

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 18th July, 1907.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

REPORT—STANDING ORDERS REVISION.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to present the report of the Standing Orders Committee, made in accordance with a resolution passed during last session. Copies will be placed before members. If members desire the report to be read now, this will be done; but perhaps it will be more convenient for them to have it in the printed form.

Report presented, and the consideration ordered for the next Tuesday.

QUESTION—MINING ACCIDENTS.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the number of accidents and fatalities occurring on the goldfields through falls of ground? 2, If so, has any special report from mining inspectors been called for on this matter, or 3, Has any other action been taken?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes; the total accidents resulting from falls of ground for 1905 and 1906 were:—1905: fatal, 12; serious, 61; 1906: fatal, 17; serious, 81; 1907: fatal, 7; serious, 28. (Reported to date.) Of the "serious" accidents, only eight were attended with severe bodily injuries, the others being slighter injuries disabling the sufferer from working for more than 14 days, but usually not more than a month. The rate for the present year is about the average of 1905 and 1906 as regards fatal accidents, and better than either as regards serious ones. 2, A special report has been called for from the Inspector of Mines at

Kalgoorlie relative to two fatal accidents from falls of ground reported on 13th inst.; but in all cases the inspectors investigate and report fully upon every individual accident, and there has been no reason to believe, in the great majority of the cases, that the mishaps had been due to want of proper care in carrying out the work, or that any further precautions could reasonably have been insisted upon which would have prevented the accidents. In two recent cases where some negligence appeared to have been shown, the persons alleged to be at fault were prosecuted by the Inspector of Mines.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, OVERTIME.

Mr. BATH asked the Colonial Treasurer: 1, Is it a fact that machine operators and hand compositors have been working overtime at the Government Printing Office, while a number of compositors (many of whom are married) who were recently retrenched after long service on the plea of scarcity of work, are at the present time out of employment? 2, Will the Minister endeavour to see that these men are given a chance for any work going, rather than continue working overtime? 3, Is there any likelihood of employment being given to those employees who were recently retrenched?

The TREASURER replied: 1, Owing to the exceptional size of last week's *Hansard* it was necessary to work overtime on the linotype machines on three occasions. Only the men dealing with linotype matter were working, and no hand composition was done. 2, Yes, where possible. 3, This depends entirely upon the quantity and urgency of the work which may come in.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

As to an Interjection.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): Before we proceed with the business of the House, I would like to refer to an interjection which was made last night by an hon. member.

Mr. C. A. HUDSON (Dundas) : I desire to make a personal explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Dundas spoke to me a moment ago, and said he intended to make an explanation; so he had better proceed.

Mr. HUDSON: In the report of last night's proceedings which appears to-day in the *Morning Herald*—poor *Morning Herald*—the following words occur:—

At Phillips River this year about £13,000 was spent in the matter of water supply for the Ravensthorpe district.

Mr. Hudson: What did you get out of the smelters?

The Minister for Mines: What do you mean?

Mr. Hudson: I mean—Oh, go on! (Laughter.)

The Minister for Mines, as I understand, takes exception to that interjection, and imports into the words a meaning which I did not intend to convey. I feel quite sure that his interpretation of my words is not warranted, and is due entirely to his hypersensitive disposition. I do not intend to withdraw or to apologise, but the Minister having taken such a view of my remark, I think it is due to him and to me that I should repudiate any suggestion of corruption or dishonesty on the part of the Minister. I do not think there was any; I did not intend to convey any such suggestion. But I do say, if there was any suggestion in my interjection it was a suggestion of incapacity, and as a suggestion of incapacity it was amply and abundantly justified.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): When I rose just now I wished to get some explanation from the hon. member regarding his interjection to me last night. I was speaking of the efforts of the Mines Department to assist the mining industry, and was pointing out the amount expended in the Ravensthorpe district, when the hon. member interjected, "What did you get out of the smelter?" I asked the hon. member what he meant.

Mr. Ware: He meant, what did you get as Minister for Mines.

Mr. Hudson: Have I not made the *amende honorable*, on your suggestion?

The MINISTER: I am sure members will be pleased to treat me fairly in this matter, because a wrong impression can be and is being created. On the last occasion when I visited Leonora, a statement was being circulated throughout that field that, on account of the large interests I had at Ravensthorpe, I had no intention of again contesting an Eastern Goldfields seat. I never had, nor have I, directly or indirectly, three-pence worth of interest in that field; nor have I any intention of having the fractional portion of an interest in any mining or land venture, or venture of any description, in the whole of that field. I wish that to be made clear and explicit. Here is a question asked by the hon. member opposite, "What did you get out of the smelter?"

Mr. Hudson: Meaning, what did the Government get?

The MINISTER: I want that made clear.

Mr. Hudson: I have made it clear. What more do you want?

The MINISTER: If the hon. member wishes to make it clear that he referred to my department, and wished to know what the Government got out of the smelter, well and good; but I do not want any insinuation thrown out broadcast.

Mr. Hudson: I made no insinuation. I have explained my position; and if you are not satisfied, you are not a gentleman.

DEBATE — ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Seventh Day.

Resumed from the previous day.

Mr. A. A. HORAN (Yilgarn): I shall not begin by congratulating one side or the other, as most previous speakers have done; but I think the country can be congratulated on the fact that it has borne up so well under adverse conditions, and in that connection I do not think there is much necessity for such an outcry because this State has a slight deficit. Too much notice has been taken of that in the Press, and it

has been the subject of too much talk and attention on every side. The deficit is small, and in any case I fail to see where, so far as the Government are concerned, there is anything in the nature of a real deficit. There cannot be a deficit, except as a matter of book-keeping; for the State must pay its accounts and it wages bills, the State must pay its way; and the fact that we are £200,000 behind is surely not a sufficient ground for so loud an outcry about the depression. At the same time, the fact that we were slightly behind should have warned the Government to seek some other method of obtaining necessary funds when the attempt to impose a land tax proved abortive; and I think the readiest method and the simplest would be the imposition of higher wharfage rates. That did not require the approval of Parliament, but could be done by executive authority; and I find that during last year a small increase of a shilling per ton all round would have added £31,450 to our revenue.

The Premier: The rate has been doubled in the last four months.

Mr. Angwin: On some goods it is six shillings.

Mr. HORAN: Yes; and very improperly too. What I advocate is a shilling additional all round. You have imposed a three-shilling rate on tobacco, spirits, and other goods, which imposition is to my mind utterly illegal. If you are allowed to put a three-shilling rate on tobacco and spirits, you straightway go behind the back of the Federal Government and practically impose a higher protective tariff than the Commonwealth have imposed. I notice there were 629,000 tons imported and exported last year over the Fremantle wharves, and the small impost of a shilling would have given us £31,450. That shilling per ton could not have been passed on to the working man or to consumers generally; it was so small that the importers and the merchants would have to pay for it. [*Mr. Angwin:* That has been imposed.] Excuse me, show me how it has been imposed. A few increases have been made on certain goods. [*Mr. Angwin:* This year the rates have been doubled.] Well,

add another shilling to them. The large shipments of cattle pay, I think, only 1s. 9d. a head, and we had 182,168 head landed at Fremantle during 1906, and 2,055 exported, making a total of 184,223. We know the large profits made by the meat ring; and surely the imposition of 2s. per head on those live stock would have been justified in the circumstances, to bridge over a temporary difficulty. That rate would have produced £18,422, or a total for the year of £49,872, practically £50,000; and this could have been done without reference to the Upper Chamber or even to this Assembly. The impost would never have been felt, and could have been removed as occasion demanded when the land tax was brought into operation. I have a word or two to say of the proposals of the Minister for Mines, though I must admit that the straightforward fashion in which he last night announced his proposals regarding labour conditions practically prevents any farther criticism until the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) and the Minister come to terms, and suggest to the House the best method to follow. But I look with suspicion on that proposition to do away with the labour conditions. On a recent trip across the Bight Mr. Hoover tried to drum into my head for a couple of hours the necessity for wiping out the labour conditions, but I was not convinced by him. If the Minister for Mines wishes to assist the small prospector he must do so in another way, by the removal of impositions which exist at the present time. The Minister's proposals may operate beneficially in my district where there are many mines in the hands of small owners. The tendency to shepherd will be pronounced if the labour conditions are removed, and I see no reason to alter the opinion which I have held, and that is utterly hostile to the removal of the labour conditions. On the question of the freezing works, I am surprised the Government have been so solicitous for the welfare of the people of the North-West. I have in my mind's eye many occasions when matters of far more importance have come up for consideration, and the Government did not take so rapid action as they propose

to do in this matter. It seems to me if the Government propose to do this there is no reason why they should not take a larger interest in the shape of shares, so that they will have a controlling interest. They might do as Disraeli did in connection with the Suez Canal. They could buy £36,000 or £40,000 worth of shares in the scheme, so that they could see that justice was done to the small property holder and pastoralist. In Queensland when the necessity arose for the establishment of freezing works the Government went about the matter in a different way. For four years before the freezing works were established they imposed a tax on the persons who would benefit ; they imposed a tax of 15s. per hundred on horned cattle and eighteenpence per hundred on sheep. This tax was collected for four or five years by the Government, and this money was loaned out to the different establishments in the different parts of the country. That in turn was repaid to the Government and the Government were able to pay it back to the original taxpayers. That was an excellent system in theory and it worked out well, notwithstanding that for the first four or five years an amount of £97,000 was loaned in Queensland and only about £5,000 was returned. That was for the first four or five years ; now things are on a better footing and the tax is paid by the persons who benefit, and repaid back to them. If we desire works to be established here there is no reason why some similar system should not be followed. I cannot satisfy myself that the wealthiest men in the country should receive Government assistance in a matter of this sort. I do not think so far as the country is concerned we would suffer much if there were a monopoly ; it would not affect the southern portion of the State if a monopoly existed up North, only the export trade would be affected by it. The export trade in New Zealand amounted to £2,500,000 last year, but they did not employ a huge number of men after all, only about 2,500. If such a system was brought satisfactorily into operation in the North-West it would do good, but I do not favour the

Government loaning £30,000 in the way now proposed. As to the wages boards, I do not think some members need be apprehensive about the spirit of unionism being affected by a more liberal system in the Arbitration Court. While in Victoria I made a close study of the wages boards there, and I had interviews with Mr. Bromley and Dr. Bride in reference to the wages board there. These gentlemen have had very lengthy experience, and I think it would be advantageous to this State to introduce the best points of the wages boards of Victoria and also eliminate the worst portions of our Arbitration Court here. Perhaps we may simplify our objection to the Arbitration Court, and it is this. We expect the Labour representative on one side and the capitalistic representative on the other side to be experts in every trade under the sun. It would be better to have the representative of labour talk across the table with the representative of capital, and they would come to a better understanding, but at present we cannot expect these representatives to be other than blindly prejudiced in many cases. In the Arbitration Court we have only two experts, but in Victoria they have from three to five experts in connection with the wages boards. It does away with the injurious element that the Arbitration Court gives rise to, that is that witnesses have to be sworn and give evidence, and they, so to speak, put their backs against the wall and fight for their lives, and say many strange things and perhaps many things inconsistent with facts at the time. [*Mr. Daglish* : Is that through being sworn ?] They go to extremes which do not alter the case, and which would be more satisfactorily settled if both sides sat across the table and reasoned the matter out. If the wages boards are introduced here, or some portion, and incorporated with the least objectionable portions of our Arbitration Act, we shall have a much better system. I am pleased the Minister for Mines in a recent trip to Pilbarra endorsed opinions expressed before in the House. I would like, before he calls for tenders for the railway, for him to give fuller consideration in providing

a different kind of sleeper to those generally in use. I am anxious to see the jarrah sleepers used as much as possible ; still it may be necessary to use steel sleepers in this instance ; therefore the Minister should bear that in mind before calling for tenders. I cannot agree with the proposition to extend the railway to Point Sampson : it would be a gross waste of money. The tramway provides all the necessities at the present time so far as the town of Roebourne is concerned, and the extension would mean a waste of money. It cost £24,000 to lay the Roebourne-Cossack tramway down and the Government have lost on it every year since, in all £20,000. It stands in the books of the State as a loss of £44,000. When I was there last I made some recommendations to the Government of the day that the tramway should be leased to some firm—Dalgety made an offer, and I may be in opposition to some of my brother members in this matter—for we lose on it every year and if it were leased to a local firm it would be of benefit to the people there and avoid a continual loss to the country. I would like to place on record one matter, I do not suppose it will go farther now, but a deputation, when I was in Southern Cross some months ago, waited on me and asked me to bring before the Government the necessity for building a railway from Ravensthorpe to Southern Cross. The matter has more to commend it than at first sight may appear. The distance is about the same as the other proposition from Ravensthorpe to Broome Hill and in the vicinity of the proposed railway there is auriferous country. At Parker's Range a number of men are turning out three ounces to the ton. There are the Marvel Loch and the Jacoletti mines, and in a short time we may expect to see some 300 or more men on the field. That is borne out by the fact that in the report of the Labour Bureau published for the current year the warden of Yilgarn reports that there is not a sufficient number of miners to be found to work on the field. There never has, he says, been quite enough labour for mining purposes. That is

a pleasing communication on the condition of things in that portion of the world. There is another railway proposition I would like to urge on the Premier. I would urge an extension of the Widgemooltha line to Higginsville, about 20 miles. At present the railway terminates at Widgemooltha, and it is very probable that, instead of loading up at Widgemooltha for Higginsville, the goods will be carried direct from Coolgardie. I urge the necessity of the extension being made as soon as Widgemooltha is reached, allowing the extension to Norseman, though of course I shall be anxious to have the railway construction right to Norseman, to stand until later. I would also urge the necessity of making plenty of reservations in the timber areas, so that companies like the Kurrawang Company and other concerns will not have a monopoly, and so that the small person may put a siding in and compete for the market on the goldfields as well as the other companies. I noticed in the papers yesterday that there is a proposition to increase the detective staff to watch gold stealing on the goldfields. I think the House will agree generally with the remarks made by the member for Ivanhoe last night that protection of life should come first and the protection of property second. Until there is a sufficiently large number of mining inspectors appointed to watch the working of mines and to protect the lives of miners, I do not consider that any Government funds should be expended in watching gold stealing. In any case, I am of opinion that at least nine-tenths of the cost of this proposed detective force should be paid by the mining companies themselves. While stealing in any form is contrary to the law, this is a particular phase of stealing that does not call for the intervention of the State as other stealing would do. We have recently had a lot of criticism about the railways. We had it in the other Chamber and also in this House. I would not refer to it but for the fact that it is an opportune time perhaps to make a few remarks. I observe that in a debate in the other place a well known gentleman in the town (Mr.

