion we are not now ready for such a scheme, I think the people of the Com-

monwealth will yet rise to the occasion, and that when the time comes they will shake off this horrible hypnotic influence of socialism which has so great and so complete a power over so many of our prominent politicians of to-day as to make them go so far as to forego their rights as men, to forget their principles, and to sacrifice their country. I should like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Government upon the satisfactory state of the railways of this country; and though I am not acquainted with the details of what has occurred, I know that a great meed of praise is due to the Commissioner, Mr. George. I should like to congratulate the Government also on the good resulting from the efforts of the gentlemen who form the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The trust has made many and good reforms, some of which, while I know them to be entirely in the interests and for the benefit of this State, are at the same time highly beneficial to the shipowners and the merchants of Western Australia; and I think this trust will do as good work in the future as in the past, so long as it has, as it certainly ought to have, the hearty support of members in both Houses of Parliament. Regarding the policy of the Government as declared in this Speech, I think there is little to complain of; but I think that policy might be improved, and if the Premier could have seen his way to include in his railway policy promises to construct more railways, if he could have included some proposal for the early abolition of the Interstate duties, and could have given to his policy—if I may be allowed to use the expression—one touch of "Irvineism," it would have been a policy fairly satisfactory to the majority of the people of this State.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanoona): I wish to congratulate the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott) upon his new position in the House (front Opposition bench). We welcome him to the House as the leading member of the Opposition, and hope that at an early date he will be shifted farther along the bench. But first, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker. I had not the pleasure of being present at the final sitting last session, when you came here immediately after your recovery from a long illness.

I now wish to join with others in congratulating you on your recovery, and hope that you will be able to attend, at any rate during the remainder of this session, to the duties of the office which you fill so well. This is a motion for an Address in reply to the Governor's Speech; and like the preceding speaker, I think it particularly unwise to occupy the time of the House in speaking now on legislative measures which we may have before us. We shall have many opportunities of discussing almost every subject we may think of great importance; and so it may be as well if we now confine our remarks as far as possible to administrative affairs, and also to any important matters outside of what we may well call legislative subjects. The first important point I have noted is that since Parliament prorogued, the Goldfields Water Scheme has been completed, so far as regards Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and Boulder; and I wish particularly to congratulate the Government on that achievement, because I have in this House been considered a strong opponent of that scheme, as I was for years on the goldfields, in fact ever since its initiation. Until a year ago I did not seriously think that the scheme would be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. It has surpassed my expectations; and I congratulate the Minister for Works on the event, and on what is perhaps more important than anything else, that the scheme was completed at a particularly opportune time, when a big drought was just commencing, and when, had it not been for the water scheme, a large section of the goldfields population must have suffered severely. Unfortunately, the scheme has not yet been a financial success, nor, so far as I am able to judge at present, have we any immediate prospect of its financial success; but so far it has done immense good, and I do not for a moment doubt it will be well appreciated in the future. But, as many members who spoke on the scheme anticipated, the collection of rates has called forth some opposition. I am one of those who greatly regret the remarks we heard on that subject at the last sitting from the member for York (Mr. Burges), when he represented that the people of the goldfields were refusing to pay rates for the water. The fact is his remarks applied to a very small meet-

ing held in one goldfields centre, and that by no means one of the most important centres, when a snatch majority of the people at the meeting declared that they would not pay any rates. I do not think I am unfair in saying that several of the speakers at that meeting who were particularly eloquent were never known to pay any rates for anything; and such a determination as they arrived at was only to be expected. But besides the resolution of that meeting, there is on the goldfields a strong feeling that, in addition to the working expenses and interest on the cost of the scheme, the goldfields people should not be asked to pay for sinking fund. That is a question which it will be remembered was fully discussed last session, and I was not one of those who were anxious that the goldfields people should not pay the sinking fund, but wished the scheme to pay its way. My reasons were: this is only one of the water schemes in this country, and we are likely to have many more. For instance, I think I am correct in saying that there is now a water scheme in Perth, and the people of Perth are expected to pay rates, not to cover interest only but sinking fund also. It is also intended to provide in the near future a water scheme for the Murchison; similar schemes may be started in other places; and if the people to be benefited do not pay sinking fund in addition to interest, then those particular schemes, which benefit only three or four sections of the community, will become burdens on the whole of this State. The position is that we are asked whether the cost of the scheme should come on the general rate of the country, or whether it ought to be a property tax. I am not sure what all the objections to this rate are on the goldfields; but so far as I can see it is not a particular burden with householders there, because the householders will take as much water as they have to pay for in rates. The people who have the strongest reason to complain are bankers, merchants, and shopkeepers—people who have a large amount of property and do not require much water. To me it appears that the burdens on the goldfields people are not very great. Of course, the question is arguable as to whether 1s. 6d. is a proper rate, or whether it should be

reduced to 1s. I am not in a position to offer an opinion on that question. I understand the figure charged in Perth is 1s.; the same is also charged at some places in Eastern Australia; at any rate, in New South Wales. It seems to me that if 1s. is charged in other places, we cannot fairly object to a charge of 1s. 6d. here. I am not able to say what figure should be fixed, but I am in accord with the Minister for Works when he says that the people who benefit particularly by this water ought to pay the greater portion of the expense. I think it was ungracious for those words to come from the member for York, the other day, seeing the class of the community he represents. We have had many public works in this State done for different sections of the community, but so far as I know the only section of any community in Australia who ever repudiated their liabilities were the farmers in Victoria. I was in Victoria in the beginning of the nineties at the starting of the great irrigation scheme, and at that time the farmers' land was increased greatly in value. They were pointing out how pleased they were that the Government had come to their assistance. But within the last eight or nine years a very large number of them have declared that they cannot pay the Government one shilling a thousand gallons; and people who are used to farming communities generally will not be surprised if farmers are the first to repudiate their financial responsibilities. As yet, however, the people on the goldfields have not said they are no longer prepared to pay for what is done for them. The first thing that we have before us, as being particularly prominent, is our financial position. We have had in this State, for the last seven or eight years at least, a perennial prosperity. Almost every year is better than the previous one. That has been particularly the case for the last three years. During that time our mining industry, our farming industry, our cattle and sheep, our pearling, and to some extent our timber industry have been in a particularly flourishing condition. [MEMBER: What about the price of meat?] I am not an authority on meat. I do know that those who have to deal with cattle and sheep in this State are in a particularly prosperous condi-

