

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 31st August, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Report of Comptroller General of Prisons for 1908. 2, Amended Regulations under:—(a) Audit Act, (b) Dividend Duties Act, (c) Land and Income Tax Assessment Act.

PAPER — COMMONWEALTH AND STATES FINANCIAL AGREEMENT.

The PREMIER said: I beg to lay on the Table "An Agreement duly signed by the Ministers representing the Commonwealth and the Premiers of the various States in connection with the financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States."

QUESTION—RAILWAY RELAYING, NORTHAMPTON.

Mr. CARSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1. When do the Government intend recommencing the work of relaying Northampton line? 2. Have the Government disposed of the plant, or any portion of the same in connection with that work? 3. If so, why?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1. The work is now proceeding. 2, No. 3, Answered by No. 2.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second day.

Resumed from the opening day, 29th July.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): It seems a considerable period since hon. mem-

bers had an opportunity of gathering together in this House—one does not count the formality attached to moving and seconding the Address-in-Reply as any thing connected with the serious business of Parliament—and so much has occurred since we discontinued our sittings in February last, and so many changes have taken place, that one is inclined to regard this Assembly as possessing a certain aspect of newness. Members have probably noticed that the occupants of the front Ministerial bench have changed—changed very considerably, and in Western Australia we are being treated to something of the nature of the continuous Ministry of Queensland; we are being treated, to a somewhat similar policy which characterised that Ministry in the sister State, except that instead of having a change of habits and a change of methods when things are going wrong, we are merely treated to a change of Ministers, and when we ask for some performance of the promises that have been made, and when we look to some change in the practice and methods which have not redounded to the credit of Western Australia, we are met with the reply that we have new Ministers in office who are going to do these things in the future. It seems to me that after nearly four years of office we can expect something more than promises, something more than changes of Ministers or changes of holders of particular portfolios, and that we do not want the attitude evidently adopted by the Premier that men or Ministers may come and go but this Ministry will go on for ever. I remember that during last session we had an hon. gentleman whose accession to this body was regarded with a great deal of pleasure and a great deal of expectation, and who during the course of the session certainly gave to members, and to many people outside, reason to believe that those expectations were to be realised. I refer to the member for Greenough. That hon. gentleman rose in the House like a veritable Solomon Eagle before the Fire of London, predicting the wrath to come; and I well remember that he threatened the Premier that some party which was

then in process of formation but of which we did not know too much—he threatened the Premier that unless the Government amended their ways there was a party in the House that would put in some other Ministry in order to do its biddings. Where is that party now? Where is the Solomon Eagle who issued this warning to the Premier and his colleagues, more particularly to the late Treasurer? Instead of the “eagle” we find the turtle-dove cooing in the most dulcet tones from a seat on the Ministerial bench, while another gentleman, who at that time waxed eloquent in defence of the Government measures and who repudiated the charges of the member for Greenough, is now occupying a seat on the somewhat colder portions of the Government benches—to be accurate, on the third back row of the Ministerial cross-benches. Now it seems to me that there is something in connection with political methods in Western Australia that is certainly not calculated to inspire confidence in the possibility of this Parliament or its Ministry leading the State out of its difficulties when we find one hon. gentleman who has hitherto defended the Government leaving it because he is dissatisfied with its financial administration, and we find another gentleman who was most keenly critical of the financial administration of the State is content to take the other's position and to acquiesce in the old condition of affairs. It is certainly time that in what is known as the Address-in-Reply we should have something more than these platitudes to which we have been treated time after time since this and other Parliaments were elected. We are told in the course of the Governor's Speech that the Government are convinced that the well-being of the people and the prosperity of the State demand a continuance of their forward policy. That is the forward policy which they say has been in force during the past four years. If the present condition of Western Australia, the present wide dissatisfaction in constituencies which have hitherto been regarded as strong supporters of the Government, is to be accepted as evidence of well-being and prosperity, then it is about time that we sought to attain our ends by methods contrary to

those pursued now. One can thoroughly agree and readily admit that the Government since they came into office have had great difficulties to contend with; no one will gainsay that. They have had a decline in revenue, they have had some, perhaps not disastrous, but we will say seasons which have not come up to expectations, and with reasonable knowledge or readiness to admit that things were not as they might have been, we have waited with some impatience for the Government to show their intention to right things. Instead of that humility which we should expect from the Government after many failures to redeem promises, we have that attitude that they adopt, of saying that although things are bad, we have only to look upon them in the right light to believe that they are as good as they should be. In the first place if we take the finances, that department upon which the Government were going to do such great work, one must say that this paragraph in the Governor's Speech, this statement as to their forward policy and efficient administration must have been written with their tongues in their cheeks. I want to say at the outset as far as the result of the recent Conference of Premiers is concerned, that the Premier and the Minister for Works in some circumstances might have every reason to be proud of the arrangement which has been arrived at. I have always said in this House that we could never satisfactorily adjust the relations between the Commonwealth and the States unless there was a fair apportionment of revenue, and as long as we had the constitutions existing side by side. With a large array of duties left to the State to administer there was need for a considerable proportion of the revenue to come to the States, and an arrangement such as that which has been arrived at—which, as it were, divides the Commonwealth from the State revenue, and at the same time gives a share in what will undoubtedly be the growing revenue of the Commonwealth from excise and customs—is one that should be satisfactory to this State. But I want to say this also, that the electors of Western Australia and the other States will need some more substantial guarantees in other

directions before they will be well advised in making this a permanent feature of the Federal Constitution, that is, something which must exist in that Constitution practically permanently, or until such time as another referendum can alter it and substitute some other arrangement. Of course, these arrangements will have to be embodied as the result of the referendum to the Federal electors in each of the States, and will have to be accepted by a majority in each of the States and by a majority of the States. But I say this also, that the electors, knowing the powers of the Government of the Commonwealth, should have some trustworthy guarantee from the State Governments that there will be some parity in the Constitutions in the first place, and also that they must have some guarantee as to the intentions of the States in regard to industrial legislation. Until then they would be foolish to hand over powers and perhaps revenue that might be needed by the Commonwealth in order to carry out their purposes, by making this a permanent feature of the Constitution of Australia. I think that should be their attitude at the forthcoming Federal elections, that is if the scheme is accepted, as I believe it will be, by the Federal Parliament. I think we should have something more than the very vague arrangement which has been made in regard to the control of industrial legislation. I believe hon. members in this House should ask from the Government some assurance that in the future this question of industrial legislation will be given more attention, and also the administration of existing industrial measures should be given more attention than has been done during the past three or four years. I want also to point out the delusion which the member for Murray, in moving the Address-in-Reply, evidently laboured under, in regard to the loss by Western Australia of revenue derived from the Commonwealth. The hon. gentleman seemed to believe that this decline in our receipts had been taken from us by the Federal Parliament, or by some other people, that in fact we had been robbed of it. As a matter of fact, nothing is further

from it. It is time hon. members in this House at least realised that the greater portion of that revenue has been lost to Western Australia by a reasonable provision which was inserted at the expressed desire of Western Australian politicians; it was part of the bargain insisted upon by delegates to the last Federal Convention before they agreed to urge the acceptance of the Constitution by the electors of Western Australia. I refer to the sliding scale.