Chinn) and his reports were commended and spoken very highly of by the Hon. Mr. Moss, and it was plainly said that at least three commissioners should be appointed and that Mr. Chinn should be one of them. If it is the intention of the Government to appoint Mr. Chinn, an estimable gentleman no doubt, as one of the commissioners, I would recommend them to employ him straight away as junior clerk, so that he would learn something about his business. It might stimulate the interest and anxiety of some of my fellow-members for the goldfields to notice that when Mr. Moss was speaking he commented very strongly on the splendid traffic we had to Kalgoorlie and said that Kalgoorlie people should be made to pay for it. He says, "We have a large consuming population on the goldfields" (quoting from the *Hansard* report).—

Mr. SPEAKER: I must draw the attention of the hon. member to the Standing Order.

Mr. HORAN: I observed that Mr. Moss states that a larger amount of profit should be made out of the traffic to the goldfields. The people on the goldfields have considered, rightly so, all along that they have been very harshly treated and that the advantages have all been on the side of the coastal districts. Mr. Moss considers that a higher tariff should be placed on Kalgoorlie because it is isolated and compelled to get all its produce and supplies by rail. [Mr. Eddy: It is the only system that is paying.] That is so. I do not wish to go into unnecessary figures, but I will clear the atmosphere so far as the criticism that has appeared in the newspapers is concerned. I may just as well start to prove by juggling with figures that our railways are the most profitable in the whole world. I could very well do it. I might do this, at any rate—show that so far as our railways are concerned, we are earning £4 6s. 8d. for every £100 expended on them, whereas in Queensland, so much under notice, they only earn £3 2s. 10d. In the circumstances, our railways are paying far better than the Queensland railways. Members should not be misled by the extraordinary

conglomeration of figures that have appeared from time to time in the newspapers lately from the pen of Mr. Chinn. His object is certainly a very worthy one and he deserves every credit for it, but while I was in Queensland I saw some of the communications received from Mr. Chinn. He simply asked straight out questions and of course got straight out replies. No one was more amused than Mr. Thallon, the Queensland Commissioner of Railways, at the absurd deductions Mr. Chinn drew from those figures. For instance I remember one question I saw on Mr. Thallon's file. It was "How many clerks are employed in the Chief Accountant's Office?" Mr. Thallon replied "Fourteen." Mr. Chinn immediately compares that with the Chief Accountant's Office in Western Australia where there are 101 employed, and of course he draws deductions at once highly inimical to the profitable working of our railways. But what are the facts? While the Chief Accountant's Office in Queensland is simply a record office, there is an office where all the accountancy of the Loco. Department is done, and there is an office where all the accountancy of the Way and Works Department and Permanent Way is done. Here in Western Australia the whole of the work is done under one head. Therefore there are three staffs in Queensland as against one here. So we see these absurd deductions are not warranted, because the full facts were not known. Again in connection with accountancy Mr. Chinn draws an extraordinary deduction that because there are twice as many miles of railway in Queensland as here, therefore our expenditure should be only half as much as that of Queensland. It must appeal to anybody with a moment's thought that the question of mileage does not in any sense govern the amount of accountancy work for which the staff is employed. To put it plainly, suppose there was 100 miles of track and a station at each end, and then another 100 miles of track with stations 10 miles apart. There would be ten times as much accountancy work in the one place as in the other. These conclusions are only drawn on limited evidence by a

'prentice hand in railway work. Anyone looking at the railway map of Queensland and comparing it with the railway map of Western Australia will see at a glance the wonderful difference in the two countries from a railway point of view. Queensland has thought so much of the cattle and wool traffic that in the railway map it is deemed of greater importance than population itself ; and instead of showing the population of the towns, the map goes into every square degree and shows the number of cattle and sheep to be found in that vast colony. The traffic in Queensland in live stock and wool is the most profitable to engage in—four times more profitable than any other kind of traffic, and it forms the backbone of the revenue there. Mr. Thallon was good enough to say at once when I spoke to him that the reason for the cheaper railway administration in Queensland was the fact that they have a return traffic, whereas on the other hand we have none here. Our railways convey supplies to the goldfields—there is practically no machinery going there now worth speaking of—and the waggons have to come back empty ; therefore the conclusions drawn by Mr. Chinn are utterly beside the question. Every railway manager must recognise that the most profitable kind of traffic to deal with is wool, which is the handiest and which pays the highest charges, and secondly when you have return traffic in every direction, needless to say your costs come down enormously. At the same time there are some phases of railway administration here that I think might command the attention of this House. Though Mr. George is gone and officially dead, still I believe he will have a resurrection on the Opposition benches some of these days, and in such case we will probably hear from him ; but there is one thing I would urge upon the Government, and that is the maintenance of a continuous departmental policy. The country will find it expensive to have frequent changes in management. If we change our managers from time to time, no sooner does one come in than he disapproves of what the previous manager has done and

puts the country to great expense in re-modelling the whole of the works. Mr. George has done good work, I will say that for him ; he has reduced the cost from the time he took office until he left, and there is no question but that he has done very many beneficial things for the staff and for the people of the country. So far as the permanent way is concerned, I may say that it is absolutely the best in the whole of the Australian States. When I was in Queensland I was in the Roma Street railway yard with a high official, and I could kick off ends of the sleepers, they were so decayed ; they were half rounded and just adzed on the top. Some of the office-buildings in the principal stations in Brisbane were in such a state that if similar conditions existed in Western Australia the Board of Health would have prosecuted the Commissioner and all his staff. My object is to draw attention to the necessity for some continuity in policy here, and I am going to prove it by a few examples. Some years ago the railway management thought fit to build barracks at Wagin—elaborate barracks—and at Northam and Southern Cross, and the engine men and guards were stabled at them every night or every day as the case may be before taking the return trip. Then this work was remodelled and Wagin was thrown out of use and Northam practically out of use, and subsequently the barracks at Southern Cross also were thrown out of use. There had been a large expenditure of money on these buildings, they were elaborately constructed with bath rooms and dormitories, but they are practically useless now and the country has had to pay. At the time the eight hours principle was introduced on the railways Mr. George decided to construct a set of barracks at Karalee and Merredin, and shifted the men from Southern Cross. I raised the question last Parliament and got very little satisfaction. It was as a surprise to the old town to have a couple of hundred men removed and sent out into the desert with their wives and children ; children that were attending school at Southern Cross. Mr. George's contention was that the eight hours principle

having been introduced it compelled him to recognise that the day of 24 hours should be divided into three sections. I think that when Parliament approved of the principle it only meant that 48 hours was to constitute a week's work and not necessarily that each man was to work eight hours a day, and consequently I believe that it was a spirit of vindictiveness that influenced Mr. George in shifting the men from Southern Cross and sending them out into the desert at Karalee on one side and Merredin on the other. I showed last session that the engines were to be pooled. At the instigation of the Railway Department a report from America was read in this House showing that the pooling of engines was a common practice there; but it is recognised in America that locomotives are only worked for a certain time at high pressure and then thrown on the scrap heap and new ones obtained. Engines in Australia are not manipulated in that way. It has always been shown as the result of long experience that a man having his own engine takes great care of it and treats it as his own property. It is not the case here, and cannot be when one engine is used by as many as six sets of men from the time it leaves Northam for Kalgoorlie until it gets back again. I am told by drivers that the engines are getting into very great disrepair, and that in fact very few of them are fit for the road. It is not to be wondered at therefore that so large a sum as £86,000 is set down for repairs for engines; and the necessity for these repairs can be attributed to the facts I have mentioned. I appeal to the Minister for Railways to go into the whole matter again with the present administrator of the railways, and see if the system adopted elsewhere cannot be brought into existence here. With regard to the barracks to which I have referred, I understand that the department are now sorry that they ever put them in those places; Mr. George himself almost admitted as much to me on one occasion. It will be in the interests of the department that the men should go back and take up the quarters at Southern Cross. The other barracks

are only temporary and can be utilised and distributed in various parts of the country where they are required. There is a large number of buildings and cottages at Southern Cross, and these have been empty since the changes were made; but if the men return, farther revenue will be received by the Treasury. I will refer to another case of questionable expenditure which shows the necessity for someone being permanently in charge of the railways. Some time back there were constructed about 16 sidings between Northam and Kalgoorlie. Shortly afterwards a heavier type of engine was brought into operation, and it was decided not to use these sidings for train crossings; consequently 11 of these sidings are now useless and 15 of them are not being utilised as crossing stations. This is a clear case of the expenditure of money which is not justifiable. Had the Engineering Department at the time known that a heavier type of locomotive was being built, those sidings would not have been constructed. Again, there is the duplication of the line to Armadale. That was approved, I believe, by the Rason Government. Either he or the heads of his departments should have known that the construction of the Jandakot line would divert a huge amount of traffic to Fremantle, and therefore that the duplication to Armadale would have been unnecessary. Had this work not been constructed a saving of £40,000 would have been effected. If there were continuity of policy right through there would be none of the bungling that has taken place, and many works which subsequently proved to be useless would never have been undertaken. The permanent way is in a very high state; but I question if it would not be better to do as elsewhere and make it bear a relationship to the revenue obtained from the various lines. I do not think it necessary to have the permanent way perfect except on the main lines, and great economies might be effected in the reduction of expenses in the maintenance of these lines, which need not be placed in such a very high standard. A large reduction should take place not in the staff but in the amount

expended in re-sleeping and re-laying of the lines. Re-sleeping has been undertaken to an extent that would not be tolerated or warranted in any other country. I desire to speak in the very highest way of Mr. Dartnall, the Engineer for Existing Lines, who is a very capable officer; but I think the time has arrived when, on account of his valuable services to the State, in the past, he might be given a rest and someone younger, more vigorous, and with more up-to-date methods be appointed to his position. He would be able to keep the permanent way in a safe condition at a less cost. Mr. Dartnall is afraid to take the slightest risk. For instance, if a pair of axles carrying $9\frac{1}{2}$ tons have to run over rails which according to the stipulated formula should bear only $9\frac{1}{4}$ tons he would write to the Commissioner refusing to take any responsibility in the matter. That places the Commissioner, or the Minister controlling the department, in an awkward position, for while the weight of the axles is frequently within the margin of safety the engineering department disclaims all responsibility. A person who holds a responsible position must take some risk on his shoulders now and again. So far as the rank and file of the department are concerned, they are not overpaid, and they certainly have to suffer many disadvantages and have to do objectionable work unlike other portions of the staff. There is no doubt about it that economies can be effected along many lines. In Queensland they amalgamate the traffic manager's position with the engineering. Certainly they pay the officer who undertakes the dual position a high salary. At Townsville he gets £700 a year. He is called the traffic manager, but he is the engineer as well; he attends to the traffic and the engineering. That is the case also in other places in that State. If a similar course were adopted here it would be a step in the right direction, and would do away with a great deal of the correspondence that has grown to such dimensions in the Railway Department. It was owing to this vast increase in correspondence that Mr. George recently had to suggest the building of a huge suite of offices

to accommodate the clerks. If you have one man in charge of both departments—and there is no reason why you should not do so—there would be no necessity for this unlimited correspondence between branches. The correspondence in the Railway Department is out of all reason. When I was in the office at Kalgoorlie—it was only a small office—we had 20,000 files accumulated there in one year. Each file held some 10 to 20 letters; and therefore some half-a-million letters were written in one year from that office. To illustrate the methods in operation, I will give an instance. A weigh-bridge had to be shifted from the platform at Kanowna to the goods-sheds. The machine could have been lifted by four men and been carried across in about ten minutes. The stationmaster wrote to the superintendent about the matter, and the latter communicated with the chief traffic manager in Perth; that officer wrote to the chief engineer for existing lines, conveying the request, and the latter wrote to the resident engineer at Coolgardie and asked him to do the work; that officer wrote to the inspector of the permanent way asking him to move the bridge, and he wrote to the ganger at Kanowna and told him to do it. The ganger then wrote to the inspector of the permanent way informing him that the work had been done; that official communicated with the resident engineer; the chief engineer for existing lines, in Perth, was communicated with and he notified the chief traffic manager; the latter communicated with the district superintendent at Kalgoorlie; and told him that the chief engineer for existing lines had told him that the work had been done and asked him if that were true. The district superintendent wrote to the stationmaster at Kanowna and asked if the statement were correct; the stationmaster said "yes"; the superintendent wrote to the chief traffic manager, informing him of that reply—and that closed the incident. Seventeen letters were written on that small matter. If the departments were combined a man would not need to send all these letters, and the traffic superintendent would be able to do everything. Most people can-