tion. But while these things have been going on and have been particularly pleasant to us, the reverse has taken place on the other side of Australia. There has been a great drought with a dearth of employment. The profits of all business people there have shrunk considerably, and the consequence has been that this State has been almost swamped with the large influx of people from the other side. The first thought which appears to me is that, although during the last two years we have been increasing our population at the rate of nearly 20,000 a year, this State has been able to absorb the greater bulk of those people; but while it has absorbed the population at a rate that probably never was exceeded by any other State or any other country, yet unfortunately we have not been able to absorb them all. [MEMBER: What about Canada?] Canada has only started to absorb the people. We do not know what the ultimate effect may be, but Canada surely cannot be compared to Australia. Canada has millions of acres of the most fertile land in the world: Australia has not. Australia so far as we know is habitable only along the coast, and we are not able to absorb all the people who come to our shores.

MR. JACOBY: We have plenty of good land in Western Australia.

MR. HASTIE: I should like the hon. member to say where it is.

MR. JACOBY: On the Collie and on the Southern Railway line, for instance.

MR. HASTIE: There has been, of late years, a very considerable settlement within the interior of Australia, and the result has been that when the inevitable drought came, practically all those people were ruined and most of them have cleared out. So far as experience shows, those places are not fit for permanent settlement. That being the case, we have to see that our industries are sufficient to employ all the people who come. We have given employment to a greater extent than any other State I know of; but people have come here so quickly that we have been unable to find employment for very many. It would be most difficult even to estimate how many people there are who cannot find employment here. Very many of those who came here were of the class who could

make employment for themselves, having some means to start with; but many who came did not belong to that class. They must have wages, they must have employment, and that is the particular class of people that this State cannot absorb largely. Besides that, on the goldfields and in other parts of the State several public works have been stopped. For instance, the Coolgardie Water Scheme has been brought to a conclusion, many people being deprived of employment there; and several railway works also have been completed, thus throwing many workers on the market. That has occurred in spite of the fact that almost every goldfield in the State showed an increase of men employed. Mining developments all over are on the increase, on almost every goldfield. The returns of gold are greatly increased, the volume of trade is increasing everywhere, and absolutely nowhere are the costs of mining increased. In spite of that, we have had far more workers than we could profitably employ. I have been a good deal about the metropolis, I have travelled on the goldfields and have spoken to workers and to business people there, and though the business people tell me the volume of trade has greatly increased, the workers tell me they have fewer opportunities of making a living.

MR. BURGESS: More workers have come in.

MR. HASTIE: That is the unfortunate thing.

MR. JACOBY: There is plenty of room for them.

MR. HASTIE: Plenty of room for what? Will the hon. member employ a larger number of extra people at the ordinary standard wages? If not, why say there is plenty of room? When people come in who are not in a position to strike out for themselves, they must get employment; and I want to know where they are to get employment. Business people tell me that although the volume of trade is greater, profits are less because there is far greater competition. I do not know what line the hon. member is in, but if he were in business about Perth, in which there was a specific amount of work to be done and other people came in and took part of it, he would not welcome them with open arms. The unemployed have been increasing. Recently

we have heard less about the unemployed because a large number of them are at present working on the new reticulation works, while others are engaged on the railway extension to Mt. Morgans; but these things must come to an end. [MR. FIGOTT: So will everything.] Every work does not come to an end. For instance, if you go pearling up North and send a dozen vessels to a certain bay, you cannot say that within six months these vessels will come to an end with pearling; but the construction of a railway must be finished within a certain time, and you cannot expect by that time that the development will have increased sufficiently to employ all those people who lose their positions through the construction coming to an end. When it was announced that there were a great number of unemployed in this State, we had very serious advice from some people as to how to employ them. The first advice was that we ought to reduce wages. That was kept up for some time, yet the unemployed cried stronger still. Then at the psychological moment we were inundated with suggestions from mining investors and speculators, who said that all we had to do was to assist them in getting cheaper labour, and they would find people who would throw millions of pounds into the country and give employment for everybody. They did not stop there, but went farther and deliberately misrepresented the position. They told us, although they knew they lied, that mining developments had stopped; that the Arbitration Act had immensely increased the expenses generally, principally in wages. They hypnotised the newspapers, and every Perth newspaper "barracked" for the position the mining speculators had taken up. They hypnotised the Premier, and the Premier would not take the trouble to look into the affair for himself, but believing the position to be as he heard from the speculators, he cried in the same direction. [MR. THOMAS: Yet you sit over there.] I do not see what my sitting here has to do with it. Probably the hon. member would like me to sit alongside of him; but if I did that I do not think my position would be made very much better; in fact, remembering the terribly melancholy speeches the member for Dundas preached to the House last year about

the impending ruin on the goldfields, that people would take away all the money invested in the Horseshoe and in the Boulder, if I joined that melancholy party it would not be any good.

MR. THOMAS: You will hear a repetition of those statements before you are many hours older.