The Premier: They would have made it 20 years instead of five if they could have done so.

Mr. BATH: Still, that was part of the terms under which Western Australia joined the Federation, and upon it Sir John Forrest urged the acceptance of the Constitution by the electors of Western Australia. If anyone is to blame, blame should be attached to the right people, our own politicians in Western Australia. A greater part of the loss of the revenue is due to the operation of the sliding scale, due to the fact that every five years it has been reduced, and then finally wiped out in 1906-7. That portion of the loss we cannot attribute to the sliding scale is largely attributable to the fact that in Western Australia we are growing more of those things that we imported and on which previously duty was paid. That is not a matter upon which we, as members representing the people of Western Australia, have any reason to be concerned about or to grieve over. As a matter of fact, the revenue which was previously obtained under the sliding scale, or which was previously paid for imports now being produced in Western Australia, is either in the pockets of the people or else it is in the pockets of the importers through whom these goods are brought into the State. When this matter was being discussed some time ago I urged upon the Premier that we should have this point settled once and for all. I moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the result of the gradual cessation of the sliding scale, as to whether the people had really benefited by the reduction of the duties or whether the importers in West-

ern Australia were withholding what rightly belonged to the consumers in the State. The Premier did not think it was necessary to hold such an inquiry; he was rather of the opinion that the people had benefited. It left us in this position: we were controlling certain departments which were necessary for carrying on the Government; we had growing needs and demands in connection with our education, our police, hospitals, medical and other departments, owing to the increase in the population and owing to the extension of settlement on the goldfields and through the agricultural districts. When we found that the revenue which had hitherto been derived from the people was being left in their pockets, that the need for expenditure was increasing, the most natural thing which would occur to any Treasurer would be to find fresh sources of revenue, to ask the people to give in some other form or channel that revenue which had been left to them through this cessation of the duties. It is because the Government have failed, to a large extent, to raise this revenue, it is because they have failed to replace money in the coffers of the State, and have resorted to borrowing not only for reproductive works, but for many purposes which cannot by the greatest stretch of imagination be regarded as reproductive, that we are in the position that we find ourselves in to-day. As a matter of fact, the revenue from taxation, as apart from payment for services, in 1905 was £221,738, or 17s. 8d. per head of the population. In 1909 it was £296,599, or an increase in money derived from taxation of £75,000 to meet a deficiency of £600,000, caused through the loss of the sliding scale duties and the increase of local production. Anyone who looks at these figures will see how small has been the provision made by the Treasurer to replace revenue which we have lost and this notwithstanding the fact that there have been growing demands upon revenue in order to meet expenditure in various departments. I might put this position to hon. members: supposing to-morrow we reached that desirable condition of affairs where we

are not only increasing our agricultural production, but also went in for the local manufacture of many of those articles which we have to import now, such as agricultural implements, machinery for our mines, and manufactures in other directions, thus reducing our share of the customs revenue to a minimum, from the attitude of the present Government they would say that was the worst possible thing that could happen, because it would deprive us of revenue necessary to carry on the affairs of the country. and they would at once confess that they had no means of replacing revenue which had been lost by such a desirable condition of affairs. That would mean that we would be in the height of prosperity, primary production going on, manufactures flourishing and meeting local requirements, and yet the Government by their own attitude during the past four years, would have to confess from their point of view that this would be the greatest calamity which could possibly happen to Western Australia; that it would be a condition of affairs which would mean deficits, loss of revenue, and inability to square the finances. I say that what we need is sufficient courage to inform the people of the real condition of affairs, to point out that revenue lost in one direction which was necessary to carry on administration must be made up in another direction if we are to keep pace with the growing demands of our producers and if we are to maintain our administrative departments in a reasonable state of efficiency. Now in regard to that taxation which has been introduced and which was responsible for the increase of £75,000 in the amount raised during last financial year over that of 1905, the highest contributing factor is, of course, the taxation on land and on incomes. I want to urge upon the Government that they should, when reintroducing that measure during this session, give to hon. members an opportunity not only of reviewing the incidence of taxation, but also of reviewing what is more important, what is an integral part of the measure, namely, the machinery Bill; and, further, that we should have some means of protecting

the State in the matter of valuations. I am satisfied from my own knowledge of Western Australia that in respect of the values of land both in our urban and rural areas there must be something radically wrong with those valuations sent in for the purpose of land tax: and I think the Government would do well to introduce in the taxation measure when it is submitted to us—and it will be necessary to submit the machinery measure—a provision which obtains in New Zealand and by which the work of valuation can be left to the owners of land, namely, a clause protecting the State by providing for compulsory purchase. That would give us the opportunity of purchasing the land at the value placed upon it by the owner, with of course a reasonable allowance for disturbance; and I am satisfied that even with the present incidence of the tax, granted such a provision the measure would raise considerably more than it is doing at the present time. Another factor in the present financial difficulty is undoubtedly the loan policy of the Government. It is characteristic of the late Treasurer, who took up the cudgels on his own behalf, that in order to reply to some remarks of mine he should have wholly misinterpreted them. This provided him with the only possible means of replying. He stated that I had attacked entirely the loan policy of Western Australia, when I had expressly stated that while there could be no reasonable objection urged against a loan policy expended on reproductive works producing revenue for the charges we must pay on these loans. But my objection was to the use of loan moneys in place of revenue to obviate the necessity of the Government facing the question of new revenue: the use of loan moneys for works which were certainly not reproductive. The Premier in the course of his pre-sessional speech at Bunbury indulged in heroics. He made some remarkable statements, which no doubt he regarded as very courageous, to the effect that he would not acquiesce in any policy of stagnation, that he would sooner leave political life in Western Australia. I can imagine the hon.

gentleman when he made that statement. As a matter of fact the Premier has gone past the heroic stage, for when a man is fat and forty he cannot look forward to being a hero.

Mr. Holman: Do you hear that, Mr. Attorney General?