not understand that such a state of affairs could exist; but this is the way in which the departments are run, and unfortunately there is a certain amount of hostility between the branches. There should be an amalgamation of the district officers. I see no reason why in Geraldton the superintendent and the engineer's office should not be amalgamated and run the northern line, the engineer taking on the traffic work; also at Albany, and perhaps at Bunbury, although I am doubtful about the latter. With regard to some of the resident engineers, there is one at Coolgardie. He seldom moves over the road, but sits in his office and signs letters; and this as a rule is what all heads of branches do. The Government are not justified in continuing the present policy, but should reduce the staff to normal proportions. At present the staff has certainly grown out of hand, and I think that Mr. George during his time was anxious to have a large staff—for it was significant that at the functions which took place every year he was always pleased to refer to the fact that he had some six or seven thousand men under his control. Evidently, to him, this seemed to indicate the importance of his position, and he was proud of the fact that so many men were under him in the service. There are too many inspectors in the staff. These officials number 46, and, barring the inspectors on the permanent way, a number of them are quite unnecessary. I hope that the Minister will see that the head of the department makes the necessary reductions there. Too many inspectors simply serve to harass men; and as I have had personal experience of this myself I know what it means. [*Mr. Bolton*: Are the inspectors getting increases?] I do not know of that. Again, there are a great many engineers and surveyors stationed at the different places. I question whether they are competent; and I know of instances where the inspectors of the permanent way have had to go out and rectify the work of the surveyors. A number of alterations should be made in that branch of the department. I do not think that many of the law-suits that Mr. George

engaged in were justifiable. He has shown a litigious spirit during the last few years; and I advised the last Government with regard to this on more than one occasion. I have not had occasion to do this to the present Government. Many cases were proceeded with and cost thousands of pounds in which the essential witnesses were either dead or else were scattered to the four winds of heaven. The result was that when the cases were tried without them the country was run into an expenditure of a very large sum of money. I can well understand that a sum of £15,000 is set aside for stationery and printing, seeing the methods of correspondence which exist in the department and to which I have already referred. There are also very many foolish transactions undertaken in connection with the department, and cases frequently occur where as much as £5 is expended in trying to recover, say, 2d. This surely does not commend itself as a business proposition. It is due, however, to the necessities of the Audit Act; and in other countries where such an Act as ours does not exist the dealing with such small items as this can be transacted without undue expenditure—and so it should be in this State. I am aware that the Audit Act compels officers to be very accurate in all their statements; but it is certainly not justifiable to spend several pounds in recovering so small an amount. The Minister might also devote his attention to the Ways and Works Branch, and in this regard I will give an illustration of how the work is carried out. In the event of a pane of glass being broken, say at Northam, a report goes to the resident engineer at Coolgardie. He sends down an inspector to take the measurements and see what is wanted. The wages of this inspector are 15s. per day, and it takes him a day and a half to make the trip; consequently, on that account the cost is 22s. 6d. His expenses amount to 7s. 6d. per day. He returns to Coolgardie, measures out the pane of glass and sends a man down to Northam to put the pane in. The wages of that man are 12s. a day, and as he takes a day and a half to make the trip and his expenses

amount to 5s., the cost of his visit to Northam totals 23s. That makes a total expense of 54s. for putting in at Northam a shilling pane of glass. If the station master at Northam, or in any other place, were given the proper authority, he could go next door, get a glazier to put in a pane of glass, and for 1s. could have the work done instead of its costing the country about £3. Similarly with all small jobs of that kind, I would urge the Minister to adopt a system of decentralisation. There is too much concentration in the head office, Perth. Combine the functions of traffic managers and engineers, call them traffic managers and give them power to attend to these local matters without consultation with the head office. The superintendents, although they receive £500 or £600 a year, cannot spend one penny, cannot without authority buy even a penny stamp. This seems to me absurd. I believe in the Chinese proverb:—"If you employ a man do not distrust him, and if you distrust him do not employ him." A superintendent can by careless management waste hundreds of pounds that can never be traced, and yet in the actual expenditure of money he is not trusted at all. The question whether ministerial or commissioner control of our railways should obtain will be dealt with later; and I take it the three aims of railway management should be efficiency, safety, and economy; and any expenditure which fails to secure these is open to condemnation, while any that goes beyond constitutes extravagance. A word or two on some other matters. I have before me, and cannot help drawing attention to it though I am disinclined to do so, a report in the *Australian World* of speeches at the Western Australian dinner in London, on the 30th May last; and I observe that Sir Edward Wittenoom, after praising the wine, etc., on which he is no doubt an expert, and I am sorry he did not keep to that subject, said:—

"The Labour party is so well supported and led with so much energy and ability, that it is very difficult to confront it. The legislation it is pro-

moting can only have the effect of keeping capital out of the country.

Now to my mind the introduction of capital into a country like Western Australia is an absolute necessity."

I should like to know why we vote money for the Western Australian dinner, at which our friend Sir Edward can make a speech like that? Why in the circumstances did not Mr. Rason say something in contradiction of the statement? Here we are on the one hand trying to introduce immigration, and spending money somewhat carelessly, though I hope the expenditure will in the long run be justified; but on the other hand we are spending money in order that a gentleman like Sir Edward Wittenoom may announce to the world that Labour legislation here is tending to keep capital out of the country. That is very wrong, and the least that could have been expected from Mr. Rason was that he should set the people right by telling them there was no such tendency. But I should imagine that in all probability Mr. Rason nudged Sir Edward, and said something like "Go it, Ned; give it to them, Ned." In the same connection I must refer to some matters previously discussed in this House, concerning the shipping ring in the North-West and in London. I notice that year after year the same persons are invited to the Western Australian dinner, and they include the English shipping brokers with whom I had to deal when a member of a Royal Commission appointed by the last Government, which resulted in some astounding revelations. I notice amongst those present at the dinner representatives of Messrs. Trinder, Anderson & Co., Messrs. Bethel, Gwyne & Co., and Messrs. Marden & Co., who have for years past been making money out of the people of this State. The Royal Commission on Ocean Freights showed in their report that £489,000 had been made out of the pockets of the people of Western Australia for brokerage alone by these three firms: and to that profit the Western Australian Government were the largest contributors, to the extent of £5,000 per annum. The sum I have mentioned does not represent profits

from freight but from brokerage; and it was on this account that the Commission denounced so strongly the appointment of Mr. Sandover as shipping agent of the State. He took the hint and resigned; and now I understand the business is being done by the Agent General's office. The same gang, however, seem to be inseparably associated with the Agent General's office, and I certainly look with suspicion on the transaction, for it seems to me that £5,000 at least per annum which the gang are making out of the Government shipments accounts in some way for their regular attendance at those dinners. The member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood) and others spoke of the necessity for subsidising a line of boats to the North-West in order to counteract the rebates of the shipping combine. The Royal Commission made that very clear in their report and recommended something of the kind. Fortunately, the ship brokers took considerable notice of our report and reduced freights by 5s., but the brokerage remains the same, and the profits they are making out of Western Australia are undiminished. I shall be entirely agreeable if the Government can see their way to subsidise a line of boats to the North-West, and indeed I should go much farther, as the Commission did in their report, by inserting a paragraph for which I was responsible. The Commission, I may say, consisted of the late Mr. Diamond, Senator Needham, and myself. Paragraph 57 of the report is as follows:—

“Whilst your commissioners would welcome the establishment of an Australian mercantile fleet under Commonwealth control, for the transport of mails and cargo between Australia and the United Kingdom, capable of being commissioned in time of war, we believe this ideal is not within measurable distance at present.”

However, as time has shown, that ideal was not so far off as we thought, and the question came very prominently before the public when the Commonwealth Government were recently trying to enter into a fresh mail contract. They should take a step in the right direction, and if

need be build their own fleet as we run our own railways. I and other members on this (Opposition) side of the House would be pleased indeed to see our ships Australian-owned and Australian-manned and carrying Australian products to every port in the world. I wish to thank the Minister for Mines for the attention he has given to all the requirements of my district while I have been its representative. On every occasion where the mining industry was concerned, whether the request was for water supply, for a battery subsidy or for anything else of the sort, the Minister has promptly complied; and in these circumstances I have great pleasure in giving credit where credit is due.

Mr. E. C. BARNETT (Albany) : The first question I asked on my return to the State after a recent visit to Ceylon was, “Is the timber trouble ended?” and along with the majority of the people in the country, I was gratified to hear that a settlement had been arrived at, though I heard with extreme regret that it had been necessary for the Government to make a farther concession to the Timber Combine, which concession will probably cost the State some thousands of pounds a year. I would draw attention to the fact that the Government might easily have asked from Millars' Karri & Jarrah Forests, Ltd., and other owners of timber areas a *quid pro quo* for the concession in respect of freights. As we are all aware, large portions of the timber land of this State are held by the Combine and other companies as concessions. These concessions have been worked for many years, and in them many thousands of acres have been denuded of marketable timber. According to the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Forestry, of which I believe the Premier was chairman, some of the leading employees of the Combine stated that fully fifty years must elapse before the land cut out would be fit to be cut over again; and in the circumstances I think the timber companies might reasonably have been asked, before the concession in freights was granted, to consent to all lands on which the tim-

her has been cut out being excised from their concessions, so that land suitable for cultivation should have been thrown open for selection. I trust that is not too late even now, and that the Ministry will move in the matter. In the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) I believe we have a gentleman who has controlled his department with greater success and more ability than any previous Minister has exhibited. But on the proposed relaxation of the labour conditions I look with great suspicion. I remember, when residing many years ago in Victoria, where labour conditions were very lax, the thousands of acres of mineral land looked up and shepherded year after year owing to the non-enforcement of those conditions. If any fault has been committed in this State, the fault was not in the too strict enforcement of the labour conditions; for it would have been to the advantage of the State to enforce them more strictly. In my opinion the concentration of labour on one of a group of leases has not always been in the best interests of the country. Had the labour conditions been enforced on more of the leases more labour would have been employed, more prospecting would have been done, and probably the mining industry would, owing to fresh discoveries, be in a better position to-day. I quite recognise the assistance the Minister has at all times been willing to give to prospectors and the necessity for fresh discoveries; but I believe that the most important discoveries and those conferring the greatest benefit on the State will be made in the districts already opened up by railway communication and already being exploited. I make a present to the Minister of a suggestion I have received from a small mineowner who works north of Menzies. He wrote to me as follows:—

"It is a great pity the Government do not send men like Mr. Goezel to explain to us our errors. It would do an enormous lot for prospecting generally, and open up these fields much better. As an illustration, take the Oroya in Kalgoorlie. In the early days they were working in a wrong direction,

and got Mr. Goezel to report for them. He went and surveyed, etc., pointed out where it should be and at what depth. Result, a bore put down and struck ore, which is now the famous Oroya chute, and yet he only got 100 guineas for it."

I may mention that the gentleman referred to owns a small mine, and Mr. Goezel, who has been temporarily employed by the State, was visiting this portion of the field, and my friend having sunk a shaft and not struck a reef or gold where he expected, he asked Mr. Goezel to inspect the mine and pass his opinion upon it. Mr. Goezel kindly pointed out to my friend what, in his opinion, had been the error in sinking the shaft in the wrong direction; if Mr. Goezel had visited the district 12 months earlier and had given the information then, the owner would have been working a profitable mine at the present time, instead of having to do all the work over again. With reference to the construction of freezing works, or the assistance proposed to be given by the State for the construction of freezing works in the North-West, I am prepared to give this my support conditionally upon the small grazier and stock owner being properly protected for a lengthy term of years. In reference to the proposal for spending a farther large sum of money on the Point Sampson jetty, I think it would be wise before this was finally decided on to have farther information. A large sum of money has already been expended on this jetty, and from what I have heard it is doubtful whether the money already spent was fully justified, and whether the expenditure of a farther large sum will be in the best interests of the State. I was sorry to hear on the return of the Premier from Queensland from the Premiers' Conference the painful impression created on the Western Australian representatives in reference to Federation. I was one of the strongest opponents to Western Australia federating at the time we did; I admit I am a supporter of federation, but I thought Western Australia was federating at least 20 years too soon. I think though we made a

mistake in federating when we did, we would make a still greater mistake at the present time should we take any step, were it possible to do so, to sever our connection with the Commonwealth, as I am convinced that within 20 years, if successful in seceding at the present time, we would have to go cap in hand to ask the Commonwealth to accept us. It is only by having a united Australia that the white policy can be maintained. After my visit to the East I fully understand the term, "teeming millions of the East." While there I visited a large cotton factory employing some 500 Cingalese, and one European only was employed. The wages the Cingalese were paid, or rather 95 per cent., was from 1d. to 8d. a day. Supposing the white Australia barrier were broken down and that class of labour introduced, what benefit would such labour be to anyone in the State except to the large capitalist? I would rather see the people prosperous than a few millionaires. I trust the members of the Ministry will, in the near future, insist on all boys, whether attending State schools, or private schools, or public schools, having a certain training to fit them to enter the defence forces of the State, so that they will be in a position to do their part in defending the Commonwealth of Australia should the time arrive. There is one matter in the Premier's policy speech at Bunbury that caused a great deal of satisfaction: the contemplated purchase by the State of the Denmark railway and the Torbay lands. The purchase of this railway and its lands is of vital importance to the Albany district, and the purchase of this railway will not only assist in the development of the 25,000 acres of first-class land at present owned by Millars, but will open up many thousands of acres of Crown lands of an equal quality. I may mention the land in this district is suited particularly for the growth of root crops and potatoes, apple orchards, and more particularly for dairying; and I consider with this district, if opened up and developed, there will be very little necessity to import potatoes, butter and cheese. I also think the purchase of this railway will be the first link

in the chain of the railway between Albany and Bridgetown. Since the Premier made the announcement last February of the intention of the Government to purchase this railway and lands a tide of settlement has set in along the course of the Denmark railway, and I was told the last time I was in Albany that the Albany Lands Office had been busier in receiving applications for land than any lands office along the Great Southern Railway. There is a number of recent English immigrants settled there, and I have received letters from these generally expressing satisfaction with their condition and prospects. In reference to the Fremantle graving dock I consider the time has now fully arrived when it is advisable in the best interests of the State for a graving dock to be established, and when the matter is brought forward it should receive the most sympathetic consideration. This State is entering on a large expenditure of money in the North-West, which will add considerably to the indebtedness of the State, and at the present time we are spending a considerable amount in developing the south coast and Phillips River fields. I hope every step taken by the Government will be to secure the trade of this district and thus develop a new and prosperous area. It is with feelings of extreme regret that I heard of the decision of the Government to dispense with the services of the late Commissioner of Railways, Mr. George. He, in my opinion, was an excellent Commissioner of Railways. He is leaving the Railway Department in a better condition than it was when he took charge, better than it has ever been before. I think every new beginner makes mistakes, and that had Mr. George remained in office the probability is that he would do as well, if not better than any successor likely to be appointed. I do not care whether members agree with Mr. George's railway policy or not, but I publicly state my belief in his honesty and integrity of purpose. I consider he believed that what he did was in the interest of the State. I would like to remind the Government that in the present Acting Commissioner they have a gentle-