MR. HASTIE: As far as the repetition goes, I give in to the hon. member. I was going to say how astonishingly easy it is to scare some people. People do not want facts. Collect a few figures, make up certain statistics, imagine some millionaire in England who is going to scatter broadcast any amount of money here, then imagine that one has authority for saying the capitalist will not spend money here now because things are dear on the goldfields—one has only to say this anywhere in Australia, and some people will be found to believe it. We have had experience of that in many of the other States of Australia and here too, and I believe we shall still have experience of it for some time to come. One of the unfortunate things in connection with this agitation has been to my mind the position taken up by the Arbitration Court. It was unfortunate because only within the last two years has the House decided that industrial disputes, like all other disputes, should be settled by a judicial tribunal. That Court has only been established about 18 months, and during that time many things have occurred that have prevented the Court from establishing regular sittings; yet during that period it has been subjected to a great deal more criticism than any other court within the State. Last year it will be remembered that certain actions by the then president, Mr. Moorhead, were severely criticised by people in the State and by very many connected with the party to which I belong. During that time, although there was great temptation to do so, I am glad to say no member in this House publicly expressed his opinion, nor has any one else ever gone so far as to publicly criticise the actions of that Court, at least not till within the last couple of months, when the Premier broke through the ordinary rule; and although he did not do it directly, in almost as many words, still he declared the actions of that Court to a large extent had caused the industries of this country

to become depressed. He told us the Court was really to blame in not seeing that the unemployed people had work, and he did so in such a way that his words had some influence with the Court. At that time there were about half-a-dozen cases pending, and if we consider the cases that were heard before the time of the Premier's speaking, and those dealt with immediately after the time he spoke, that gentleman will see what a great deal of influence he wields in the judicial minds within the State. [MEMBER: Rubbish!] I only state what occurs to me, and having looked into the reasons I believe the Premier's action in that matter was particularly unfortunate, and that to a large extent it changed the policy of the acting president of the Court. If the case had been as bad as the Premier stated, if the statements he made had been facts, and the effect of the actions of the court had been true, a great deal could have been said for that particular case; but the Premier has never quoted any authority, nor have any representative men in the State shown that his facts were right. The only one who has spoken on the matter has been the Premier, and when he was delivering his policy speech and found facts bearing on the subject, he quoted them: I am glad to say he read them out, and he replied to his first speech in the most effective way that any one could be expected to do. The Premier told us in his speech that principally through the actions of the Arbitration Court, mining had been made a very costly thing in Kalgoorlie, that the development work had been stopped and in some cases mines had been closed down. The idea I found was laughed at in Kalgoorlie. The Premier might have been fair enough to have put forward the other side of the ledger, which is this. In the first place wages have not been increased, they have been lowered; water which a year ago, and less than that, cost the mines 25s. to 40s. per 1,000 gallons—and members know how many thousand gallons are used on the mines per week—has been reduced from that figure to 6s. per 1,000 gallons. Firewood, which is extensively used, has been reduced from 14s. 6d. to 13s.; explosives have been reduced from £3 7s. 6d. to £2 5s. per ton. I saw by the report of the Mine Managers' Association

the other day that that body congratulated themselves on the fact that during the last 12 months there had been a considerable reduction in the freight on timber and machinery. All this has occurred in the Kalgoorlie belt. Everywhere on that belt the cost of mining has greatly decreased. If members look at the mining columns in the newspapers they will see that meeting after meeting of the large mining companies of this State have taken place in London, and in every case without exception the chairman of the meeting has congratulated the shareholders on the great decrease in cost and the increase of profit. The Arbitration Court has not increased the wages on the whole, and by no means has it increased wages in the Kalgoorlie district. Besides, I would impress on the House that wages are the least important factor in the development of our low-grade ores. There are many things more important, and far and away the most important thing is the management of these affairs. I do not wish to defend the Arbitration Court. It has proved unsatisfactory to many people. People have suffered from the decisions of that Court just as people suffer from the decisions of Judges who settle all other disputes. But this Court has done some very good work, and I believe it will do good work if its decisions are only respected as the decisions of other Courts are respected. We may have this Session an opportunity of discussing the power of the Court, but so far as I can see I am of opinion still that arbitration once being started here must not be treated as an experiment. It is not an experiment, but has come to stay. There has been a great deal of prosperity in this State, but at the same time people all declare that they do not have larger incomes than they had before. They have less profits from their business, and if work is started anywhere one hears the cry of depression. In spite of that fact we find many sections of the community particularly well pleased with themselves and the country. I refer to those who own land values in Perth. In spite of all the depression, these land values increase, and continue to increase to almost phenomenal rates. They are increasing not on account of the fact that the land about Perth is owned by deserving or good men, but on account of the increase in the

population. An increase of population is a good thing. It may be that an increase of any kind of population is good enough for, say, a farming community, or another community where people are expected to accept small wages, but population is not good for a country unless that country can find the people in work. But any kind of population is good enough for those who own land values in the cities, especially in the metropolis. The particular time when land values are increasing ought to be a good time for the State to get some portion of these values. This is the only State, as far as I know, which has not a land tax.

MR. BURGESS: You give the land away here.

MR. HASTIE: If the people have got land cheap, they are all the better able to pay taxation on it. That is a perfectly good argument from the member for York, for which I thank him. In every other country there is direct taxation, and many of our farmers who revel in wealth, and other people who are wealthy, should have a share of it here. [MEMBERS: Where are they?] I do not think any of those members who interject require to apply to me. If to-morrow morning they will only consult their mirrors they will not look very far astray. If we had land taxation in this State, the only possible way to levy that taxation would be on the value of the land. It is too late in the day to think of taxing the improvements on land. We must tax the increased value of the land. I am glad to notice that during the last six months many roads boards have taken the opportunity, which we gave them last session, to levy taxation on unimproved land values. I hope that system will increase, but that will not be sufficient. We must have general land taxation, not for the purpose of getting money only, but because it will tend to break up large estates. We have in this State, in proportion to the population, as many large estates as there are anywhere else. Especially would a land tax be useful in assisting us to get a share of the value of the Midland Railway. That is a concession which everyone will agree has blocked settlement in a really good portion of Western Australia; and no genius has yet suggested any plan by which the

people can get the land for a fair price, unless we tax land values.

MR. JACOBY: The roads boards are now rating the lands on the unimproved value.

MR. HASTIE: But they do not rate them sufficiently. There are not many roads boards near the Midland concession.

MR. JACOBY: All through it.

MR. HASTIE: Then I hope the Minister for Works will insist that those roads boards levy sufficiently heavy rates.

MR. JACOBY: They must be fair.