Mr. BATH: So far as the Attorney General is concerned, a gentleman with his lean and ascetic look is more likely to be regarded as a hero than is the Premier or the ex-Treasurer. After all, this statement regarding a policy of stagnation as opposed to a forward policy, sounds very well from a platform, when people are not too critical or disposed to too closely analyse the statements of a politician; but when such a statement is analysed one fails to find in what the courage consists so far as the Premier's present attitude is concerned. I have heard of gentlemen who certainly had what they might regard as courage, but what others would regard as lack of conscience; gentlemen who had no scruples and who, rather than earn an honest living, would go round borrowing from their friends for all conceivable purposes. That is practically the policy adopted by the Government—borrow for everything, no matter how trivial, or how unfinancial the Government might be. It is just this policy which has been responsible, or largely responsible, for the present financial stringency. Now as a matter of fact we have largely increased our indebtedness since the year when the present Government, or the first blossom of the continuous Ministry, took office. We have increased our debt by over £4,000,000, involving interest and sinking fund charges amounting to about £180,000. And in this connection I want to point out how cunning was the Premier in the comparisons he drew in his pre-sessional speech. He made his comparison of 1908-9 with the financial year 1902, and said that although they had borrowed 15 million pounds they had only increased the debt per head by something over £1. As it happened, in 1902 the debt per head of the population was £69 and in 1909, £71, or a little less than £2 increase when the shillings

are worked out. If the Premier had compared the year 1908-9 with the year 1905 he would have had to put a very different complexion on it.

Mr. Collier: That is, since he has been at the helm.

Mr. BATH: In 1905 the public debt was £61 19s. 5d., or, in round figures £62; so that since 1905 we have increased the debt per head by just a little under £10.

The Minister for Mines: Was that before the big loan raised by the Daglish Government?

Mr. BATH: That was at 30th June, 1905.

Mr. Foulkes: That is, in five years.

Mr. BATH: In four years. And it is also well to bear in mind that in working out the indebtedness per head of the population it is necessary to remember that during those four years the percentage of children of what might be termed non-taxpaying ages has very largely increased the percentage of our total population; so that a debt of £10 per head of the population, recognising the constitution of our population at the present time, represents a very substantial increase over the public debt of 1905. But when we turn to the statement of revenue derived from the public works and services upon which this loan money has been and is being expended, we find an altogether different condition of affairs. One would have thought that with the expenditure of four millions of loan money in the construction of public works we would have had an increase in revenue from those public works and services. As a matter of fact it has actually decreased. Although we have constructed over 300 miles of additional railways, the railway revenue during last financial year as compared with the year 1904-5 has declined by over £100,000; and when we take the services such as mining, railways, harbours and rivers, public works, State batteries and other services, we find that the revenue in 1905 was £1,991,804, and that in 1909 the revenue derived from these same works and services in which our

loan moneys are expended, was only £1,904,000, or £87,000 less than in the year 1904-5. That is to say, we have involved ourselves in additional interest and sinking fund to the amount of over £150,000 in order to raise £87,000 less revenue from those public works and services on which the money is being spent.

The Minister for Mines: We hope they will grow up again very quickly.

Mr. BATH: The hon. gentleman is always hoping against hope. But we cannot live on hope, or pay interest and sinking fund with hope. We cannot administer the State with hope. We have to have hope backed by financial resources; and it is just about time the Government recognised that hope is not sufficient food for the public to live upon.

The Minister for Works: We will have large quantities of wheat this season.

Mr. Foulkes: Would you mind telling us how you voted on the question of the construction of the Fremantle Dock?

Mr. BATH: Later on I will have something to say on that. Of course it will naturally be argued by the ex-Treasurer that although we have had this decline in the revenue derived from our public works and services, there has been an economy exercised in the expenditure. I know that is an argument which has been advanced, but I want to give a few details to show in what that economy really consists. Let us examine some of the items of expenditure of 1905, the year I am comparing with the present financial year. In that year we had to make provision of £35,600 for the purchase of copper ore at Phillips River; we provided £33,000 for the erection of State batteries; we expended £6,000 on the development of mining; for Mines Water Supply, over and above the ordinary administrative expenditure, we furnished £20,000. Then in regard to railways, in order to bring our lines up to a decent condition so far as the permanent way was concerned, we had a special expenditure from revenue of £79,000; for vacuum brake fittings, £13,000; for replacing obsolete stock, £40,000; for new works and im-

provements we found £13,716 and for new railways, £7,000.

The Minister for Works: How much does that total?

Mr. BATH: The total is £153,048 as to railways and £94,367 as to mining. Then for the Public Works Department the general vote for roads and bridges in 1904-5 was £61,101, and in 1908-9 £35,000, or £26,101 less. The votes for other works, such as roads, bridges, public buildings, etcetera—that is the vote for those works apart from administrative cost and apart from this item of £61,000—in 1904-5 was £235,068, while in 1908-9 the estimate was £111,688, or a difference of £123,380. That makes a total of £386,896. When we compare the difference in the expenditure between the two years it will be found that the expenditure was less in 1908-9—making allowance for the expenditure from the Sale of Government Property Fund—by only £345,449, so that upon that score the Government cannot urge that in this question of less expenditure there is anything like a set-off for the big decline in the amount received in return for our public works and services, or in our revenue derived from them.

The Minister for Works: How much extra revenue had you? How many hundreds of thousands of pounds more?

Mr. BATH: I am making a comparison as to the expenditure, which may be urged as an argument against my statement that although we have gradually increased in indebtedness, we are deriving less revenue from public works and services. Apart altogether from the revenue—I am leaving out the question of surplus revenue returned from the Commonwealth—the position amounts to this: owing to unwise loan expenditure we are piling up our indebtedness, increasing the percentage necessary to pay interest and sinking fund from 21 to 29 per cent., and we are not securing a corresponding increase from revenue in these public works and services. Naturally anyone having any knowledge of business, whether a State or a private commercial undertaking, will realise that a few years of administration such as

that can only end in disaster, whether it be to a State or a private individual. Then again the hon. gentleman, and his colleagues, when warmed up with the good cheer of public gatherings, show dinners and other functions, generally have a word of obloquy for what they are pleased to term the croaker. I would point out that the Premier and his colleagues are the worst croakers we have in Western Australia to-day, because they are croakers not with their tongues but in their actions. On the one hand they will say that we have a State of magnificent resources, teeming with wealth, for they can always manage in an eloquent peroration to talk about gold, pearls, wheat, and wool, and yet on the other hand they say that a State possessing this wealth and resources cannot afford to pay decent salaries to the men and women in the Education Department; cannot afford to make decent provision for the sick in the hospitals, and that they are forced to pare, cut down, and deny this and that because the State cannot afford the expenditure. One statement gives the lie to the other, and such remarks do us great damage, not only here but in the old country. It is about time we taught the people, and impressed on them that with the resources we undoubtedly possess we can afford to pay our way, and pay for those conveniences of civilisation and for those humanitarian sympathies which every flourishing community should possess.

The Minister for Works: We are paying the same rate you did in the flourishing year you refer to.

Mr. BATH: The hon. member is wrong. In 1904-5 we did not deny the teachers their increments.

The Minister for Works: The same rates are being paid now as then.

Mr. Bolton: You did not refuse the hospital votes.

Mr. BATH: The hospitals were not then deprived of the money to carry on with; the people living in the country were not deprived of facilities in the way of roads; the municipalities were not deprived of the money necessary to help them on with their work.