man with very large railway experience. While he was manager of the Great Southern Railway that railway was the most economically managed, not only in Western Australia, but in the Australian States ; also it was successfully managed and gave satisfaction to the general public. I presume the Government will make inquiries in the Eastern States, and Europe, England and America for a successor to Mr. George; but I think that before making any definite appointment it would be wise to see what reforms and economies have been effected by the present Acting Commissioner. If things are improved and reforms are effected I do not believe in the State paying a large salary to an imported Commissioner when there is a gentleman in the State equally able to fill his position. I trust that while we all recognise the necessity for economy, as much consideration for the retrenched employees of the Railway Department and any other department will be shown by the Government as is possible, and that any future vacancies may be filled by the retrenched employees. The member for Greenough (Mr. Stone) last Tuesday referred to Albany as an abandoned port. I think it is a great pity that hon. members in advancing the claims of their districts cannot do it without referring disparagingly to other districts. I for one would do all I could to assist the port of Geraldton. I think Geraldton should have all the trade to which it is legitimately entitled, and I think that Albany should have the same. I think that six or 12 successful ports with a fair volume of trade are preferable to having everything concentrated in one port. To show the injustice of the remarks passed by the member for Greenough I will read the comparative trade of the two ports, Albany and Geraldton, not in a disparaging sense to the port of Geraldton, but in justice to the port of Albany. For the year ending the 30th June, 1907, the number of vessels calling at Albany was 434, with a tonnage of 796,058 tons, while the number calling at Geraldton was 179, with a tonnage of 216,062 tons. I think that conclusively proves that Albany is anything but a deserted port. I

do not think the Honorary Minister was quite in earnest in all the remarks he passed last night. There was only one conclusion to be drawn, that it was the intention of the Government to concentrate the export of frozen meat, wheat, apples and everything at Fremantle. I do not know whether that is the wish of the Honorary Minister; I certainly hope it is not the wish of Ministers. I think every port should have the trade of its district. Probably it is sufficient to draw attention to this matter, and probably the Minister did not mean actually what he said. The land tax proposals of the Government shall have my support as they did last session. When seeking their suffrages I told my constituents that I intended to support a land tax if introduced, because I considered that the finances of the State warranted such a tax. Where exemptions were made, I consider that the exemptions in the Government measure last session were in the best interests of the State and would cause the tax to reach those who could best afford to pay. On these lines the tax will have my support when introduced.

Mr. E. E. HEITMANN (Cue) : Like other members, I desire at no great length to place a few of my grievances before the Ministry and the House. I am somewhat surprised after listening to the debate—I have carefully listened to almost all the members who have spoken—to find with perhaps one exception members have not touched upon the most important question that appeals to me, that is the position we find ourselves in to-day industrially throughout the various districts of the State. The majority of members seem to be prepared to tell each other privately and quietly that the State at present is in a bad way, but we seem to be like Micawber—doing nothing, just waiting for something to turn up. Having travelled through a great portion of the State of late, one could not fail to be struck with the great number of men out of employment, and with the general depression among the working classes and among the business people of course, right throughout the State. I am not

one to blame this Government or the Government preceding them for the position in which we find ourselves to-day, but in the course of my remarks I shall endeavour to point out where the present Government could have done much better than they have done in the last year or two. In speaking of this depression one must recognise that we have heard of it for the last two or three years—not only to-day, and not only last year; because when the Labour party were first returned with 22 strong and took hold of the reins of Government in the State we had a state of depression existing in Western Australia. It appears to me that it is necessary, in trying to find some solution of the problem we have in front of us to-day, to try to go back and find the causes which have left their effect in the shape of the present depression; and in studying these matters one must look back beyond the last year or two and study the history of the State for the last 10 or 12 years; and one must also look to the experience of the other States of Australia. Many members in the Chamber and people throughout the country put various reasons forward for the depression. Some blame federation, and others lay the blame on other causes, but in reading the history of the other States one finds that each and every one of the Eastern States of Australia passed through a similar period to that through which we are passing to-day. It appears to me to be only the result of what we may term a boom; and there is no doubt we had in Western Australia for several years a booming time. They had the same in the Eastern States, and if we take their experience one need not be so greatly alarmed; because we find that after a boom time a natural depression followed, while now they are, generally speaking, in a fairly prosperous condition. I am inclined to think that, instead of trying to hide our present state and to blind ourselves to the fact that Western Australia is in a bad way—and in my opinion is likely to be in a bad way—instead of taking up such a course as that taken up by the member for Coolgardie when he rebuked the only member

who, in my opinion, tried to place before the Chamber and the country a picture showing the true state of affairs, and accused the hon. member of crying “stinking fish,” it is really useless to try to hide the fact that Western Australia to-day is in a fairly bad state. I am not going to blame this Government or past Governments for the present state of depression, but I will say that the policy inaugurated by the present Government and spoken of only last night is a policy that in my opinion has caused the depression, some of it at all events. I refer to the policy of spending altogether too large amounts of borrowed money on reproductive works. I may give just one or two instance of where this policy has been abused. I may say “abused.” Recently when I was travelling in the outback portion of my electorate, I was at a small place with 50 people, a place that has never had more than 50 people for the last five years; and going into the Miners’ Institute there and looking into a corner, I found to my surprise a present of the good old boom days by the then member for the district of a complete set of the Statutes of the State. This may appear to be nothing, but it only shows that whereas to-day members themselves cannot get a set of the Statutes, in those good old days when there was plenty of money, members could give freely to electors in every corner of their electorates. Again in my electorate the railway passes through a place called Lake Austin. This has a fine station built of freestone, with a goods shed and station-master’s residence and cottages for the workmen. I suppose if these buildings were put up to-day they would cost between £4,000 and £5,000, and I know it cost considerably more to build then. That station to-day is not earning a penny in freights, for the simple reason that there is no traffic there, and there is not even a station-master.

At 6.15, the *Speaker* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. HEITMANN (continuing): When the House adjourned I was giving members what I believe to be some causes

for the depression existing in Western Australia, and was endeavouring to show that in the past large sums of money were spent lavishly without due regard to whether the works for which they were to be utilised would be reproductive or not. When the goldfields were booming and a kind of false prosperity existed, this policy did not affect the position of the State to any material extent; but now when we are in a normal condition, we find that the primary industries of Western Australia are not sufficient to carry the present population, and the evil results of this system of expenditure of public revenue are demonstrated. To-day, the population in Western Australia, although small, is too great for its industries. The main industries are the mining and agricultural. The latter is being assisted to a very great extent, but the benefits from it will not be felt to any great degree for some time to come. Out of our population of about 250,000 people there are between 70,000 and 80,000 people who can be termed producers. It has been found not only here but also in the Eastern States that the greater number of people there are in the cities and large towns the more poverty exists. If in the past, instead of spending so much money in the metropolitan areas upon works which are not altogether reproductive, we had spent that money upon the industries upon which Perth depends, we might not have a depression existing to-day. In thinking over this matter I am carried back to two years ago. At that time we had a Labour party in power and, when they retired, Mr. Rason and his followers went to the country and told the people that it was the fault of the Labour party that the depression existed. This is an old cry and perhaps it is not altogether advisable to revive it, but in fairness to the Labour party it may be mentioned that the present position of the country shows that instead of matters improving when that party were put out of power, things have been going from bad to worse. It is remarkable that the very party that at that time made the Labour party responsible for the then depres-

sion are now stating that Federation is causing the present set back in the prosperity of the country. I have always believed in Federation and am a strong Federalist, but I voted against it at the referendum, thinking that at that time it would be unwise for Western Australia to enter the Union. I said then, and it has since been proved to be true, that Western Australian industries would not be able to compete with those in the Eastern States. Although I can see the disadvantage Federation is to Western Australia I do not believe in the cry of the party which is now calling for secession, that we should secede because we are losing a certain amount of money through inter-State free-trade. As was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, if this were the only trouble that Western Australia had with regard to Federation, it would not be so bad, for the money taken off the inter-State duties went into the pockets of the people. If that were so then we would be justified in going to the people now and stating that, as they had gained something through the duties being knocked off, there was justification for the Government asking them to pay some little taxation. I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the money is in the pockets of the consumer, for on the field at all events, living is just as expensive now as it was six years ago. From observations and inquiry I believe that the indenters and importers of the other States, and the big firms here, are making greater profits than they did at the time of the boom in Western Australia. It is a very complex matter, but sooner or later the Government must inquire into it, and we have the right to demand that, instead of the money going into the pockets of the indenter, the consumer should get the benefit of the inter-State free-trade. Before Mr. Rason and his party got into power they told the people, not once but many times, that there was no need to fear. They also said they believed there was no necessity for fresh taxation, and added that by strict economy and by faith in the country there would be a return of prosperity. We find that that has not

been so, and one must come to the conclusion that, either Mr. Rason and his party were not aware of the condition of affairs here, or they obtained their present position under false pretences. The Attorney General, I believe, won his seat on the cry that there was no necessity for extra taxation. We all know that whoever advocates fresh taxation is unpopular, but the Government are now recognising that the Labour party, by raising that cry some two years ago, were correct and admit that the time has arrived when it is necessary farther to tax the people. The cry of economy is an old one, and I think that altogether too much prominence has been given in the policy of the present Government to the question of economising in the Civil Service. Whenever you hear a Government cry for economy and the next moment see that they start on the civil servant—and unfortunately they generally begin on the lower men—it shows a weakness in the party in power. The fact that there are too many civil servants is not the cause of the present depression : when we were prosperous we had all those civil servants. It is unfortunate that the only time when steps are taken to economise in the direction of reducing the staffs of the various departments of the service is when the State is in a bad way. Therefore at the time those men are discharged they are unable to obtain fresh employment, and the result is that the depressed state of affairs is added to by a number of ex-civil servants who are out of work. If a department is overmanned, by all means put the men off ; but it is useless to say that it will be the end of our troubles to cut down the expenses of our departments. The saving effected by that means will be merely a drop in the ocean. The Government now say that one great fault in the Labour party was that it did not put forward a progressive works policy. I do not believe that it is always a sound policy to put forward works merely with the object of providing work for the people. When we come to that position and are forced to do that it shows clearly that there is something wrong, not with the branches of the Government, but with

the very root of it. It should be the desire of any Government, instead of tinkering with outside branches to get at the root of the financial trouble as far as possible. We find ourselves at the present time with a deficit. As has been stated by the member for Yilgarn this, under ordinary circumstances would not cause any very great alarm. The Eastern States have on several occasions been in a very much worse position than Western Australia is to-day, but unfortunately we are placed in a worse position than they were owing to the existence of Federation. In those days the States had the benefit of the tariff and to a certain degree their industries were protected. To-day Western Australia is unable to build up industries. The population is at a standstill and, consequently, things altogether are not too bright. If we had the conditions which existed in the Eastern States in their bad times I would not be at all afraid of the deficit, for I believe in a very short time we would be able to overtake it ; but what do we find ? Some of the manufacturers who opened up small branches in Western Australia during the time of the inter-State tariff are leaving here and are manufacturing at head works in Melbourne. That is our great difficulty. It is impossible for Western Australia, unless the standards of living and the social conditions are greatly lowered, to compete with the manufacturers in the Eastern States. In speaking to the Address-in-Reply the Minister for Works declared that the deficit was not so very much after all, and he tried to point out that if we could merge two or three normal seasons into one, and if we could have a land tax, then we would be all right. But I think, although perhaps we should not refer to those who have passed from this world, it was rather ungrateful on the part of the Minister not to tender some thanks to men who were kind enough to depart this life and thus give the Treasury some £30,000, but for which our finances would be in a still worse condition. It is altogether foolish for the Minister for Works to try in that manner to explain away our deficit. He states that if we had had a land tax

we should have been all right. Whose fault is it that we have not a land tax? I should think the Minister, or any other man on the Government side, should be the last to mention the land tax, for in my opinion the tax would have been imposed, and we should now have the benefit of it, but for the Government, who put forward the excuse that members were not in the country, and therefore the meeting of Parliament was postponed until the present month. I agree with the Government, and I think every one in the State agrees, that the one industry we should encourage by every possible means is the agricultural industry. for there is undoubtedly a possibility that one day Western Australia will have to live almost entirely upon agriculture. Our experience of the Eastern States leads us to believe that the mining industry is fairly stable. In Victoria mining has been successfully continued for the last fifty or sixty years. At the same time, there is a possibility of our mining industry petering out; and it should be the desire of all Governments and all members of this Chamber to encourage the agricultural industry as far as possible. But I must say that the policy of the present Government in their endeavour to settle people on the land, has in many cases been very inconsistent. Before pointing out this I should like briefly to touch on the immigration policy. In the first place I will refer to the London office. In that office we have, I believe, under Mr. Rason the Agent General, some five or six clerks. Of those five or six, I believe only one has ever been in Australia. To my mind this is altogether unwise. A man enters that office in search of a country to which he can go with reasonable prospects of success, and he meets clerks who know as much about Australia as he knows. I would suggest that instead of having in that office five or six clerks whom we may call foreigners, who know nothing more about the country than they can see on the map, we should draft to London every year or every couple of years a fresh set of our own civil servants who are acquainted with the State. They