MR. HASTIE: I wish to speak of one or two interesting experiments during the last twelve months. One was the establishment of a State hotel at Gwalia. During my travels in the north-east I never got so far as Gwalia; but I have been assured by many who have frequently visited that place that they are much pleased with the experiment; that at the hotel one can depend on getting good liquor; and about the only complaints I have ever heard are that one still has to pay a shilling for some kinds of drink and is not served by a barmaid. But in spite of these drawbacks, I believe the experiment has "caught on" particularly well. Another experiment was the erection of an accommodation house at the Yalingup Caves. Members will recollect that when the item was passed, I and many others opposed it because we believed that the money could be better invested elsewhere; that the sum was too large to be devoted to that place alone. Since that time the accommodation house has been built; and I believe it would be open now if the season were propitious. I have recently been informed by a member of the Caves Board that the board intend applying for a license to sell liquor; and I hope the Government will agree to that request. I have visited the caves; I have seen many others who have been there; they all assure me that when visiting the caves they invariably felt very thirsty; and if this accommodation house is not authorised to sell liquor some one else will; so there is a very good opportunity for the State to get the profit which will result from that traffic. I hope the Premier will add this to his other experiments. If he were here I should ask him to try another experiment in which I feel many members would back him up—to raise the salaries of

members of Parliament. Speaking on that question to-night, the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) pointed out that some Labour members believed it impossible for a member of Parliament to live well on £200 a year. I am one of those; and personally I feel that if Parliament is to be conducted in anything like the style of the past, and if we are to induce men to spend sufficient time here to assist effectively in the legislation of the country, an increase of salaries is absolutely necessary.

MR. JACOBY: Is that why you want land value taxation?

MR. HASTIE: I do not know exactly where the proceeds of such taxation would go; but I am doubtful whether there would be on the whole an increase in the expenditure of the State if members of Parliament were paid higher salaries. I hope that during this Session the House will have an opportunity of voting on such a proposal; in fact, I anticipate that something like a requisition or petition, signed by a majority of the members of this House, will induce the Government to give us an opportunity of passing a vote in its favour. One pleasant feature of last year's history is that we have not resumed the old and easy policy of borrowing money. We have had no loan except the half million that the Treasurer raised locally. And yet, during the year, from last year's and the previous year's surpluses, about 60 miles of railway is being constructed out of revenue, showing that this State at least can almost entirely run its business without borrowing money from outside. [MR. PIGOTT: With the help of the Savings Bank.] And I believe the Treasurer will see that the money borrowed from the Savings Bank is not repaid from loan, but out of the revenue he collects. Last year we had before us in this House a Dividend Duty Act Amendment Bill, a measure opposed by a few inside and many outside the House, who told us that the country would be ruined if we dared to collect a duty on dividends; but we gave the Treasurer power to collect that duty upon what we considered to be a fair basis, and instead of the harm which the member for Dundas so often anticipated, the Treasurer has been able to get far more money than even he expected.

MR. THOMAS: Quote something that I said; not what you imagine.

MR. HASTIE: Before the hon. member speaks, I will look up *Hansard* and quote some of the many remarks he made. [MR. THOMAS: You are welcome.] During the session we shall be called upon to reconsider some of the measures brought before us last session, some important Bills which many good people then told us were brought forward too hurriedly. They told us that if such measures were only put off till next year the country would be able to consider them. [MR. THOMAS: Who are "us"?] The members who voted for those measures. If I rightly recollect, the member for Dundas assisted materially in getting them through this House. We were told by most of the newspapers, by members of the Upper House and of this House, that if we delayed the measures for a year the time would then be more ripe for their consideration. I refer to such measures as the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, the Electoral Bill, the Factories Bill, the Bread Bill, the Land Act Amendment Bill, and I think, the Rabbit Bill. For these measures we were assured the country was not then ripe. Will members say whether the country is any riper for them now than it was then? The fact is that all those reasons given us then were simply excuses for delay. The country wanted the measures then, and it wants them now. We shall soon have an opportunity of voting for them; and I feel certain this House will support them with even greater unanimity than it exhibited last year. Amongst the Bills I have noted is the Jury Act Amendment Bill. I hope the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) will not delay in giving notice of that particularly useful measure, which if introduced will no doubt become law at an early date. The Governor's Speech refers to several railways which it is intended to make. For some time past we have noticed in the newspapers, nearly every day, that the Minister for Lands has been going about the country; and if he did not promise a railway to all he met, he did not tell them he would not give it to them. He raised their expectations to a high pitch, and those expectations have been to some extent realised in the Governor's Speech. But there is this

peculiarity. All the proposed railways are very small. If a projected railway is of any size, then there is some reason stated for getting estimates and for delaying the matter to permit of mature consideration. But if it is a small railway, the Government do not seem to hesitate long. We have a line proposed from Collie, but unfortunately the Government do not state exactly where the line is to terminate, and the consequence is that three or four sections of the people in the Collie district are not able to sleep at night. They spend most of their time watching their neighbours and trying to see that the other fellows do not score a point upon them. If the Minister for Lands, who seems to have arranged for this line, would only carry the project a little farther and tell the people that the railway cannot be constructed until those concerned are agreed, then this House would be saved much trouble. As it is, the people of the district will have to spend all their savings on the deputations they send to Perth to "barrack" for their rights. Then there is in the Speech some reference to the Jandakot Railway—a line which is, I understand, believed in by some people in Fremantle, and also by some of the most extraordinary men I have met in this State. If one happens to see a man from Jandakot or one who has interests there, and one says to him, "You don't think much of your line," one has to run for one's life; because there is no man from Jandakot who would for a moment consider anyone to be sane who dared to suggest that Jandakot is not the centre of the universe. The proposed railways are all small. I do not hear much of the Collie-Goldfields line; we do not hear a word of the Esperance line; nor have we heard much lately of the line to Lawlers, although some reference is made to it in the Speech; and there is but little said about the line of which we have heard so much, from Port Hedland to Pilbarra. Personally I much regret that something better is not intended. I remember in this House last year and the year before stating that if the stories of the scarcity of timber and stores and the want of convenience generally could be proved, the construction of that line was of far greater importance than that of any