The Minister for Works: You wasted a lot of money.

Mr. BATH: On the question of administration as affecting these various departments I have a word or two to say, especially with regard to the question of education. I do not think any State has advertised itself in a worse manner, or has done more to discourage the development of what is really essential to the welfare of the people, than the Government have done by their refusal to grant the increments to teachers. The Minister for Agriculture, who is not in the House, made great use in the course of his electioneering speech of the rate of wages paid to State farmers, but he forgot to mention that we have men in Western Australia—and women too, who receive even less—earning the munificent wage of 5s. a day for educating our youth. Not only are those teachers condemned to live for years in a distant part of the State where living is more expensive than in the capital and where facilities for progress in their profession are less, but they are also condemned to a wage altogether inadequate to maintain them in decency, let alone to give them an impulse to make progress in their profession. We cannot afford it, we are told, and many things which are necessary for the improvement of the system of education are denied us simply because we are told that the finances will not permit of the expenditure. As a matter of fact, until we say that our finances will permit it, or at least that our resources will permit it, we will not have a proper educational system in Western Australia. To-day we are spending £170,000 or more, apart from the erection of buildings, in our system of training children from the ages of five or six until they are 14, and then, except in a few localities where proper facilities are provided, these children are turned adrift, and the expenditure on their education is practically wasted, as there is no provision for some system of continuation schools for the extension of the educational system by which those boys and girls can be given further facilities just at the time they are at the most receptive age. If we cannot provide these things from revenue, if the state of our finances

is stringent, there is all the more reason why the Premier should not fail to carry out that intention which has been spoken of before, and urged in this House, to set apart a considerable proportion of our land for the purposes of an endowment. The longer we delay, the less opportunities will there be to carry this principle into effect. We are opening up fertile areas, and surely we can afford to set aside portions of them to provide a fund in order to supplement our annual estimates. We are selling the land which is the heritage of our children, we are exhausting our timber resources, we are lessening the amount of coal and gold in our mines, and the least we should do is to compensate the children in some way by giving them sufficient education for the greater struggle they will have in the future. All the profits from our land sales could be devoted to no worthier purpose than to provide money not only for primary education but also for the extension of the educational system until it is co-ordinate and complete. Then, as to the action of the Government with regard to hospitals. There is no direction in which the economy of the Government could be worse conceived than in the proposals for the control of the hospitals. To-day we lay ourselves under the reproach that we have more concern for a sick hog here than for a sick human being. We have a gentleman, an entomologist, travelling throughout the world looking for parasites; we maintain an insectarium in Perth; we have experts in the Agricultural Department who can be called upon from any part of the State to go free of charge to the stockowner or agriculturist and examine his bad potatoes, or sick pig, or ailing hog, or to provide ladybirds to eat the scale off his orange trees, or to provide some other kind of insect to get rid of the grub in his cabbage patch; we can do this, we can look after the farmer's stock and his garden produce, but we cannot afford decently to look after the sick in our hospitals. This is a reproach to us, and one which should be removed at the earliest possible date. So far as education is concerned we have a communal system for

looking after the minds of the growing youth, and it is just as much a charge upon us to have a communal service for looking after the health of the people.

The Premier: Why should we pay double what they do in the other States?

Mr. BATH: We regard ourselves as being more progressive. In the East they have been mean and cheese-paring, and they have not realised their obligations in this direction. There is no necessity for us to follow their example. If we have started well there is no reason why we should retrogress instead of progress. Let us hold ourselves up as an example to the other States. It is true that this policy of local control in connection with the hospitals might work well in some districts. There are districts where an aggregation, perhaps of a large body of workers, and a concentration of the population, will permit of the scheme of local control with a Government subsidy. But what about the man who is continually in the outback districts, the man who goes for employment to the outfields and has the duty of rearing a family. He will be most seriously affected by these charges, which, with the other expenses of living there, will more than likely ruin him. Those persons have to pay most exorbitant prices for everything, and it is really almost impossible for them to live. In the agricultural districts again the same thing applies. I can understand that in centres like Northam and other places where there are more facilities for doctors, and, therefore, where the rates for medical attention are cheaper, economy might be contemplated, but I cannot understand anyone having regard for the welfare of the people contemplating the economy which is proposed in regard to public hospitals situated at some distance from centres of population. I say we ought to retrace our steps in this direction and show we have sufficient resources, and that we can afford to look after the sick, both in body and mind, in the State of Western Australia. In regard to the Lands Department we have now Mr. Mitchell, who was honorary Minister, in charge of that department, and there is promise of many reforms and of an altogether new regime

as far as this department is concerned. There are just two or three points I should have been glad to bring under the notice of that gentleman had he been here. I know of several instances where men have taken holidays and others who have given up employment for the purpose of going on the land. One man came all the way from Boulder and went to the Albany district; he was taken out west of Albany to look at some land, and he selected an area which he was assured he had a good chance of getting. He went back to Boulder and waited for advice from the Lands Department preparatory to going down in order to start work on this land. Some time after he arrived back in Boulder he was coolly informed that this land, which he had chosen and to which he had been taken by the land guide had marketable timber on it, and therefore, could not be granted to him. This man lost his job and was placed in a very unsatisfactory position, in fact a position of poverty, by reason of the action of the Lands Department. In this case the officer at Albany had not sufficient knowledge to lead the man aright, and prevent him from making this mistake. And going up in the train I was told by a well-known gentleman of Kalgoorlie that he knew several similar instances. One man in company with his brother occupied his holiday of six weeks in looking for land. He was taken by the land guide to some land and he returned to the goldfields only to be told later that it had marketable timber on it.

Mr. Collier: That will not happen now under the new regime.

Mr. BATH: I hope not, but I am not going to indulge in a tirade against the control of the department because the hon. gentleman is new to it, and he must be given a chance. Every man is entitled to a fair chance. I would urge on the Minister for Lands that in this State there are many men anxious to get on the land, but it is certainly asking them to make a big sacrifice to throw up their employment and spend weeks of their time, and go to expense looking over the country, searching out blocks, and then be disappointed. We should provide equal facilities for our own people as we pro-

vide for immigrants. We should give the first opportunity to our own people; men who have been taxpayers and done their duty to the State should receive first consideration. So far as this consideration is concerned they should have been given facilities and saved disappointment and expense, which in some instances goes far towards ruin.

Mr. Underwood: They are given facilities if they come from St. George's-terrace.