could give people some idea of the conditions here, whereas all the information the present clerks have is obtained by reading. [*Mr. Underwood*: Our clerks would be more usefully employed here.] That may be. I have just said that the land settlement policy of the Government appears very inconsistent. In the agricultural areas the Government are prepared to grant to any man 160 acres free, and any area he likes on very liberal terms. This is very well; but there are people not in the agricultural areas who are desirous of making a living on the soil. In my district alone there are, I believe, some twenty or thirty men with families, men who desire to get out of the labour market and away from the mines, and who have taken up small areas on the outskirts of towns. These lands have been hitherto held by people who run cattle and sheep, and from these people the Government have received 10s. per thousand acres for the land. Let me point out how the Government are assisting men who are trying to get out of the labour market by taking small blocks of land for such purposes as vegetable gardening, poultry raising, and pig farming. The pastoralist pays for the land 10s. per thousand acres. If the land is within two miles of a township and a man wishes to take up twenty acres for the other purposes I have mentioned, he must pay first about £5 for survey and inspection, and 2s. per acre per annum for twenty years. That is to say, the Government sell him the land for £2 per acre, though this same land is now held by squatters at 10s. per thousand acres. In all fairness, if the Government wish to encourage land settlement, if there is one man more that another who should be encouraged it is the man who takes up land in that part of the country, with a view to making a living out of it. It would pay the Government to give him the land, to grant him a perpetual lease. So long as he fulfils the residential qualifications it is preferable to have that land occupied for agricultural purposes rather than to have it used as at present for running sheep. Another case to illustrate how expeditious and

how ready the Lands Department are to assist a man to get on the land, was brought under my notice some little time ago at Cue. A man at Cue, desirous of going on the land, inspected certain lands at Geraldton, and found a block occupied by another man who was prepared to surrender it. The Cue man filled out a surrender form some time in September or October last, and took it to the department. He then went back to Cue and waited for several months. During that time he had written to the department, had wired to the department, and had got the man in charge of the lands office in Cue to write for him; and seven months after he had sent in the surrender form I came to Perth and was informed that the surrender was not in order; that it contained some technical error. That is after waiting seven months! Surely there is something wanting in the Lands Department, and it seems to me peculiar when we find men in the streets of Perth waiting to go on the land, waiting sometimes as long as two months for approvals, while men with a little influence can go in and fix up such matters in about two days. Naturally, representing a mining constituency, I shall have something to say of the mining industry. The proposals of the present Government were somewhat surprising to me; and though the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) has spoken for some considerable time of his proposals, I did not think he would have made the proposals we find in the Governor's Speech; for the experience of Western Australia at all events has been that the more we liberalise the tenures and the easier we make it for people to hold mining leases, the more shepherding we have. This is illustrated by the concentration-of-labour section of our Mining Regulations. It has been pointed out before, and cannot be pointed out too often, that many mine-owners in Western Australia holding as much as 200 and 300 acres, have concentrated the whole of their labour on about 10 acres, the rest remaining idle. And if we make the conditions more liberal, we shall in my opinion find more shepherding. While the Minister has advocated in season and

out of season a policy of encouraging the small man, and though he appeared most sincere last evening, and although anyone not knowing the Minister would believe him to be absolutely sincere, it is hard for me at all events to believe that the Minister is sincere in his proposals; for while advocating these proposals from the platform, and while telling us at all times that he is desirous of encouraging the small man, when the Minister has had an opportunity of applying his policy he has absolutely failed to do so. In one instance at all events he has given absolute preference to the wild-cat promoter instead of to the small man, the man who was willing to work and had worked the lease. One case in particular will show how the Minister for Mines applies this and another of his so-called reforms—his proposal to give wardens more power than they have now. The Minister has on more than one occasion said he wished to give wardens more power, so that instead of a warden being able only to recommend in case of applications for forfeiture, he should have power to forfeit a lease or to do whatever else he thought fit, of course reserving a right of appeal to the Minister or to a board. One instance of how this policy has been pursued. Some time ago a party of miners held a lease at a place called Errol's, had worked it for a considerable time, and spent on it a considerable sum. Having spent all their money, they left that part of the district in order to earn more money. A man whom I term a wild-cat promoter came along. He could see a market for the lease, and applied for forfeiture. The warden at Cue, a man in whom I think everyone in the district has confidence, decided, after an exhaustive hearing of the evidence, to give the lease back to the workmen. "But," he said, "you did wrong in leaving your lease without applying for protection. However, seeing you are working men and have spent your money and done work there, I am prepared to give it back to you after imposing a fine." But the wild-cat promoter was not satisfied with that. The facts got into the Murchison newspapers; I believe he gave them about half-a-dollar apiece; and he came to Perth. And on

an *ex parte* statement—and I defy contradiction and am sorry the Minister is not in his place—the Minister did that which has never been known to be done before in Western Australia, forfeited the lease and gave it to the wild-cat promoter. In all fairness to the workmen, if the Minister found there was any fresh evidence brought forward by the promoter, the Minister, instead of forfeiting the lease, should have referred the matter back to the warden, saying there was fresh evidence and asking him to re-hear the case. Here we have a Minister saying he desires to give a warden greater power, and desires to help the small prospector. Such are his words, but in his actions he shows, by going against the warden, that the warden is not fit to give a decision, and that the Minister desires to help the wild-cat promoter. I need not apologise for occupying the time of the House for a few minutes on the subject of mine inspection. This is a matter of which I have recently thought much, and which I have had reason to think of; and as mining accidents are increasing, we cannot too often emphasise the fact that the inspection of mines in Western Australia is not being carried out as it should. Last year we had, I believe, a total of 40 fatal accidents and 277 serious accidents which were not fatal. [Mr. Bath : No ; 270 more than in the previous year.] Anyhow, this year, I believe, we shall find accidents more numerous than ever. The average individual away from the mining industry seems to have no idea of the effect of accidents and the bad condition of the mines, not only amongst the mining population but on the whole of the State. It would surprise many members to know the poverty and misery that are caused by these accidents, and I declare here, without fear of contradiction, that the mines in Western Australia are in an absolutely rotten state, and are not being inspected as they should be. I have had brought under my notice cases where mining men in Western Australia have asked miners to work in rises of a height of 300 feet, and anyone who knows anything about mines is aware that it is absolute murder to work under these condi-

tions. Some of the miners in Western Australia are working in places where for fully eight hours it is impossible to see the light of a candle three feet in front of them, in consequence of the dust and the fumes and the smoke. The moment one mentions the giving of better conditions to miners one meets with the reply that it will cost too much. In my opinion if we are to add to the cost of getting the gold, the misery and the deaths we have, it is far better in the interests of the State as a whole, and especially in the interests of the mining population, that the gold should remain where it is. I have said the mines are in bad condition, and I have often been met with the question, "What do you call fair conditions?" In mining as well as in any other industry, any work that will take away from the miners the right of living out a life such as he would live in the open air, or under good conditions, the state of such an industry should be remedied no matter at what cost. We should give the workers better conditions; and I do not only refer to the dangerous places which will have to be attended to in the near future, but even more important than that is the condition of our mines from bad ventilation and various other causes such as dust, which of course follows on bad ventilation. I stated previously on the platform that less is thought of the life of a miner than the machines and the tools the miner uses. I have said this and I declare again that it is absolutely criminal for members on the Government side to oppose as they did last year members on the Opposition side getting fair conditions for the miners. Last year we had a disgraceful condition of affairs when the Mining Bill was going through the House. We were told by the Minister for Mines when we asked for check inspectors that he would not allow the trade union secretaries to be check inspectors; and when we replied that the miners could not do this duty because the moment the men employed sent in a report which would be somewhat against a mining company, from that date the miner's time was very short indeed, the Minister ridiculed

the idea, and stated that he believed the mining managers to be honourable men, and would not think of blackballing a man for sending in a true report. I have found out since that not only are the mining managers prepared to blackball men, but the officer employed by the Government to inspect the mines and to administer the Act brought in for the benefit of the miners, is prepared to blackball the men also. This is proved conclusively, and I think when a new Mining Bill comes before the House, as come it must very soon, having for its object the better condition of the miners, I shall appeal to members on the Government side to go to the miners themselves, and I am satisfied that if members can see the conditions under which miners work, they will at once side with the Opposition party and give the miners better conditions. The Minister has time and again told the House and the country that our mines inspection was on a par with the mines inspection in the Eastern States, that is that the percentage of the cost of mines inspection was as high here as in the other States. I can assure the Minister, if he does not know it, that this is not at all true. Whereas in this State the percentage of the total administration cost used for mines inspection is something like three per cent., in the Eastern States it is eight per cent., and it goes up as high as 12 per cent. in New South Wales where they have 13 inspectors. From a geographical standpoint, Western Australia should have many more inspectors for its mines at the present time, for the few inspectors employed cannot give fair attention to the mines, and we must also recognise that it is not desired that the inspectors should give fair attention to the mines. So long as we have men in these positions, men who are prepared to side with the mining companies on every occasion, so long as we have bad conditions and the fatal accidents that we have at the present time, so long will the miners complain. To show that the inspectors are not inspecting the mines as they should do, I can quote scores of incidents. I have called for certain papers to be laid on the table of the House, and when I

get them I will deal with a certain matter which was the subject of a Royal Commission. Charges were made by myself against a particular inspector, but I intend only to touch briefly on this matter. Last session and the session before, other members with myself charged this inspector with not doing his duty. Time after time these charges were made and the attention of the Minister was drawn to the laxity in this man's inspection and to various other irregularities on his part. The Minister refused to take any notice of these charges, and although he knew that this man was not fit to hold his position, the Minister was prepared to allow things to go on as they had been going on for some time. I was determined that the Minister should know the exact state of affairs, and I was determined also that the public of Western Australia should know how this man was carrying out his duties, therefore, on the public platform I made charges against this particular individual. My reasons for doing so were to give the public some idea of the handicaps under which the miners have to work. When I made these charges they were reported in the metropolitan Press. The Minister for Mines ridiculed the charges, saying there was no truth in them. This went on, I believe, for about a week. Morning after morning the Minister said the charges were not true and were not worthy of consideration. But suddenly the Minister found out that these charges were serious and he determined to appoint a Commission to inquire into them. I found out from inquiry that during the time the Minister was ridiculing my charges he was writing to the inspector at Cue, or someone in the department was writing, to find out how the position stood. Naturally a reply was received from the inspector that there was no truth in the charges and courting full inquiry. As soon as the Minister found this out he declared at once that these charges were of great importance and that he would appoint a Commission to inquire into them. Later on it became known that the Warden at Cue, Mr. Troy, was appointed to inquire into the charges. Mat-

ters went on quietly, and the next I heard was that Warden Troy's appointment had been cancelled, and another gentleman had been appointed to hold the inquiry. The excuse given—I will not give the excuse to the House that was given at the time for the cancellation of the appointment—but I am satisfied that from the time that this particular warden's appointment was cancelled, certain people conspired, and the Minister is not free from it, to defeat me in my charges, and from the outset I had not a chance to prove them.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is making the charge that the Minister was conspiring. He must withdraw that.

Mr. HEITMANN: I withdraw it and I will say certain individuals conspired to defeat me from getting fair play; and I am satisfied that certain parties started out at once, and from that time no matter what evidence I could have brought forward, the verdict would have been against me. I say this, and I can fairly well substantiate my statement, that the Ministry should be proud of the action they took in connection with that inquiry.

The Treasurer: What part did they take? Did they not give you an inquiry?

Mr. HEITMANN: They did. A sort of an inquiry, but the verdict was given before the evidence was taken.

The Treasurer: The verdict was given against you.

Mr. HEITMANN: No. When a certain member of this Chamber made certain charges against a public officer, as soon as the verdict went against him the Minister rose in his place and asked the member to apologise. I ask, what actions to be taken in this particular case? Is the Minister prepared to ask me to apologise? I will prove to the House that from the word "go," Heitmann had not a chance in the inquiry. A certain individual, a man high up in the mining world, was responsible for the cancellation of Warden Troy's appointment. From my experience of justice in Western Australia, when the interests of certain parties clash, it is impossible for the Labour man to get a fair deal—it is impossible for the Labour man to get a

fair deal from the Ministry. Before I have finished with this case, I shall demand that the present Ministry take some action either to discharge the inspector against whom I made the charges or ask me to take a certain action. After the appointment of Warden Troy, matters went on quietly for some six or seven weeks, and I believe it was the intention of the Government to get the people to believe that the matter had died out, but subsequently we found that another gentleman had been appointed. I may state I never heard a single word from the Minister, although he had written to certain persons to find out whether I had made the charges. The Minister had not the courtesy or the decency to find out my version of the affair. I am justified in saying that the gentleman who held the commission of inquiry had arrival at a verdict and his report, before he took the evidence, and I declare he was not a fit and proper person to adjudicate on such a Commission. [*Mr. H. Brown:* He is a gentleman above suspicion.] Is he? Then I will tell the hon. member something and ask him then if this gentleman is above suspicion. At Cue on the third day of the inquiry we finished at about 11 o'clock in the morning, and we find after spending a few hours in Cue this man above suspicion going out inspecting certain works which were in dispute. In all justice to me and in all fairness to me, if he is above suspicion he should have informed me that he was going out to inspect this matter in dispute. Instead of that he took parties from the other side and Heitmann was left out. I will prove whether he is above suspicion. I will get the papers, and I will leave it to the House or any committee that may be appointed to say whether this report is consistent with the evidence or not; and I shall prove that it is absolutely untrue as well as inconsistent. The Commissioner states that no incorrect reports have been sent in. I will prove that absolutely incorrect reports have been sent in by the Inspector of Mines, and I will prove that this particular inspector has gone out of his way—not only has he been lax in the administration of his

duties, not only has he allowed companies to work men in places not fit to work in, but in cases of accidents he has gone out of his way, anticipated legal action on the part of the men, and with the acuteness of a lawyer has covered up the weak spots in the company's defence. I will prove this conclusively. I am not afraid of the result. As I said before, the Government should take some action, and in all decency they should have sent me a copy of the evidence and a copy of the report, but from the time I made these charges the Minister for Mines and the Government have not communicated with me in any way. That perhaps is beside the question. I am ready to stand upon these charges, I am ready to abide by the decision of any fair-minded man, but when we find this report absolutely inconsistent and absolutely untrue besides, I am not prepared to abide by the decision of this man. There is only one thing I can say, that if it was not for the strength of the evidence I brought, if it was not that I had absolute proof of my charges, he would have condemned me from the very start. He was afraid to go any farther; if he could have possibly have done it, Heitmann would have been condemned from start to finish. As it is he has not condemned me. He said that the inspector did wrong, but he whitewashed him. He said that nobody was injured. As I stated, I am going to call for these papers. I will move a motion on them and will challenge the Government to disprove what I say, that this report is absolutely inconsistent with the evidence. And I will also prove, as I stated previously, that it is absolutely impossible for a Labour man to get anything like justice from the men appointed by the present Government to inquire into any charge that may be made. I am sorry that the Minister for Mines is not present; it seems to me a conspiracy of silence. This much I am assured, that if the report had gone against me the Minister would have been only too ready to act. They thought it was impossible for me to prove the charges. I feel very strongly in this matter, and I am going to have the public know who was right and who was

wrong, and I will have the electors of the Menzies electorate know absolutely the part certain individuals took in this inquiry.