other in this State. I am glad the line is being justified; and if what we have been told about it turn out to be anything like true, I personally shall do my best to see that Pilbarra gets its communication. In fact, while I am protected within this House, I will dare to submit that the Pilbarra line is of even greater importance than the line to Jandakot itself. The member for Dundas interjected a few minutes ago that it was a pity I did not assist him to get the Esperance line. Last year I did assist him; the year before last I did so. During those two years the hon. member, before bringing forward his motions, consulted the other goldfields members here. We gave him a free hand; but he always consulted us. This year he has determined that he will go "on his own," and he gives notice of a particularly complicated motion, apparently with a desire to show the goldfields people that he is not afraid; that he is a man who will play a lone hand. But he goes farther, and deliberately starts in this House the old idea of railway log-rolling. He gives notice of a motion that one railway is contingent on another railway.

MR. THOMAS: Is the hon. member in order in discussing a motion which has been put on the Notice Paper for discussion at a later stage in this Session?

THE SPEAKER: No.

MR. HASTIE: I beg the hon. member's pardon. I am not discussing the motion; I am referring to the hon. member's starting log-rolling by declaring that one railway is contingent upon another railway. That is the first stage. The second is that the hon. member goes to the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Isdell), and says, "To get the Transcontinental Railway, vote for the Esperance Railway." Then the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond), although he is sincere enough to sit on the Labour benches, declares we must vote for the Jandakot Railway. If the tactics of the member for Dundas continue, I am afraid that even the member for South Fremantle will be demoralised enough to go in the same direction. The thing has taken place in every other State in the Commonwealth. [MEMBER: Are you speaking for your party?] I don't speak for my party. I speak as an individual, and I support every railway that I think ought

to be built. I have voted for the Esperance Railway, and shall do so again ; but I shall not be a party to blocking all other legislation because I cannot secure that line. I should like to support the Transcontinental line, but I fear the enthusiastic supporters of that railway are not likely to have their wishes realised for some time. I am glad to see that in the Governor's Speech one definite proposal is made, that we should at least guarantee that we lay a railway of 4 feet 8½ inch gauge from the coast to Kalgoorlie. Everywhere I have spoken on the subject I have contended that we must take up that attitude. No Federal Government will consent to build a Transcontinental Railway and allow the gauge to be broken on the goldfields. This State wants a railway to the East, and this State must prepare by laying a good gauge. I think we may take it for granted that the standard gauge will be adopted. [Interjection.] It is the standard gauge of the world, and until the member for South Fremantle interjected, I was about to say I had not met with a sensible person who raised any objection to it. During the last six months I have, in Perth, on the goldfields, and elsewhere, been pointing out a number of dangers which may be anticipated from the Commonwealth. Members will recollect that while I have been a member of this House I have shown that I was a strong federalist ; no one would suspect me of being anything else ; but I am one of those who do not believe that the Federal Parliament is composed of men who are wiser or better than the ordinary run of people here : therefore I do not think it is wise that they should have all power. Federation is good up to a certain extent, but beyond that it is always bad. For instance, eight or nine months ago it was seriously proposed that we should federalise the debts of the States. A very good idea at first sight, but what does it mean ? It is said that the Federal Treasurer should take over all the State debts, and those who are most anxious that this should be done are the representatives of States that have many debts and whose credit is particularly bad. When they are asked by the Federal authorities to say under what conditions they should hand over their debts, they

say they should hand them over unconditionally. Apparently their object is that the States Treasurers should hand over their debts, to have a clean sheet so that they may begin again to get into farther debt. Is that desirable ? I understand that of all States in the Commonwealth, this is the only one that has got a sinking fund. At present our credit is particularly good ; and if our debts were federalised the same as the others, no doubt the credit of the Commonwealth would be to a large extent improved. The great danger is that if the debts were handed over to the Federal Treasurer, the State Treasurers would continue to borrow more money, and the last condition of Australia would be worse than the first. No one has suggested any means by which States could be prevented from going farther into debt, no more than individuals could be prevented. I believe there is a very great danger, if we seriously consider the question of joining the other States, in this respect. Besides, if our debts were handed over, the Commonwealth authorities would say, very fairly too, "If we have to pay the interest on your debts, we must have charge of your principal means of revenue." And next they would ask for would be our railways. Probably the majority of the people in Australia are in favour of the railways being regulated entirely from the centre of the Commonwealth. That may be good enough for Eastern Australia, but how would it suit the West ? Do you think the people in and about Melbourne and Sydney, their representatives and those who represent the other States, are so unselfish that they will allow a comparatively undeveloped State like this to get more railway communication than they get for themselves ? I doubt it. Until I have some reason for believing that the people there are better men than we have here, I believe the danger I have indicated is too much for us to undertake. There is another question that is somewhat remote, but one that we should not lose sight of, because within the next three years we may have it brought seriously before us. That is what is known as the book-keeping system. At present all the customs duties are collected by the Federal Treasurer, who keeps a note of the duties derived from each State. The Treasurer deducts all

the expenses of the collection, and pays back the balance to the State. That system was adopted, not because it was considered the best, not because it was the most popular system, but because it was insisted upon by some of the people of New South Wales, who were afraid that if any other basis were accepted the Victorians would have the better of them. The book-keeping system was adopted very tentatively, and it was to continue for five years after the imposition of the uniform duties; and after that the Commonwealth was to continue or to alter the system as it wished. After the first year of uniform duties, Sir George Turner, the Commonwealth Treasurer, issued a statement in which he said that if those duties were distributed on a population basis instead of by the book-keeping system, Western Australia would have got £638,000 of revenue less than she actually received, and that revenue would have been distributed among the other States; £345,000 to Victoria, down to £11,000 for Tasmania. The book-keeping system will expire three years from the 8th of October next. Unfortunately this State is not in a position to effectually protest. I have mentioned this danger in several places, and again I take the opportunity of bringing it before the House, because I think that if we do not show we are willing and anxious and able as far as we can to look after our own interests, we cannot expect that other people in the Commonwealth will deal with us as generously as we wish. I have to thank the House for its kindness in listening to me so long. We shall have very many discussions on all sorts of subjects during this Session. Again I have to say I am particularly glad that this State is continuing in its prosperity. I believe its prosperity will continue to increase, but it will increase only if we do not continue to inundate it with this tremendous influx of population. Hitherto we have kept up a very high standard of living, and a high standard of remuneration in every line of work or business. That will continue, but it will continue only if people elsewhere are discouraged from coming here to inundate us.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): I did not come prepared to speak this evening on the Address-in-Reply; but as there seems to be consid-