Mr. BATH: Then as to the matter of dealing with transfers and the removal of transfers from the Lands Department. This seems to me a step in the wrong direction and opposed to the policy of decentralisation, about which we have heard so much. It is a policy, which after all only seeks to suit the interests of the bankers and legal fraternity of the metropolis. It has caused great inconvenience in Kalgoorlie where hitherto these transfers could be fixed up. Transfers as to residential leases and working men's blocks could be carried out by the local branch of the Lands Department at a minimum of expense, and a greater amount of courtesy than people are likely to receive in Perth, not perhaps courtesy, but merely expedition and more information being placed at their disposal. As a matter of fact the transfer branch is not now able to give transfers until the branch is assured from the Lands Department that all the conditions attached to the occupancy of the lands have been carried out, in fact they must have a clean certificate before the transfer can be completed. Considerable work is entailed on the officers of the Lands Department in this way. Instead of completing the transfer in the Lands Department the documents have to be taken to the transfer branch. I hope the Minister will reconsider this proposal and revert to the old method, which, I believe, is in a line with the policy of decentralisation to which the Government are committed. Then again, there is the action of the Agricultural Department in the prohibition of the importation of potatoes. It is a remarkable thing that in Western Australia almost every proposal which is put forward by the Government has the

object of making it more difficult to the consumer, and increasing the cost of living. We had the proposals of the department in connection with the pastoral industry, and the consumer has to suffer naturally at the hands of the meat combine. As to the development of our timber resources we are told that these are of great assistance and value to the State, but in that direction we find we have to submit to the very same thing. It seems to me no other good can arise from this undue prohibition of potatoes than the mere gratification of raising the cost of living of the consumers in Western Australia. It is a serious thing indeed that this article, which constitutes one of the staple foods, has been raised to such a prohibitive price, when I believe the whole thing could be fixed up without any danger to the potato growers in Western Australia. It is an admission of ineptitude on the part of the Agricultural Department when they cannot arrange for supervision, so that potatoes from clean districts and free from disease can be brought into Western Australia. The Government should take some steps to see that this is done, otherwise we maintain an Agricultural Department, or rather officers in the Agricultural Department who are ornamental and who are not equal to the task of inspecting a shipment of potatoes when they are brought in. We have also proposals in regard to some of the public services of the State, and it is a remarkable thing that they are mainly confined to the Goldfields Water Supply and the State Batteries Department. We are told that these departments entail a great loss and there is need for readjustment of charges so that the revenue may not be called upon to make up such a large amount of interest and sinking fund on these works.

The Minister for Works: What works?

Mr. BATH: The Goldfields Water Supply and the State batteries. Proposals are on foot for increasing the charges so that so big a demand shall not be made on the revenue; that is the statement made. I am not going to complain about any proposal for trying to put our public works and services, on which loan money has been expended, on a self-sup-

porting basis. But I would strenuously object to this attempt made in regard to certain services while we still continue to run others at a loss. If we are going to have this done in regard to the Goldfields Water Supply and the State batteries then it is time we were given a fuller account of the result of the working of our railways, and that those lines which at the present time are run at a loss to the community, and for which the payable lines have to pay, are put on precisely the same basis as the Goldfields Water Supply and the State batteries. Also that when the Fremantle dock is constructed the same principle shall apply.

The Premier: You propose to make all losses, make them uniform?

Mr. BATH: I do not; I propose that we should have a fair deal all round and not ask the goldfields to pay up on their services and allow others to escape. We should have sectional returns of the railways so that we can see which lines are paying and which are not.

The Minister for Works: Would you have differential rates on the different sections?

Mr. Taylor: Give us the return first.

Mr. BATH: No, I do not think that differential rates are necessary. I want to point out first that no railway proposal has been introduced in this House without the Minister in charge of the measure assuring us that with the resources contiguous thereto the line will pay, with the development of the resources.

The Minister for Works: Not from the commencement.

Mr. BATH: All I ask is that we shall see that in the construction of railways that the resources are used and the statements made, justified. I am not saying that as soon as a railway is constructed we should expect it to pay interest and sinking fund, but there is a reasonable limit to running it on unprofitable lines, and there should be a greater limit to the holding of land along the railways which are served by these lines and the value of which is enhanced, and which is kept out of use and for which others have to pay.

Mr. Collier: The Premier threatened and warned them at Bunbury.

Mr. Taylor: He did not go down to Bridgetown.

Mr. BATH: He did not go any further; he was very clever. I noticed in connection with the recent Conference the State Premiers and the Ministers of the Commonwealth have made some arrangements in regard to the future control of industrial legislation, and it seems to me that the proposal is nothing more than a mere pretence designed to postpone what the measures are which should be taken. We have had something similar to this proposed board of trade or inter-State commission in force in the United Kingdom for a considerable period, and until the last year or two it has done nothing more serious or more practicable than to issue annual returns and periodical books of statistics. If, in Australia, this proposed inter-State commission is going to do nothing more than tickle our ears with figures when we want measures—legislation and administration—it is not going to be satisfactory to the people of Australia. In this State we have not shown that sincere desire to administer our existing industrial legislation to give the people of this State any hope that this arrangement will be of any greater advantage. And as I said before the people would be foolish to make any such arrangement or allow it to be made part of the Constitution until they have some sounder and more practical guarantee. We have, for instance, the Factories Department; and I say without fear of contradiction there is a worse condition of affairs, in regard to the employment of large numbers of women and girls especially, in Western Australia than in any other State of the Commonwealth. We have girls and women employed as shop assistants, or as assistants or so-called apprentices to dressmakers, white-workers and others, whose condition to-day is a reproach to the Government that permit it; and I think the Government, if they want us to believe that any good is going to come out of this proposal for industrial control, should give us some assurance as

to their intentions towards providing for the administration of our existing industrial measures, and towards introducing amendments when amendments are necessary. We have had revelations from time to time as to the conditions prevailing in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide; but I say, knowing the facts, that there are conditions worse in Perth to-day; there are girls receiving 2s. 6d. per week as apprentices who, as soon as they ask for more, perhaps after having been years at the trade, are coolly turned out and their places are taken by others. We have hundreds of girls in the metropolis receiving not more than 7s. 6d. and 10s. per week, who, were it not for the fact that they reside home with families and depend partly on their parents for support, would be absolutely unable to exist on such wages; and when we have, as now, many unemployed, who are under conditions which are not too satisfactory, when the parents find it difficult to make both ends meet, it is certainly not to their advantage nor to the advantage of the girls that the girls should be receiving such low wages. I think the Government could very well provide that the existing organisations, that is the industrial councils, should be permitted to take up cases on behalf of these workers in order that their wages may be fixed at a reasonable rate; because it is often very difficult to organise them; they are afraid that if any move is made, or if any information is given, it will result in their being victimised. Therefore, it is impossible to form any organisation that will enable them to move for themselves; but someone else will have to fight the battle for them, someone else will have to take up their case. However, the Government should see that the Factories Act is administered, and that some tribunal should be provided so that reasonable rates of remuneration will be provided for these people. We also have a proposal from the Government for a redistribution of seats, and it is remarkable that the Premier and his colleagues deem that a redistribution of seats is necessary, such "as will provide for the movements of popu-