Mr. Taylor: Did they shift this inspector from Kalgoorlie for incompetency?

Mr. HEITMANN: I will go fully into this man's qualifications for the particular billet. I believe this individual contemplated resigning. If I had my way he will not resign, but will be shifted very suddenly. When I get these papers I am prepared to leave it to the House to say whether this man is worthy of his position or not. I am not looking for notoriety, but I am out to protect the interests of those working in the industry in this electorate. I know they have not got a fair deal. As a matter of fact the Commissioner states that no false statements were sent in, and that no words were put into the injured miners' mouths. As a matter of fact in the case of one man, the inspector, seeing that the company had a very bad case—and anyone acquainted with the facts knows that they were in a very bad way in reference to this particular accident—when the man said, "I do not think this timber was safe," turned to him and told him not to say it, saying, "It is no use your thinking of going to court, for your mate will make you out as telling untrue statements." But the man persisted in knowing Mr. Lander and his ways, and Mr. Lander then turned to him and said, "If you make such a statement as that you will be blackballed, not only on the mine where you are working, but on the mine right throughout Western Australia. This is a servant of the Government. This is a man who holds an appointment in which he is supposed to administer an Act brought in solely for the miners, but it appears to me that from the very outset he seems to have considered the side of the mine-owners instead of that of the miners. As I stated, I am going to present this before the House, and I want the Government to say one thing or the other—whether Heitmann was wrong or whether the inspector was guilty of the charges made. Now the position arrived at is this: The Royal Commissioner practically

states the inspector did wrong, but he as much as said there were not irregularities. The question for the Government is: If my charges did not constitute irregularities why was a Commission appointed; and if my charges have been proved, what action are they going to take with reference to this particular mining inspector?

Mr. A. C. GULL (Swan): I intend to make no apology at the outset of my remarks and then proceed to occupy the attention of the House a couple of hours or so, but if I think I have trespassed upon the kindness of members I will make an apology afterwards. I think I may fairly congratulate the Government on the honest and fair attempt they have made to keep within the limits of their expenditure. [Mr. Taylor: The limits are pretty wide.] Limits at a time like this must necessarily be elastic, because things have been drifting for so long that it is very hard to say just when the limit of drift has been reached and when it has not. At all events I think the Government have shown a healthy attempt to keep their administration costs as low as they possibly can. The question of the railways to my mind is so wrapped up with the whole development of Western Australia that it is a point that must take precedence in the minds of most hon. members when they look to the development of the country. I have always been in favour of development by railway extension wherever there was justification for it. I have for years believed in a policy of railway extension in the great North-West; I believe it is absolutely necessary for agricultural development as well; and so long as I can see a reasonable hope of getting people into the country I am prepared to run lines even before there are any settlers on the ground. There is one point in regard to these railways that has severely exercised the minds of the public. I refer to the rates charged in connection with the spur railways. I am glad indeed to find that the Government have recognised the rapidity carried on in regard to these spur railways shortly after they were built last year. I take it that these lines are part of a system;

and though at the beginning they may not show the profit we would like to see, still since they are part of the system, the whole railway system of the country should be prepared to make up what loss there is in the initial development of these new districts. The sectional returns asked for by the Leader of the Opposition may be valuable to a certain extent in showing just where the losses are; at the same time I believe the whole of the system should carry whatever losses occur on particular branches. I mean to say that because the goldfields lines are showing more earning power per mile than agricultural railways at the present time the goldfields people should not get a smaller rate than other people. I believe that the goldfields lines, being the best paying lines, are able to average up the lines that are not so remunerative.

Mr. Taylor: Whether they are able to, they are doing it.

Mr. GULL: I think it is quite right they should; just as much as I think that the whole of the population of the State should bear the cost of the loss and sinking fund on the Goldfields Water Scheme.

Mr. Taylor: What about the Fremantle Harbour Works?

Mr. GULL: That is a national work.

Mr. Taylor: Just the same thing.

Mr. GULL: There is another point in dealing with these agricultural railways. I do not think the enhanced value put on the lands brought into touch with these railways should be swamped into current revenue. There are many areas that may be worth 5s. an acre before the advent of a railway, which if we run a railway to them may be worth a pound per acre. I hold that the 15s. added to the value of the land should not go to the Lands Department and be used as current revenue. I should like to see it put aside as a set-off against whatever loss is made on these railways before they become properly developed. Coming to the question of railway management I agree that the system of a Commissioner is the best one, also that one Commissioner will do as good work as three. I believe it is only a fair thing to give the pre-

sent occupant of the position a chance of proving his worth before going out of the country to import another man. This gentleman has been for many years in the employment of the Government and, prior to that, he was in charge of the Great Southern Railway, and made an absolute success of his work. We have had an experience of bringing a gentleman from England to fill this position, and that man was quite as big a failure, if not a greater one, than he who followed him in the administration of the department.

Mr. Bolton: Would you pay the present man £3,000?

Mr. Taylor: If he can do the work I would.

Mr. Bolton: But he has been doing the work for years for £1,000.

Mr. GULL: If you are going to pay £3,000 a year to a man from England, I do not see why you should not give that salary to the present man if he can do the work thoroughly and well. I am in favour also of some system being adopted for the establishment of freezing works in the Nor'-West. At the present time there is an enormous loss of weight on stock during transit, and that is paid for by the consuming public. So long as the Government safeguard the interests of the consumer in whatever regulations they draw up with regard to these freezing works I do not care who gets the concession; but I will reserve to myself the right to agree to, or disagree to, any project for the establishment of works until I know what regulations are to be promulgated for their control. I desire to know that the public, and not any individual, are going to get the benefit. A great deal was said the other night about the action of the Honorary Minister in importing cattle and sheep from the other States. The comment was particularly in evidence because I happened to have been in the Eastern States while some of the stock was being purchased, and the member for Mt. Magnet insinuated that I was either directly or indirectly remunerated for the services I may have rendered. I would not take particular notice of it only that the interjection which came from the

hon. member was repeated once or twice, and attention was drawn to the fact that the Minister was not listening to it. Although I may pardon that hon. member's want of knowledge on very many of the questions he debates in the House, and agree that it is a matter for his constituents so long as he confines himself to those subjects of which he may have gained a smattering of knowledge in driving about the Murchison country or at the camp fire, it is a different matter when he launches out on such a subject as the dairying industry. It is only fair to myself, in view of the suggestion thrown out by him, to inform the House exactly what I did in connection with the purchasing of this stock. Speaking the other night the hon. member said that for the industry of dairying to be successfully carried on it would be necessary to establish a number of creameries, and that the closer they were to the factories the more prosperous would be the industry. He also said that the larger the number of creameries the better, and added that the Honorary Minister wanted the farmers to scatter over a radius of about 30 miles, and carry milk to the creameries. Irrespective of the ignorance displayed in advocating the importation of silos to teach the farmers how to grow them, the hon. member should at all events have known that, in the matter of creameries, they are absolutely out of date in connection with the dairying industry. The home separator has taken the place of the creamery, and instead of the farmer having to go his 10 or 15 miles twice a day, and thereby be prevented from attending to the duties incidental to a mixed farm, his cream is now taken into the factory perhaps only twice a week. Probably the hon. member will read up a little more carefully on the subject before he hazards these suggestions in the future. [*Mr. Bath:* In one of the biggest districts in Australia the milk is taken in twice a day.] That is an absolutely obsolete system, and the home separator has taken the place of the creamery. Referring once more to the purchase of the cows, the hon. member said that at the time the Western Australian agent was in Melbourne the Queensland Government

had sent a man over to buy stock for them, but that he had been compelled to report that, with the exception of a few cows at a price of about £15, there were just as good stock in his own country as there were in Victoria. I will give you some of the prices that existed at sales of stock about that time at three or four of the leading country markets in Victoria. At Dandenong on June 23th, springers—if the hon. member knows what they are—sold from £7 15s. to £8 ; at Echuca on June 29th springers sold up to £6 11s., and at Moree on June 24th the price was between £7 and £8 ; at Werribee the price was £7 10s. If the Queensland expert were looking for herd cows suitable for the ordinary farm and contemplated paying £15 a head for them, it was no wonder that he was recalled without having succeeded in his mission ; but if, on the other hand, as I presume from the price which was quoted, he was looking for pure bred stock, he was as much below the average in that as he was above the average in the other instance. Before passing on from the dairying question, I may say that I fully agree with the system propounded by the Honorary Minister. I have some knowledge of the question, and I have proved from my own experience that I can produce more milk per head from my own herds in Western Australia than I could from any herd in Australasia. I think that the question of whether dairying is going to pay or not depends entirely on the feed for the cattle. If the farmers here—and I want to say this as a sort of warning to those intending to take cows from the department—think that they are going to run a dairy in the ordinary negligent way that farmers are prone to adopt, the less they have to do with the industry the better. If on the other hand they are prepared to save many tons of their crops and see that their cattle receive good feed, then they will make a success of it. It is entirely a question of feed, and this remark applies more in Western Australia than in the other States. I was surprised when travelling in the East to notice, even in some of the much-boomed dairying coun-

try in Victoria, the absolute neglect of the ordinary feeding arrangements.

Mr. Collier: What districts are you referring to?

Mr. GULL: I passed through a good many of them ; for instance there was Gippsland.

Mr. Collier: There is no dairying there.

Mr. GULL: I went through the western districts, Sale, Echuca, Euroa and various others. If the Victorian farmers were to pay a little more attention to getting good feed for their stock, the butter export of Victoria would increase by 50 per cent. With regard to the mining industry, I am in favour of the suggestion that encouragement should be given to prospectors, and approve of the proposal made by one of the members of the Opposition that one of the very best aids to the prospector is to see that he gets a minimum rent, that his survey fees are very much decreased or even omitted altogether, and that he is exempted from roads board taxation. We find a miner's or an ordinary prospector's show seventy, eighty or a hundred miles out in the bush, being taxed for roads board purposes and the money spent in the town where the board meet. If there is any justification at all for assisting the individual prospector, I say that justification is best expressed by reducing his rents and his survey fees. On the land tax question I will take up the position I took last session, only perhaps a little more strongly. I will altogether oppose the land tax. [*Mr. Taylor:* That settles it.] It does, so far as I am concerned. Our deficit of £220,000 has set by the ears half the people of this country and half the members of this House. [*Mr. Bolton:* All of us have not herds.] Well, apply for them to the Agricultural Department, where you can get them cheap. My views on this matter are borne out by investigation. The more fully I look into it, the clearer it is that with a dual system of roads board taxation and Government land tax, there will arise a discrepancy which does not appeal to me in the slightest. Some of the boards rate themselves highly. According to the Min-

ister for Works (Hon. J. Price), in his speech the other night, the boards have done well this year by raising some £16,000 or £17,000 more than they raised last year. At the same time the Minister admits that those boards spent in administration £17,000 odd. Last year, bear in mind, they raised £16,000 or £17,000 more than they raised the year before.

The Minister for Works: No; the £17,000 applies to the year ending 30th June, 1906. The increase of last year's collection is for the year ending June, 1907, which I estimated at between £16,000 and £17,000.

Mr. GULL: That is practically what I was saying. Before that increase, the amount of their rating was practically exceeded by the cost of their administration. That resulted from some of the boards, a good many of them, not fulfilling their obligations. There is no reason in the world why the whole of them should not rate themselves fairly, and I am quite at one with the Minister in any legislation he may introduce to bring all the boards to a sense of their duty. At the same time I realise that when a board is taxing itself, as in some instances, up to 2½d. in the pound, and declaring the unimproved value, in instances I know of, up to £10 an acre, I say there is little room for a land tax on top of that. If the roads boards will fulfil their obligations there will be a saving to the Government, inasmuch as the boards will construct their own works, will collect their own rates, and the Government will need no machinery for collecting a land tax: all they will have to do to square accounts will be to cut down the amount of the subsidies. I cannot see any reason for imposing a land tax on the country to collect £60,000 or £80,000, in order to hand it back in the shape of annual grants to roads boards. I should much prefer to see those boards compelled to raise the £60,000 or £70,000, and spend it as they choose in their own districts, rather than see the money raised by the whole country and handed over to the boards to expend. I wish to compliment the Minister for Works on his perceiving this session what he would

not perceive last session. On the question of the Mundaring catchment area I made a motion in this House, and was most consistently laughed out by the whole of the members, who would not listen to me, and said my suggestion was absolutely absurd. [*Mr. Taylor:* Did not I defend you?] I think you helped me. [*Mr. Taylor:* That was your ruin. This session I find the Minister is prepared to do exactly what I asked him to do last year. I compliment him on his having acquired wisdom, and am pleased to offer him my best thanks.