erable reticence among members, I will fill the breach. I will dispense with the preliminaries that are usual in speaking on the Address-in-Reply. With reference to the proposed new trade relations between the mother country and the States, territories, and colonies of the Empire, I welcome the proposal with great pleasure. I am glad also that my friend the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott) approves of the suggestion, but he does not appear to approve of the details, which details none of us yet know anything about. The hon. member went into the question of the Commonwealth Tariff. That is a question for the Commonwealth Parliament, and I do not think any speeches in this House will affect the matter. But I think it will be found that if we do come to an agreement with the mother country, and with the other territories of the Empire, the Commonwealth Tariff will not be interfered with. That tariff will stand as it is against the mother country and against our sister States, but I believe an increased duty will be placed on all goods coming from foreign sources. So that, if my view be correct, there is no occasion for us to discuss the question of universal free-trade. With reference to a railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta, there is one little matter I would like to mention. Some months ago a distinguished South Australian legislator passed through Fremantle on his way to England, and at that time he was interviewed by a member of the Press, and made a boast that he was a distinct opponent of our Transcontinental line. This gentleman said that the South Australian Government dare not agree to it, or that he (Mr. Darling, who was the gentleman in question) would turn the South Australian Government out of office. I happen to have known that gentleman for many years, and I know that he is in the habit of making boasts of that description, and I believe that statement was made by Mr. Darling to a member of the Press here. Mr. Darling came back a few days ago, and in Adelaide he has stated that he never made the statement which was attributed to him by the member of the Press here; still I am prepared to believe the gentleman of the Press. Mr. Darling has been known to me for many years, and I may

tell members that at the time of the Broken Hill strike, Mr. Darling told me that he believed he was born into the world for the purpose of killing trades unionism. I told him at the time that he had taken a big contract on hand; and we have seen that trades unionism has increased in South Australia and all over Australia ever since. From what I know of politics in South Australia, there is no possible chance of Mr. Darling ever becoming the leader of a Government in that State; so that we have nothing to fear from Mr. Darling. We want to conciliate and make friends with the Ministry in South Australia and also with the people of that State, and not trouble about Mr. Darling and his boasts. With reference to the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme, I confess I would like to see some greater despatch in regard to the reticulation. I have no doubt the Minister for Works and his subordinates are doing all they can in the matter, but it is a very important question, and as the summer will be on us again in a few months, it will be a pity if the reticulation is not forward enough so that the scheme will bring in the revenue which is desired. In connection with this scheme I would like to see something done for the future management of it. I trust we shall not have a proposal for the formation of a trust. The member for Kanowna when speaking to-night referred to the failure of farmers in Victoria to pay up for the benefits they had received through a water supply. The water supply in Victoria was under the trust system, and I may say that trusts will not, if they can possibly avoid it, rate themselves and make themselves pay a proper return for benefits received. The Coolgardie Water Scheme is a business proposition and should be conducted on business principles. I do not believe with the member for Kanowna that this scheme should not be made to pay a sinking fund. The circumstances all point clearly to the intention to establish a sinking fund.

MR. PURKISS: The member for Kanowna stated the reverse.

MR. DIAMOND: Then I withdraw what I have said about it. I would like to see the meter system, and a certain price charged to cover management,

expenses, interest, and sinking fund. With reference to the Constitution Amendment Bill and the Electoral Bill, I believe every member of the House at the general election was returned pledged to bring about an alteration of the Constitution and a redistribution of seats; and I trust the Government will try, with our assistance, to fulfil these pledges to the people before the House rises.

MR. THOMAS: The same measure as last session.

MR. DIAMOND: At this stage I cannot go into details of that description. If the hon. member has amendments to make I am prepared to discuss them with him. With reference to railway extensions, the member for Kanowna was unnecessarily unjust and severe on that pet lamb of ours, the little line from Woodmans Point to Armadale. The remarks disclosed something in the member for Kanowna that I had never noticed before. I had never known the member for Kanowna to talk on a subject of which he knew nothing. The hon. member evidently knows nothing about the country and the settlement which is going on in the district referred to. The hon. member says nothing about the lines which are proposed to open up the country to create settlement, but he condemns a line which is to assist deserving people who have been there for years spending their money and labour, and who now want communication to make their operations a success. It will be a cruel wrong for the House to refuse this communication. I regret that the Government do not say they will ask Parliament to sanction an extension of the existing railway from Woodmans Point to Jandakot. The words "to Jandakot" are not to be found in the Speech, and that is the reason why I have shifted my seat a little farther away from where I used to sit. I am much disappointed at this omission in the Speech, but I trust the Government, before the session is ended, will see the error of their ways and the injustice they are doing to settlers, and give them relief. With reference to water supply, this is a matter that requires early and earnest attention. From our experience in Australia I say that any system of artesian bores is only worthy of the attention of