lation in the various districts of the State, brought about mainly by the development of agriculture and the great expansion in the settlement of our wheat-producing lands." There is something sinister in that statement if one takes the actual figures of the number of electors throughout the State into consideration, because there are only two electorates which I think can be called agricultural electorates in which there can be any reasonable grounds for a redistribution of seats, while, on the other hand, there are several metropolitan, and there is one goldfields constituency I know of which can advance an even stronger claim than the two agricultural constituencies, I have taken the trouble to go through the enrolment in 1908 to find out the exact position, and to find out the reason for this proposed redistribution of seats, and I find that in those constituencies which may be classed as metropolitan the average number of electors in each is 4,088. The average in the Fremantle constituencies is 2,538; in the agricultural constituencies the average is only 2,414; in the ports, that is Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton, the average is 2,010; in the central goldfields, that is Boulder, Kalgoorlie, Hannans, Ivanhoe and Brown Hill, the average is 3,394; in the scattered goldfields, that is Mount Magnet, Mount Margaret, Murchison and others of that character, the average is 2,491, and in the North-West constituencies the average is 1,207. So there is nothing in those figures which to my mind warrants this emphasis on the need for redistribution found in the development of our agricultural and wheat-growing lands. If there is a proposal to distribute the seats in order to equalise the number of constituents throughout the State I think members will be ready to support such a proposal; but if there is one which aims at giving some addition to some particular producing interest that on the figures does not warrant it, then I for one will be strongly opposed to any gerrymandering of that nature. I notice also that the member for Kimberley is greatly concerned about the advent of a Japanese medical man in the North-West. There was a time when the question of

Japanese competition affected only the manual workers—the pearlers, laundry-men and others—but the hon. member and others adopted the attitude of—

“Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.”

But as soon as a Japanese medical man appears on the scene then this Japanese invasion assumes proportions—there are deputations to the Premier, and wires to the Commonwealth Ministers, and there is great concern lest one Japanese doctor shall deprive one medical man of a job up at Broome. I am pleased now the time has come that they realise there is some menace in this invasion, and I hope the experience will lead them also to realise the danger of the menace in regard to other occupations, and that we will find in the future the member for Kimberley one of the strongest supporters of the White Australia policy.

Mr. Male: I told you that last session.

Mr. BATH: Not only for doctors but also for other individuals, no matter how humble they may be.

Mr. Collier: This session a member for the North in another place advocated the introduction of coloured labour.

Mr. BATH: There is only another matter that I wish to deal with before concluding, and that is the proposal for Upper House reform. We have the proposal of the Premier and his colleagues that there should be a reduction in the franchise to £15. I want to appeal to the Premier at this time to make the reform one worth having; and if the Government are not prepared to consult the people of this State to find out their actual opinions in regard to the need or otherwise for a second Chamber, I appeal to them to at least go for household suffrage for the second Chamber and make the reform a substantial one. The same arguments that could be urged against the restriction of the franchise to £25 can be urged with equal force against the restriction to £15, and I am satisfied that if the Government take the one course necessary to ascertain the opinions of the people of this State they will find that the people are strongly in favour of a single-chamber Legislature for Western Australia, and also that the greatest reason,

the greatest argument in the minds of the electors in this State in their preference for the Federal Parliament, is because of this block in this State and elsewhere to the will of the people as a people being heard through its legislative enactments and through its administration. It is only by reform of this character, only by going deeper to the root than the Premier and his colleagues propose, that we can rid ourselves of other evils to which the State has to submit at the present time. Our trouble, the depression that exists, and the feeling of dissatisfaction evident throughout the State, are not attributable to any lack of resources in Western Australia, nor to any lack of energy on the part of the people. We still have men in the out-back districts prospecting, opening up new areas, going out farther back than existing fields. We still have men using the axe and plough in agricultural districts. We still have men in other parts of the State developing our resources. Their energy is as great to-day as ever it was. Resources are as great to-day as ever they were, and greater, in that we have more knowledge and greater appreciation of them. Yet on the other hand all the efforts put forward, the expenditure incurred, the indebtedness piled up on our people, have done nothing more than put wealth in the pockets of the few, into the pockets of those who have stood by and seen others do the work. Our agricultural railways, what have they done? They have enhanced the value of land held in many instances by speculators, men who have never stirred out of Perth, men who have held the land and done nothing to develop it, but on the other hand have hampered those engaged in work by putting greater obligations on them, by increasing their expenditure through the increase to the sinking fund bill. I say our efforts in the future should be to insist that the best title to the resources of the land and other rights of this State will be the use of them, the energy and the activity in developing them; if we do that we need have no fear but that Western Australia will prosper; but so long as we content ourselves by using our legislation for the benefit of the few instead of for the benefit of the many,

all our resources will not help to save Western Australia from the evils of legislation and administration that does not seek the advantage of the whole people.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): I desire in the first instance to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address-in-Reply for the interesting addresses they delivered when submitting the motion. The hon. gentleman who moved the motion was a very old Parliamentarian with a great deal more experience than most of us and with a degree of practical knowledge that will, no doubt, be of value in considering any proposition before this House. The hon. member who seconded the Address-in-Reply was naturally very interested in that portion of our great territory, which up to the last year or two had received very little attention from the hands of the Government, but I think that it must be at least recognised that the Government have realised what a great asset we have in the great North-West portion of our State, and have given evidence of a desire to open up and develop that portion of the State which is practically a *terra incognita* to so many. In connection with the development of the North-West portion of the State, I may say that the Government have done something in the way of endeavouring to secure the charting of the coast. When we realise that Western Australia has something like 4,350 miles of coastline out of a little over 11,000 miles in Australia, we will understand that there is a good deal to do in connection with the charting of the coast in order to provide against the dangers of shipwrecks and other dangers incidental to traversing the coastline. An arrangement was entered into by the Government for the services of the survey ship "Phantom," so that it should be placed at the disposal of the Commonwealth Government in order to enable the North-West to be charted. Under that agreement it was estimated that the cost would be something like £30,000 per annum. It has been arranged that £15,000 will be provided by the Commonwealth and the State in the proportion of £7,500

each. That work is now being proceeded with, and I have no doubt that when it is completed it will certainly be of very great value to the shipping. At the same time the fact that some additional light-houses have been provided will result in additional benefit in connection with the opening up of that territory. During the recess the ex-Minister for Works and I took the opportunity of visiting that portion of the State, when we had the privilege of consulting with the residents of the various towns along the coast, and had the advantage of the help of the members for the districts, our desire being to make ourselves acquainted as far as possible with the wants and necessities of the various parts of the districts we called at. The Leader of the Opposition in the course of his speech this afternoon has dealt exhaustively with a good many subjects. As to the question of finance I do not propose to go into that in very much detail this afternoon inasmuch as I hope within the next three weeks to be able to make my financial statement to the House. I do not think it wise therefore at this stage to weary the House with a number of figures which they possibly may have to hear a little later on.