The Minister for Works: Did you not propose a rescinding of regulations?

Mr. GULL: No; I proposed a fair taking over, a fair purchase to get the settlers out of the way. I must compliment the Minister for Lands (Hon. N. J. Moore) on the splendid year's work done by his department. We find 809,000 acres taken up this year, and that speaks volumes for the departmental energy. It is a hopeful sign; and so long as we can continue to get people to take up year after year such areas as that, we need have no fear. At the same time, if I were taking up land, I would sooner give the Government £10 an acre for land cleared of its timber than give them £2 for uncleared land and have to spend only £3 or £4 to clear it. With people in this State time is of the essence of the contract. We are seriously behind the other States in our development, and to ask selectors to go to the South-Western districts and to make a satisfactory success out of that forest country is practically absurd. It will take two or three generations to make anything like a decent farm in the heavily-timbered country. It would pay the selector infinitely better to give the Government the full cost of the clearing, in addition to the cost of the land, the payments, with interest, being extended, rather than for him to go down there and slog away for the rest of his natural life, with little to show for his labour. Whatever money the House and the country are prepared to spend on immigration I should rather see devoted to land clearing. Make the conditions enticing, advertise your coun-

very well, and immigration will follow. The more point in connection with our lands. I refer to the cut-out areas on the timber concessions. It is very well to say that Millars' have an undoubted right to hold those concessions till the term is up. I know that; but I know also that a fair proposal might be made to them, not necessarily of acre for acre, but of an uncut forest for a much larger area of cut-out forest. They are entitled to hold what they have; I wish to heavens they were not; and they are entitled to hold the cut-out areas. If we could redeem a cut-out area of say 5,000 acres by giving them 1,000 acres of forest country as an equivalent, I think we should for settlement purposes be making a good "deal." On many of the areas, such as the large area around Jarrahale, I hear constantly of men who are anxious to go on the land, but they are locked; and though that portion of the country is practically cut out, there is no hope of its being settled. I am fully alive to the fact that the timber companies are holding those areas because they would not like their London shareholders to think that their assets were being curtailed. The London shareholder understands that his company holds, we will say, a million acres. [Mr. Collier: He is a greedy animal.] He is, but he holds his shares on that understanding. Therefore if you were to tell him that he should give up 500,000 acres after the timber was cut out, he would not understand the proposition. He lives too far away to realise that such land is no longer of use to him. If the Government can formulate some scheme of offering a portion of uncut forest for a much larger portion of cut-out forest, we shall do much more than we are doing now to clear land for agricultural settlement. A few words more on the question of the depression of which I hear so much; and there is undoubtedly a certain depression, the reason for which is not far to seek. This country is not producing sufficient food-stuffs for its own requirements, consequently we have to pay for them to other countries. We are paying every day for imported articles that we

should be producing in our own country; hence directly we cease to pour into Western Australia borrowed money to take the place of the money which is drifting away every week to purchase food-stuffs, there is a depression, which can only be brought to an end by following the lines laid down by the Honorary Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department (Hon. J. Mitchell)—pushing agricultural development in this State to the farthest limit we can possibly reach. Until that time we shall have periods of depression. Usually in our so-called good times, loan money is being expended and people say that things are splendid. Just one farther matter, in regard to Federation, of which I am not very proud. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Eddy), in speaking the other night, actually attributed the wonderful gold production to Federation; and he went on to show that every year since Federation the gold yield has gone up. I am not going to deal with the Federation question to-night, for I have no doubt that during this session we shall hear farther on this subject. I have no doubt many Ministers will also reconsider their position in this matter. I am sure that after their recent excursion to the Brisbane Conference they will have conviction added to conviction that there is no hope for Western Australia getting a fair deal. The reason why members on the Opposition side are so keen on Federation is that they wish to get the control of the whole legislation of Australia through the Commonwealth Government. It is not so easy to collar all the Governments one by one; and that is the reason why the Labour party are so fond of their ideal of Federation, for the desire of the party primarily is to get control of legislation through the Federal Government. We shall hear more of this matter later on, and I am sure that members of the Ministry will at all events be more lenient to us this time. I will not say more lenient, because they were trying to vote against their convictions the last time; but instead of a few of them being behind the dais they will vote with those whom they agree with. I do not know that any

apology is necessary for the time I have taken up, and I thank members for the kindly consideration they have given me.

Mr. W. C. ANGWIN (East Fremantle) : The Governor's Speech opened with an apology for not calling Parliament together in February. That apology was made under a very limited excuse. The announcement that a session was to be held in February is one of the worst advertisements this State ever had. There is not the least doubt in my mind that statement was the means of keeping away a very large number of subscribers from the public to our loan. Any person giving the matter thought must have realised that to call a special session of Parliament together for the purpose of raising the small amount of revenue that the Treasurer stated would be raised—such a statement going before the world would, and did, in my opinion, act adversely to the interests of the State. This to my mind showed that, at that time—this was in December last—the Ministry did not realise the position of responsibility which they held. If they had done so, after passing the large Loan Estimates through the House, they would not have made the statement that a special session would be necessary in February. I have no doubt that some of those who supported the Ministry had in the meantime pointed out that by holding a special session in February Western Australia would fare worse than we should do by leaving the matter alone. Then it was stated that the Government intended to hold the ordinary session in May. A postponement was made for the purpose of allowing some of our Ministers to attend the Conference of Premiers. I may say that I differ from some of those in Opposition in what they have stated on this question. I believe if Ministers had not attended that Conference Western Australia would have fared worse than we shall do under Federation. I believe that by constantly drilling into those in authority in the other States the necessity of giving special facilities to Western Australia, by that means only we shall get the dues to which this State is justly entitled. I am pleased indeed that the

Premier did see his way to attend the Conference in Brisbane, and I hope the result will be of benefit to the State in the future. I deeply regret the antagonism taken up by a number of members in this House to Federation. At the time the referendum was taken I was personally opposed to entering the Federal compact with the other States. I believed then it would be detrimental to the interests of the State for many years if Western Australia federated, more especially in regard to our industries. But the people of the State decided by a very large majority—and most members in the House believe that the majority should rule—that it was to the interests of Australia as a whole that this State should enter the Federation. Seeing this is so, we should give Federation a fair trial before we take any steps to endeavour to break the bonds now uniting us. I cannot help drawing attention to remarks made by a representative in another place who took every opportunity, more particularly around Fremantle, to place before the people the conditions to be gained from entering the Federal Union. He was out night after night telling the people that they would have almost free living; but we are now told by this member that some of those who took such a firm stand in 1899 are among those who wish to break the bonds that now unite us. The member for Swan (Mr. Gull), as well as the member of another place to whom I have been referring, has told us why there is so much antagonism to Federation. The member of another place said, "I regret that an old friend of this country in the person of Sir John Forrest is the person who has brought down these proposals which will have such a detrimental effect on this State." He was speaking then of the taking over of our State debts and other matters that are likely to act detrimentally to Western Australia. But a few moments afterwards he showed his true colours, and while he regretted that a statesman like Sir John Forrest would bring down measures detrimental to this State, he said if it had not been for Sir John Forrest we should be disfranchised in the Federal Parliament.

I however think it would be better for this State to be disfranchised in the Federal Parliament rather than have a person there representing us and bringing down measures which are detrimental to this State. That shows that the one objection raised against Federation so far as the future is concerned—according to the member for Swan and the gentleman I have referred to—is that a majority of the people chose to send to the Federal Parliament members in whom they could put the most trust. I notice it is the intention of the Government to do their utmost to open up the North-West portion of the State. I believe with the Government that it is advisable to try an experiment in that direction and I think, with the Minister for Mines, that it is necessary for the Government to try if possible to give cheaper shipping facilities to that great district. We have to realise that not long ago an agreement was entered into—it was condemned considerably at the time on account of the subsidy attached thereto—which was the means of reducing the fares somewhat. We find that last year the Treasurer almost shook hands with himself that he had been the means of giving greater shipping facilities to the North-West coast without much additional charge to the State. In looking into this matter carefully we find that instead of that action doing good to the State there is a probability of it being a loss. We find that the shipping combine—that is the term those engaged in the shipping trade to the North-West are commonly known by—were charging to take general cargo to Carnarvon 32s. 6d. per ton, but another firm came in and said, "If you will subsidise us to the amount of £1,000 per annum, we will reduce the charge for general cargo to 20s. per ton." No doubt, subsidising this steamboat to go to Carnarvon will be the means of increasing trade to Carnarvon, and it will also be the means of inducing the Government to take steps to subsidise steamers to go farther north than Carnarvon. But the Government then sent for those connected with the shipping combination, and we find a gentleman by the name of Mr. Moxon

and a gentleman by the name of Mr. Carter and others waiting in deputation on the Government. They said: "We will reduce the charges to the people of Carnarvon for 12 months to the sum of 20s. per ton without subsidy." That is, all except the Adelaide Steamship Company who had the mail contract. We see that it paid them to remove any opposition that then existed, because once the opposition was removed it would be the means of prices being brought up again. I thought I would strike a comparison between the fares charged by the shipping companies trading to the North-West ports of Western Australia and the fares charged by the shipping companies trading north of Brisbane on the Queensland coast, and I find a considerable difference. The fares from Fremantle to Geraldton 210 miles are, single saloon £2, return £3 10s. The figures are supplied on the Government file of the 12th July, 1906. From Brisbane to Bundaberg 272 miles, the fares are single saloon £1 2s. 6d., return £1 15s., just half the fares from Fremantle to Geraldton. These are the figures I have drawn up. Fremantle to Sharks Bay 410 miles, single saloon £4 10s., return £7 10s.; Brisbane to Rockhampton 472 miles, single saloon £2, return £3; Fremantle to Carnarvon Roads 484 miles, single saloon £5 10s., return £9; Brisbane to Mackay 540 miles, single saloon £4 10s., return £6 10s.; Fremantle to Ashburton Roads 764 miles, single saloon £7 15s., return £13; Brisbane to Townsville 745 miles, single saloon £5, return £9; Fremantle to Cossack Roads 944 miles, single saloon £9 5s., return £15; Brisbane to Port Douglas 943 miles, single saloon £7, return £11. Port Hedland is the port where it is the intention of the Government I believe to start a new railway to Marble Bar, and no doubt in the near future it will be a port largely availed of not only by passengers but also for goods traffic, so that it will be necessary if it is the intention of the Government to open up the North-West in the manner stated, that fares for passengers and rates for cargo should be brought down to the proper rate so that people will have proper

facilities to carry the goods to Port Hedland to use the railway. Port Hedland is 1,004 miles from Fremantle; the single saloon fare from Fremantle to Port Hedland is £10 10s., and the return is £17 10s., while from Brisbane to Cooktown, 1,008 miles, the single saloon is £7 10s., and the return £12 15s. So it goes on continually right up to the whole of the coast to Wyndham, showing that the passenger rates on the Western Australian coast are from one-third to one-half more than the fares charged on the Queensland coast. The rate for carrying cargo from Fremantle to Port Hedland is 45s. per ton, whereas from Brisbane to Cooktown it is 30s. per ton. With these charges in their minds I hope the members of the Ministry will go into the matter carefully with the Minister for Mines, and I trust that his wishes in regard to this matter will be put into force. If we wish to develop the trade of Western Australia or if we wish to retain our trade, the Government should subsidise a line of steamers on our coasts, but I would rather prefer that they should take up their own shipping and run it in the same manner as we run our railways. There is no doubt that every convenience in regard to charges goes to those who trade outside the State, because we know a large portion of the trade of the northern ports comes from Singapore, and that a large portion of the trade of our southern ports comes from Adelaide. Consequently if we wish to develop the State it is necessary we should go carefully into the shipping charges to the ports on our coasts. We have heard a good deal during this debate in regard to agricultural development, and the Honorary Minister has received a good deal of patting on the back. The Minister reminds me very much of a child with too many toys. He takes one for a little while and suddenly leaves it and goes to something else. Consequently, while one gives him pleasure for a short period, we find it thrown away for something new. I only hope the Minister will keep at one of these things he has in view to which I regret no particular attention has been given in the Gover-

nor's Speech. I refer to cool storage in connection with the port of Fremantle. It is one of the toys I hope he will play with until he has carried it into effect. The Minister referred to this matter very carefully. He stated that everything he could do he wished to carry into effect. I can only say that some four or five years ago plans were drawn, and I believe tenders were called for the construction of abattoirs. I believe the plans were put on one side for a little while until a superintendent of abattoirs was appointed. That officer has been appointed now close on two years, but we find no mention in the Governor's Speech of the construction of abattoirs for the metropolitan area. We know that there are to be abattoirs at Kalgoorlie, and that according to the Press reports they are required. But they are also required in the metropolitan area, and while we have heard so much in regard to cool storage plants that are to be placed in almost every port, there is no statement whatever in the Governor's Speech that any step is to be taken in connection with the matter this year. I trust that if the Government are genuine in their promise to provide cold storage for the export trade they will take the matter in hand, put it on the Estimates this year and provide cool storage at Fremantle. It is just as well to finish with Fremantle while I am on it. I wish at this stage to congratulate the members on the Opposition side on the pressure they brought on the Government to carry out their wishes in regard to the construction of the Fremantle dock. I was rather disappointed in regard to the site. [*Mr. Bolton*: It is a good site.] At the same time I realise that it is the site chosen by the engineer, and I think it is the duty of any member of this House when an engineer decides the best place to carry out a work of this description, to try not to raise any obstacles to the work being carried into effect on that site thus chosen. The member for North Perth brought in an outside engineer, but I maintain that no man should know more about the requirements of this port than