school boys. We have a large range of hills and catchment areas, and a distance of 10 or 20 miles to secure a system of gravitation is a mere bagatelle. When I was in Melbourne some years ago they were bringing water from the Yan Yean, 42 miles away, and they have to go still farther now, to the Watts River. Why should we not go to the Darling Range and bring water down by a system of gravitation? The first outlay is a mere bagatelle compared with the continual pumping which is required with boring schemes. The water supply for Fremantle is only a makeshift, the pumping scheme for Perth is only a makeshift, and while nature has given us suitable places in which to make dams, still we have engineers who are proposing to obtain artesian water. No such thing as true artesian water is to be obtained here: it is mere drainage from the hills. With reference to the question of education, I think we can afford to wait a good many years for a University. As to secondary schools, I would like to see something of that sort done, but it must not be forgotten that we have a fairly good system of technical education now. There are boards for technical education purposes, and there are night schools. I have the honour of a seat on the board of the technical school in Fremantle, and if members will come to Fremantle they will see classes at work which will surprise them. The same thing is going on in Perth and elsewhere, but in addition to that we might expend something to provide secondary education. However, we should not expend anything on a University for some years to come. The member for West Kimberley in his remarks was very severe on the restrictions of immigrants bound by agreement. The laws of the Commonwealth say that men must not be brought to Australia under agreement to work. In the celebrated case of the hatters, the men were brought to Australia under distinct agreements to work in the Commonwealth, which is against the laws of the Commonwealth. One matter referred to by the member for Kanowna to-night, was the question of payment of members, and I have no hesitation in saying that the present remuneration of members of the House is not sufficient. If members of the Lower Houses in South Australia

and Victoria receive £300 a year for their services, that amount is not too much for members of this House to receive. Members of the Labour party are not properly paid. Those men who come from hundreds of miles away in the bush are not properly remunerated, because they cannot follow their ordinary avocation. I can follow my avocation in Fremantle and still attend to my duties in this House, therefore I am not speaking for myself: as far as I am concerned, the remuneration could be wiped out. I say the members of the Labour party are not properly remunerated, and if a motion is brought forward to increase the amount of remuneration, I shall vote for it. I shall support the Address-in-Reply, reserving to myself the right to criticise the measures as they are brought before the House.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan): It is rather depressing to find that so early in a Session we have so few members present to represent their constituencies; and I fancy that if the various electors had an opportunity of looking into this Chamber to-night, in this second sitting in the third Session, they would consider the time had come for the election of a more energetic set of representatives, and for the decease of this apparently very tired Parliament. Though I do not hope that the vigorous scenes which took place here during the first session of this Parliament will be repeated, still I think it fitting that the discussions should be listened to by a larger number of members than has hitherto attended. I join with others in congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, upon your restoration to health; and I trust you will be able to complete your duties this Session in full vigour as of yore. I think we may congratulate ourselves that the British Government has made such an excellent choice in sending us—and this I believe is a new departure—a naval representative of the King, in the person of Sir Frederick Bedford. If there is one thing rendered clear by the debates in the Federal Parliament, it is that Australia should be more fully seized of the importance of the navy to our existence as an Empire; and the policy recently pursued of appointing naval Governors is one to be commended for the opportunity it gives for our instruction by such officers. I also join with other members

and with the Government in welcoming the breaking of new ground by Mr. Chamberlain in connection with the proposal for preferential trade. I should have thought we might have achieved the same result by perhaps a slower process and a less violent upheaval than appears to be proposed, and without going to the extent of making a complete change in the fiscal policy of the old country. Treaties for preferential trade in various items might gradually have been concluded with the various self-governing colonies, without the complication and the tremendous fiscal fight that will probably be unavoidable. However, whatever view British electors may take of preferential trade, there can be no question that it would largely benefit the colonies; and I think the Government are to be commended for mentioning this matter in the Speech, and giving some degree of that moral support which is evidently so much needed. I am not in accord with the reference in the Speech to the proposed construction of the first section of the Transcontinental Railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. The member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) has referred to the important question to be decided in the Federal Parliament as to the method to be observed in the distribution of the Federal revenue at the end of the book-keeping period; and upon that, it is argued, depends the prosperity of our own Treasury. If, as was foreshadowed at the Conventions, a distribution is adopted on a population basis, the loss will be so heavy that it will be absolutely impossible, if the same conditions exist then as exist now, for this State to continue in the Federation; and I do not wish us to be placed under any obligation to the Federal Government in the matter of the Transcontinental Railway which would give the Federal Parliament an excuse for disobliging us in another matter. If they are given an opportunity of pointing to the construction of the Transcontinental Railway—as a result of Federation, and of saying, “Now that we have given you this, you can surely allow the Federal Treasurer to distribute your revenue on a population basis,” that would be exceedingly disastrous for this country; and if there be any cloud that overshadows our future, that is the cloud

—the question of the redistribution of the revenue at the end of the book-keeping period. It is well that this matter should be referred to in order to awaken the public mind to the danger. We entered light-heartedly into Federation without looking too closely to the cost; and unless the people of this State be aroused, the danger is serious. In the Federal elections which are to take place within the next few months, I trust this subject will be thoroughly threshed out, and its importance impressed upon all candidates. I am glad to see there appears to be justification for the extension of the railway from Morgans. I hope the returns from Laverton will justify that extension, and even if they are not so large as may be wished, I think we may safely take the risk and continue extending these main goldfields lines. I congratulate the Government on the decision to undertake the construction of the Collic to Great Southern line; and I look forward to that as a work which will ultimately bring to this State a large increase of settlement. The Minister for Lands appears to have undertaken a very vigorous campaign throughout the agricultural districts; and I am glad that the selection of a goldfields member for that portfolio has so far proved successful. I trust the result will be that the strong antagonism which did exist on the fields towards the agricultural districts will be minimised, and that the agricultural districts will secure from the fields a large number of settlers who possess farming experience. I would suggest that the Government expend a few hundreds in more adequately advertising our agricultural lands in the Eastern States and elsewhere. I believe some objection to this was made by members of the Government, who thought it would be somewhat unfederal to endeavour to attract population from other States. But I would point out that Queensland has already done this by advertising largely in Victorian and South Australian newspapers. We have room here for an enormous extension of our agricultural industries; and I believe we can attract a considerable number of people from other parts of Australia if we take adequate means to acquaint them with our resources. Mention was made to-night of the proposed