Mr. Hudson: Will you deliver it within the next three weeks?

The PREMIER: I hope to do so if I can possibly manage it, but the fact of my having been away for a month has put me back to some extent. The Leader of the Opposition has referred to certain changes in the Ministry, which apparently he did not appreciate. That fact is a very good evidence that the changes will be found satisfactory from a Ministerial point of view. He complains that so many changes would not have the effect of inspiring confidence among the electors; but as a matter of fact during the past three years there has been practically only one change, so that as Governments go there is not much to complain about in that respect. The hon. member in speaking referred to the fact that notwithstanding the policy we had pursued there had been evidences of dissatisfaction in certain districts which supported the Government. If there has been dis-

satisfaction at the work which has been done, surely it is only logical that there would have been a great deal more dissatisfaction had no work at all been done. In some of these districts—we know of one the hon. member referred to—a little agitation has been worked up by a political derelict who was dropped by the Labour party, and has not been able to work his way into the good graces of the Ministerial party.

Mr. Bolton: What is the district?

The PREMIER: You can make a very good guess at the district. Notwithstanding that the Leader of the Opposition says that by our actions we have given evidence that we have no faith in the State, the fact that we have been able to bring down and carry such great works in a period of depression is evidence that, so far as we are personally concerned, we were prepared to pledge our faith in the future of Western Australia. A little over three years ago, when I first announced my policy at Bunbury, I gave an indication of what we intended to do so far as railway construction was concerned. The whole of that railway construction has been carried out or else is in course of construction. Now when you realise that that means something like 18 different lines of railway, surely the Government cannot be charged with neglecting to do what I consider is the paramount duty of the Government, and that is to develop and open up those areas which, were it not for railway communication, would be practically barren wastes. This fact alone is evidence that we have redeemed the promises we made. In regard to the other matters of policy touched upon, all have been carried with the exception of the liquor law amendment, which is now proposed, and an amendment of the Constitution in regard to the reduction of the franchise for the Legislative Council.

Mr. Bath: What about the reduction of Ministers' salaries?

The PREMIER. The hon. member I know would not support that proposal. I knew he would be opposed to it, and there was no use in courting defeat, so I sup-

pose that was the reason why it was not brought down.

Mr. Holman: You always study us.

Mr. Underwood: And will do so more, as time goes on.

The PREMIER: You have studied me to some extent, as you have allowed me to sit here for something like four years. You will have to "huck-up" considerably next session if any alteration is to be made. If the hon. member for the Murchison does not leave us for pastures new, we shall be able I am sure to get on as amicably in the future as we have done in the past.

Mr. Collier: You would miss him.

The PREMIER: I would have voted for him in the selection ballot.

Mr. Holman: I will be like you at the next elections, defeated.

The PREMIER: After the prorogation, as members know, we met and I asked the House to be good enough to adjourn for some four weeks in order to allow this State to be represented at the recent Conference held in Melbourne.

Mr. Collier: We did not know you would sneak away the Minister for Works with you.

The PREMIER: As the Leader of the Opposition was apparently not acceptable to the other Premiers, it was necessary that I should have some colleague. Although I recognise that possibly that colleague is not the equal of the Leader of the Opposition as a travelling companion, he was a fair substitute. Had it been possible to have refrained from attending the Conference I would have been only too pleased, in view of the obligation cast upon us to get on with the Parliamentary business without unnecessary delay; and owing to the fact that I had just taken over the Treasury it was absolutely necessary that I should give close attention to the work of the department, which was new so far as I was concerned. At the same time, however, I realised that it was necessary, in order that the other representatives should have a just appreciation of our position, that Western Australia should be represented, and although some inconvenience may have been caused I feel sure that the advant-

age which has been gained by the representation will more than compensate for any real inconvenience that may have been caused. In connection with this agreement, I have laid a copy on the Table in order that members may see the text of it. At the Conference the Commonwealth was represented by the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, and the Treasurer, while the Premiers of each State were there, as well as certain of their colleagues. In connection with the agreement come to it will be noticed that it is to some extent an alteration of the proposal previously agreed to, first of all in Melbourne by resolution and afterwards in Hobart, where it was translated into £ s. d. As a matter of fact the Hobart figures worked out at something like 29s. 3d. per capita with a £250,000 contribution to Western Australia falling on the States alone, making a total in all of something like 6¾ millions. At the recent Conference it was found that it was not likely those proposals would be adhered to, inasmuch as the expanding necessities of the Commonwealth made it necessary that additional revenue should be raised. I would like to say in connection with the arrangement arrived at that, if hon. members have given any attention to the question, they will realise that, so far as Western Australia is concerned, we have fared very well, that is compared with the other States. The greatest loser will be New South Wales. That State received last year from the Commonwealth as a returnable surplus an amount of £3,377,192; Victoria, £1,929,542; Queensland, £1,060,796; South Australia, £707,959; Western Australia, £618,803; Tasmania, £232,842; or a total of £7,927,134. According to the Commonwealth Treasurer's estimate it is anticipated that the three-quarters this year would amount to £7,891,481; but in order to relieve the anticipated deficit to the extent of £600,000, it was agreed that a contribution should be made by the various States in order to render unnecessary the flotation of Treasury Bills to liquidate that deficit. With that £600,000 off the total is reduced to £7,291,481, or some six hundred and

thirty and odd thousand pounds less than was received last year. With regard to the £600,000 to be divided among the various States, it was suggested first of all that it should be levied on a contributory basis, under which scheme we should have had to provide some £60,000. Afterwards, however, it was decided that it should be on a per capita basis. In that connection I pointed out that most of this money would go to relieve the old-age pension fund and that so far as the older States were concerned they would by this be relieved of considerable expenditure, yet that so far as the smaller States were concerned it was new expenditure. I suggested that a fairer contribution would be 3s. per head for New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, and 2s. per head for South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. That is to say that out of the £600,000 returned New South Wales would contribute £238,809; Victoria, £191,106; Queensland, £83,738; South Australia, £41,057; Western Australia, £26,780; and Tasmania, £18,510.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