one connected with its work for many years. In these circumstances I wish to assure the Government and the Minister for Works that so far as I am concerned I shall do everything possible to assist in carrying their proposal into effect. [Mr. Scaddan: You will have to wait for a general election before you get a dock.] Members on the Opposition side are so anxious to have this work carried out, that I trust the Minister for Works will bring in his Bill at once. While I agree with the necessity for the construction of a dock at Fremantle, at the same time I trust the Government will keep the control of the dock once it is constructed. I disagree entirely to handing over to boards or trusts any properties for control. I maintain the Government can control its work far better than any board they may bring into existence. During the past 12 months the Government have found it necessary to call on the Harbour Trust to raise revenue at Fremantle. We know that the revenue derived to-day from the port of Fremantle would not have been raised had it not been for the pressure brought by the Government. It shows clearly that as far as the control of the Harbour Trust is concerned it is necessary that the Government should have some power in the control of the Trust's funds. We know that the Harbour Trust if they could have avoided making these charges would have done so. It was expressed very clearly in the columns of the Press at the time that the public were to bear in mind that it was not the Harbour Trust who were enforcing the extra charges, but it was the Government who must take the whole of the responsibility. The Government had used their power under the Act, but if the Harbour Trust had had their way, the charges would not have been made. Those are not the actual words but it is the meaning of the paragraph, inspired no doubt by the Harbour Trust, appearing over the name of the Trust's secretary. There is another reason why the Harbour Trust should not have control over a work such as this dock. I refer to the unnecessary expenditure incurred I believe with the permission of the Labour Government

who were then in power, but on the advice tendered by the Harbour Trust and on the advice of those who called themselves experts and knew the requirements of the port. I am speaking of the cranes and electric capstans which have been erected at very large cost at Fremantle. I believe that the electric capstans are going to be removed from the wharves; they have been of no use, and have really been white elephants and consequently a great loss to this State. According to the commercial men of the port, the cranes erected on the wharves will not earn the interest on capital for many years to come. When the work of the dock is to be carried out we should not put the control in the hands of such a body as the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Just before the last elections for the Legislative Council we found that the chairman of that Trust, who is the saviour of the State according to some members, wanted to resign his position; the Government of the day thought that the State would go to ruin if we lost that gentleman, and they fell on his neck and almost kissed him, pointing out to him the great loss the State would sustain if he retired. That was nothing more than a ruse in connection with the then approaching Parliamentary elections in order to show to the State or to the people of Fremantle what a fine man they had, and how wrong it would be if he were allowed to retire from the position. That gentleman was returned to Parliament. A few months ago he again expressed his desire to resign the position and the Government again fell on his neck and asked him not to resign, and said if he would not they would give him a commission (he was about to visit the old country) to travel all over the world, see the various ports, and obtain all the information he possibly could in regard to the management of harbours. [The Premier: At his own expense.] I was about to say that it would be very interesting to know how much the State was going to pay for this inspection, but I will now take the Premier's word for it that he is not to be paid. At all events, I only hope that such is the case. We have in England to-day an experienced con-

sulting engineer, and if it is necessary for any information to be obtained with regard to the harbours of this State it would be far better that it should be received from the responsible officer rather than from a man who has no responsibility whatever. [Mr. Bath: He takes all the kudos for the good work performed by the secretary and officers of the Trust.] I noticed also in the Governor's Speech that the Government intend to bring down a Bill to amend the electoral laws. All will realise that what is required in regard to this question is a Bill that everyone can understand, and that the simpler it is made the better. We have been told that under the new Bill there is to be some system of preferential voting. I will suggest to the Minister in charge of the Bill that he should immediately place on the table of the House a copy of the proposed new measure so that members may become conversant with it. It is very essential that members should be thoroughly acquainted with the measure before they have to deal with it in the House. We not only desire to deal with the purifying of the rolls, but we also want to purify those persons who take part in elections. [The Premier: The candidates too?] It is necessary to bring into effect a clause having for its object the purifying of persons who take part in elections, so that care can be taken that those persons who have been appointed to honourable positions under commission by the Government and do not carry out their work in a pure, upright and just manner, can be prevented from continuing their dirty work. I also notice that it is the intention of the Government to bring down a Bill to provide for the better supervision of the liquor traffic, and that in this measure there is to be embodied the principle of local option. The Premier when speaking at Bunbury dealt with this matter, and stated that the Government would bring in a Bill for local option. We were subsequently told at Kalgoorlie that this Bill was also intended to provide for a system of Sunday opening of public houses. [Mr. Scaddan: Hear, hear.] I trust members will not take such a backward step.

Mr. Scaddan: I hope they will.

The Attorney General: Why do you hope that?

Mr. ANGWIN: While I have been in this House I have heard a good deal, especially from members who represent the goldfields, as to preventing Sunday labour. I trust that those who are trying their utmost to prohibit it will not agree to open the hotels on Sundays and thereby increase the labour of a large number of persons.

Mr. Scaddan: You decrease Sunday labour if you have limited hours during which the hotels are open.

Mr. ANGWIN: The hon. member has never been in places where they have certain hours during which hotels are open on Sundays.

The Attorney General: Do you believe in the Sunday thirst?

Mr. ANGWIN: I believe there is a proper way of treating it, but that is not by having the hotels open on Sundays. I also see that it is intended to amend the Public Service Act. In dealing with this question I regret very much that in the past the Public Service Act has not been administered as I think it should have been. It is a great pity that those connected with the asylums and gaols are not brought under the provisions of the Act. Before a man can be engaged as a warder at an asylum he has to undergo three years training and to hold a certificate for competency. Until he receives that he is not ranked as a warder, and in such circumstances I maintain that it should not be at the disposal of any one person, also a public service officer, to dismiss a person or to inflict penalties without giving him any right of appeal. I have known cases where the penalties have been altogether too heavy, several instances having occurred where girls have been fined £5 for very slight errors in their duties, and yet their salary only amounts to between £36 and £40 a year. All such officers should be given the right to be placed under the Public Service Act. We know very well that a great complaint in regard to the Act is that there is not an opportunity afforded to persons in authority of giving positions to their friends. For the sake of the Public Ser-

vice and for the sake even of the Ministers having control of the various departments, it is advisable to keep all appointments clear from political influence, and this can be done by placing all branches of the service under the Public Service Commissioner. The next item dealt with is that with regard to the control of health. I was hoping that the Minister in charge of the Act would bring down a consolidating measure this year so that the whole management of the health matters could be discussed. We should wipe away the incubus called the Central Board of Health. It would be far better instead of going to the expense of having a number of lay members appointed from outside the public service to positions on the Central Board of Health, to select additional inspectors for the Health Department, and have the whole branch managed entirely under Ministerial control. If it is necessary to have the Central Board of Health there are sufficient expert officers in the public service to form a far better board than the present one. Such a board would carry very much greater weight with the local boards and very much more good would be done. I think that the whole of the management as far as the control of health affairs is concerned, should be left to the local boards with due inspection by Government officials. If that were done the local boards would work much better. I am very glad indeed to see that the Minister intends to bring down a Bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Act. Those who come from Fremantle know well that great hardships exist in connection with the working of the Act at present.

Mr. Bath: You do not know what the amendments are yet and your compliments may be too early.

Mr. Bolton: The amendments have been foreshadowed.

Mr. ANGWIN: It is necessary that an alteration should be made in the present system, whereby if a man who is working for an employer for one day a week meets with an accident while he is on duty he can only get compensation under the Act amounting to half the wages he earns on that one day.

The Premier: Provision is made for that.

Mr. ANGWIN: It certainly needs alteration. I am going to ask the Attorney General to put a clause into the Bill so as to prohibit solicitors who will appear before the court when a case is tried, from appointing their clerks as assessors. This, I think, shows very bad taste indeed; and when we know that such things are done we should try to prohibit them. I therefore trust that in future we shall prohibit the clerks of solicitors who are bringing before the court cases under the Workers' Compensation Act from sitting as assessors. This very thing happened not long ago at Fremantle, and I regret that the award drawn up after the sitting of the court was not in accordance with the court's judgment. When a solicitor happens to be successful in a case, and draws up an award and gets his clerk to sign it, only two signatures out of three being necessary, one is led to suspect, rightly or wrongly, that everything is not so straight as it should be. I wish to draw the attention of the Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price) to a matter concerning the Fremantle water supply. Some time ago, on the outskirts of Fremantle, it was found advisable before the reticulation of the scheme was extended to levy an extra rate on persons who wished to use the water. That system obtains to-day as it did when the agreement was entered into a year or two back, when the water was first taken to the outskirts of the town. But I think the time has arrived when the whole of the Fremantle district should be put on one footing. There should be no distinction. A small property on the outskirts supplied with water from the Fremantle scheme, should be rated on exactly the same basis as a large building in the centre of the town. I realise that in a large central building very little water is used, though the charge is very high; and while the Government save in the case of large buildings, they provide also that there shall be no loss on outlying properties, which must pay a higher rate if the valuation is not in the opinion of the Government

sufficient to pay for the water at the ordinary rate.

The Minister for Works: The custom in vogue at Fremantle as regards household reticulation, is exactly the same as under all the other Government water schemes.

Mr. ANGWIN. If the Fremantle Water Scheme involved a loss to the State, I could understand the adherence to this system; but I notice from the last report, tabled the other day, that for the last half year of 1906, after paying $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. sinking fund and $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, the sum of £1,103 0s. 6d. represented a profit to the consolidated revenue. Seeing that the water scheme is profitable to the State, everyone should be rated on the same basis. If there were a loss, I should hesitate to make this request to the Minister; but we find that from 1901 until last year every year shows a handsome profit, therefore I think myself justified in asking that the same rate should be charged throughout the whole area served. The member for Greenough (Mr. Stone) referred to the manner of distributing the charities vote. Some few years ago, on every public platform, those opposed to old age pensions mentioned that the Government provided cash payments to people who found it necessary to seek State relief. If the Government will investigate this question they will find that some persons receiving relief in the shape of rations, are of such an age that a few shillings a week would be far better for them than the rations supplied by various tradesmen on orders issued by the departmental officers. I believe that office expenses could thus be considerably reduced, and greater satisfaction given to those who unfortunately have to seek relief. I have never known one instance in which relief has been refused, but cash relief has been refused and rations substituted; and I agree with the member for Greenough that the Government should see whether they cannot give cash relief in the future and as far as possible avoid rations. The Minister for Works, speaking the other night of the large areas of unused land adjoining our railways, disagreed with an interjection

to the effect that we should bring those areas into use. I maintain that throughout this State where persons who have taken up land have not carried out the compulsory conditions of improvement, it is the duty of the Government to confiscate; to put into operation the forfeiture provisions, to compel the holders to effect the improvements. It is known that around the Chapman area a little while ago a large portion of the land was repurchased for settlement; and it is known to-day that the land so purchased for agricultural settlement is being used by the people who sold it to the Government; and those people are running sheep on it, as they were prior to the sale. When the compulsory conditions are not complied with it is the duty of the Government to say, "If you do not use the land, we shall hand it over to someone who will."

The Minister for Works: Those estates at the Chapman were freehold. There were no improvement conditions attached to them.

Mr. ANGWIN: I refer to land taken up under compulsory improvement conditions.

The Premier: What have the Government done to remedy that? On every lithograph issued the date of approval of the application appears; and anyone who has a lithograph of a locality can see whether a block should be liable to forfeiture.

Mr. ANGWIN: Will that take effect in respect of lands alienated previously, or only from to-day?

The Premier: It takes effect from about six months ago.

Mr. ANGWIN: The lands of which I spoke were purchased for agricultural purposes, and I hear on the best authority that some of the land held around these areas would suffice for the settlement of over a thousand families. I have been told that it is the best wheat-growing land in the State; and I maintain that the Government should take action. If the land is being dummed and no improvements effected under the purchase conditions, I maintain that the Government should try if possible to

have the land brought under proper cultivation.

The Premier: I inquire into every case reported to me, whether or not the report is anonymous.

Mr. ANGWIN: I notice that when the Honorary Minister in charge of the Department of Agriculture was in the district he made use of these words: "It was a thousand pities that such valuable country close to railway facilities and a port should be given over to the maintenance of a few sheep." I think it is necessary that the Minister should get some information in regard to the areas I have mentioned. I refer to the Bowes area, and to Appertarra, where, I have been informed on the best authority, the land has been dummied, and no improvement conditions have been carried out. I have also been told that in various parts of the State these conditions have never been fulfilled. Land has been held on condition that £1 an acre should be expended on improvements, whereas not sixpence has been expended.

The Premier: Give one instance, so that we may inquire. What is the use of vague statements? As a matter of fact, I was, two years ago, travelling over the area you mention, and it struck me the holders were not fulfilling the conditions. On my return I instructed Mr. Thompson, the Inspector of Conditional Purchases, to make a full examination and to see whether the conditions had been fulfilled. But under the conditions existing up to the new amending Land Act, a man need effect no improvements for the first eight years, except to put a ring fence round his holding.

Mr. ANGWIN: Some of this land has not even been fenced since it was subdivided. No money whatever has been expended on it. I am pleased to hear the Premier say that he will take steps.

The Premier: I have taken them.

Mr. ANGWIN: I hope they will be successful, and that a large area now lying idle adjacent to our railways will be thrown open for settlement. There will then be no necessity to place our

immigrants on land 30 or 40 miles from our railways, when we have unused land such as I have mentioned. I do not think it necessary to take up more time. I trust that the Government will at once table their new Electoral Bill, so that we may carefully study it, and I trust also that one of the first measures introduced will be a Bill for the construction of the Fremantle Dock.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at three minutes to 10 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 23rd July, 1907.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY, PRESENTATION.

Mr PRESIDENT: In accordance with the resolution of July 11th, I presented the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency the Governor, and have received this reply:—

"I thank you for your Address-in-Reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament, and for your expression of loyalty to His Most Gracious Majesty the King.

F. G. D. BEDFORD, Governor."