line from Port Hedland to Pilbarra; and though I am not sufficiently acquainted with the district, or with such facts as would justify one in coming to a definite decision on the point, I can assure the Government that if the results of the investigation now being made are at all satisfactory, or give any degree of fair promise, I shall be glad to support the construction, at the earliest possible date, of at least a section of that line. Mention has been made to-night of the proposed line from Armadale to Fremantle *via* Jandakot; and though we all recognise that this will be to some extent an agricultural line which will assist a district that is capable of intense culture, and will support a large number of producers to the acre, we have also to remember that the line is to some extent needed for railway purposes; and when later on we have the proposal laid before us, I think members will not hesitate to agree to its construction, largely because of its value for railway working purposes. But I shall certainly object to any attempt to make a dead end of that line by landing it in the middle of Jandakot. It would be impossible for such a cockspur to pay; and after constructing it and working it for a year or two, the Government could then say that the result had not been satisfactory, and that they did not propose to extend it. If the line is at all justified, its extension to the South-Western Railway is absolutely necessary. That means a very small expenditure; it would open up a fair area of Government agricultural land, and would serve a large number of small settlers. But this cannot be unless the junction is made with the South-Western line. The route has to be settled; but I have every confidence that the line which will serve the great mass of settlers—the route to Armadale—will be adopted. I am pleased that mention has been made of this line in the Speech, but I regret that, like so many other items, it is left suspended, as it were, in mid air, and not promised so definitely as some members in favour of such proposals would like. I wish to refer to another railway, which has caused considerable trouble to this country. The Government have recently taken the extraordinary course of subsidising a line of steamers between Fremantle and Geraldton. I think there can be no doubt

whatever that the object of their so doing was to injure in some way the Midland Railway Company. The time has arrived when some definite conclusion should be arrived at as to this company. Either we should distinctly decide to purchase their line—and if we are to purchase it we shall, I presume, have to pay for it—or, on the other hand, the Government should definitely make up their minds that it is not their intention to purchase, and then they should vigorously enforce the conditions of the agreement with the company, and some endeavour should be made to get the company to institute a more vigorous land policy. [MR. HASTIE: Levy a land tax.] That is now being done through the roads boards. But as to the railway itself, I do not think much exception can be taken to the manner in which the line is worked; and for my part, if it were not for the land policy of the company, I should not be inclined to interfere with this railway, because it is a railway advantageously worked, giving fair satisfaction, as far as I can ascertain from the people who use it, and it is worked at a cost per train mile far lower than that of our Government lines. It would be useful if that line were even to remain in the hands of the private company, to be a check on the working of the Government railways. There must be something radically wrong when we find a railway in a comparatively sparsely-populated district able to yield a far better return at a far lower cost than Government lines running in similar country. I think that owing to the various complications which have occurred in our dealing with this company, we are rather inclined to go to the extreme in our condemnation of the management. It is to be remembered that the gentleman who now controls that line, Mr. Brounlie, had a most difficult position to fill when he came here. However we may disagree with the land policy of the company, we must compliment him on making a considerable success of affairs which he found to be in a mess when he came here. I think the time will soon arrive when the line will be out of the hands of a receiver, and the company will be able to develop these lands, and perhaps they may adopt a policy of land settlement from which we may take some hints. I take it that, provided some vigorous

attempt is made by the company to develop this land, it need not expect much interference from the Government, or the Parliament, or the country. I should like to draw the attention of the Minister for Lands to the very considerable inconvenience to which he is putting a large number of settlers who have applied for small blocks on the Midland Company's concession. It is necessary for approval to be obtained from the Government before these grants can be issued. In the case I have in my mind, a farmer who has cleared his land, built his house, and got his first crop in, has not yet been able to get his Government grant. A considerable number of small applications have been made, and the Government have refused to issue the grants. The Government may have injured or bothered the company to a serious extent, but they bothered the settlers much more. It matters not to us whether the settlers are going on the Government ground or the Midland Company's ground. I trust the Minister will look into this matter, and see if steps cannot be taken to put it right. If large grants were being applied for and large estates were being built up within the Midland Company's concession, then perhaps there might be some justification for the action of the Government; but I think I am right in saying that the largest area applied for does not exceed 300 acres. I trust my reference to the matter will result in its being placed in a better position than it has occupied up to the present. I wish to refer briefly to one or two other matters, particularly secondary education. I am in sympathy with the Government in connection with their proposal to endow a University, but I cannot say I agree with them in their proposal to establish secondary schools. The system of primary education has not yet been sufficiently extended in this State; and even if it had been and the time were ripe for introducing a secondary system, that system would be applicable only to the large centres of population, and the great mass of the people could not reap any benefit from it. I therefore think that if it is found necessary to go in for a system of education, we may go to the extent of assisting those secondary schools already established, and do this by subsidy or grant

or some other means; but I should prefer that secondary schools, which if they are to be established will run into very considerable expense, shall be left in the hands of private people; because if the Government undertake a scheme of that description, it is not certain they can make such a success as if the schools were left in private hands. It could only be applied to populous districts, and it would be an injustice to ask the whole State to bear the burden of giving higher education to a favoured few in the metropolis. I intend, therefore, to oppose the introduction of a system of secondary education. On the whole, the Opposition are placed in the happy position that they are generally in accord with most of the items of the Speech. Though we will not sacrifice our right to criticise, and to criticise strongly, yet I think that as far as a good deal of the policy is concerned, we will be able to lend the Government some assistance in carrying it into effect. I will not say anything about things which are not in the Speech and might have been put there, and upon which we hold very strong views on this side of the House; but certainly, as far as the Speech itself goes, it is to a large extent satisfactory to many members on this (Opposition) side of the House. We can all congratulate ourselves on the continued prosperity of the country. In whatever direction we look, prosperity seems to be promised to us. There is no cloud on our view, as far as can be ascertained, outside of our anticipated trouble in connection with the Federal revenue; and I think we may congratulate the Government, the Treasurer, and the country on the very satisfactory state of the revenue which has been foreshadowed.

On motion by Mr. A. E. THOMAS, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9-53 o'clock, until the next day.