The PREMIER: Prior to the adjournment I was pointing out to hon. members the method of the allocation of the £600,000, which it is proposed to set aside from the three-fourths to be returned to the States. I referred to the fact that as far as Western Australia and the other States were concerned it was entirely new expenditure, and that the other States had been relieved to a considerable extent. At the risk of wearying hon. members I would like to point out, assuming that old-age pensions will cost £1,500,000, New South Wales, while contributing £238,800 out of that £600,000, would expend on old-age pensions £527,000, and it was estimated that it would have returned to its people £558,450. Victoria is in a much better position than New South Wales, inasmuch as her old-age pension scheme was not on the same liberal basis as New South Wales. While she contributes £191,106 towards this £600,000, she is relieved of expenditure to the extent of £270,000, whereas, as a matter of

fact, her people receive as their portion of the one and a half millions estimated to be paid, £445,950, or £170,000 more than they contribute. Queensland will be relieved to the extent of £148,000, and it is estimated that the old-age pensions in that State will amount to £194,800. As far as Western Australia is concerned it will be seen, providing the Commonwealth Treasurer's Budget is correct, that we will receive back £601,235, while we will have the advantage that old-age pensions will be provided for us by the Commonwealth. Therefore, while contributing that amount, it is estimated our people will receive £35,000. Tasmania contributes £18,510 and receives old-age pensions to the amount of £64,000. I am glad for the sake both of the Commonwealth and the States that all the recent turmoil is over, and that an agreement which has crystallised the position has been come to. Personally I had hoped for a materially higher per capita basis, but rather than continue the present uncertainty with all its attendant anxiety to the State Treasurers, it was considered we were well justified in accepting the arrangement come to, with the special consideration as far as Western Australia is concerned of the £250,000. That is given as hon. members are aware in view of the specially high contribution we are making to the customs and excise, from which the per capita returns are made. Our presence at the Conference has secured for the State that permanent recognition of our special needs. The decision is one which is to be considered now by the Federal Parliament and the people. I am satisfied that every thoughtful man in the community will be glad to see this financial problem advanced to the stage it now is. It only remains for the Commonwealth Parliament to contribute its quota to the settlement for all time of this overshadowing question by adopting the resolutions and submitting them to the people to place the seal of their approval on this agreement so that it may be finally ratified and embodied in the Constitution in perpetuity. The Leader of the Opposition, in speaking of the

resolutions passed by this Conference, said that we might have had reason to be proud of them had the electors the same assurance in regard to the measures proposed in connection with our own Parliamentary arrangements. He suggested that some undertaking should be given (at least, this is what I understood him to mean) that the qualification of the electors of the Legislative Council should be made similar to that of the electors of the Senate. In connection with this agreement, I may point out that the Conference dissociated the debts transfer from the returnable revenues question. There was no necessary connection between these two. A Royal Commission is to be appointed to inquire into the transfer of the debts, in regard to which a satisfactory settlement may be made. We are not singular in this respect in regard to separating the two questions, as at the Brisbane Labour Conference, when the report was submitted, Mr. Holman, who presented it, in speaking on the question of the transfer stated—

"The committee had gone into the matter of the State debts, and after very earnest deliberation had come to the conclusion that it was impossible at this juncture to evolve a definite scheme on that subject The proposal which Mr. Watson suggested was that payment should be made on a per capita basis. A certain sum would be determined on for every unit of the population of Australia after providing for Commonwealth expenditure Expenditure on the post office and other reproductive services could be dealt with out of revenue received."

Mr. Watson said—

"The proposal meant in effect that £1 or 2s. per head would be paid to the States out of Commonwealth revenue, no matter from whence it was obtained by the Commonwealth. It was not necessary to confuse the question of State debts with that of payment by the Commonwealth to the State treasurers. The State debts question should stand by itself."

I am just pointing that out because it

has been urged in some quarters that no arrangements should be come to as far as the return of surplus revenue is concerned if the question of the transfer of State debts is not dealt with at the same time. Hon. members will see that provision has been made in this series of resolutions that—

“To fulfil the intention of the Consolidation by providing for the consolidation and Transfer of State debts, and in order to ensure the most profitable management of future loans by the establishment of one Australian stock, a complete investigation of this most important subject shall be undertaken forthwith by the Governments of the Commonwealth and the States. This investigation shall include the question of the actual cost to the States of transferred property as defrayed out of loan or revenue moneys.”

The only other subject of any importance dealt with was that in connection with industrial matters. But, I think, if the Leader of the Opposition peruses the result he will see as the resolutions stand at the present time no objection can be taken to them, and as a Bill will have to be submitted to each State Parliament to carry out the purport of the resolutions, I think ample opportunity will then be afforded for discussing the question on its merits. As a matter of fact, the resolutions dealing with industrial questions, declare first of all it is desirable that each State should establish tribunals to regulate labour in that State. With the exception of Tasmania, all the States have wages boards, and New South Wales has an arbitration court. The second resolution is to the effect that the jurisdiction and powers of each State's industrial tribunal should be uniform as far as practicable, and the third is to meet cases where it is proved that inter-State competition exists in industrial matters which is unfair, and the State tribunals have failed to grant relief, the Parliaments of the States should agree to vest the court with the power to adjust the grievance complained of.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Wade said he had ample machinery now.

The PREMIER: The argument raised by Mr. Wade was in connection with the question of the boot industry. It was not a question of wages, it was simply the conditions governing the industry. Inasmuch as while in Victoria and New South Wales the wages are practically the same, in New South Wales they are restricted as to the number of apprentices, whereas in Victoria there is no limit.

Mr. Heitmann: Victoria replied that there was no limit to the number of children employed in New South Wales.

The PREMIER: I take it that the inter-State Commission will be appointed to deal with this very important question. In conclusion, dealing with the result of the Conference, boiled down, the scheme has recognised the expanding interests of the Commonwealth in providing the additional revenue required. We realise, too, that there are many obligations that they have to enter into, principally defence, old-age pensions, and many others which are purely Commonwealth matters, and it was absolutely essential that they should have freedom to impose certain duties, if necessary, and not be restricted as at present; namely, for every one pound they require they have to raise four. Generally speaking, I think this is a proposal which will commend itself to the Parliaments of the States. During the speech of the Leader of the Opposition he referred to the action taken recently by the Government in connection with the potato blight which is prevalent. At the time that the proclamation was made it was not anticipated that there would be any sign of blight in any portion of Western Australia, but, unfortunately, yesterday afternoon some specimens were brought to the agricultural authorities, and it was found that certain of these potatoes which came from Guildford were affected by the blight. An examination has been made to-day and the report is practically confirmed. I would like to point out to the hon. member what a serious matter this blight has been to some other parts of the world. As a matter of fact Irish blight has cost New Zealand from £200,000 to £250,000 during the last two or three

years, whilst the State of New York has lost as much as £2,000,000 in one year alone through its ravages. At the same time we realise that it is absolutely essential that some provision should be made for the importer. With that end in view my colleague has anticipated the suggestion of the hon. member as far as securing sufficient supplies for consumers is concerned and this morning a telegram was sent to the Minister for Agriculture in Melbourne as follows:—

“Are you prepared instruct your inspectors brand with definite mark all bags potatoes passed for export to this State and certify that they have been produced in districts fifty miles distant from blight-infected area. If you can do this I propose modify prohibition against your State. Potatoes must be in new bags.”

Mr. Scaddan: But did they not refuse potatoes in one of the boats here which had already a clean certificate from the Victorian Government?

The PREMIER: I do not think so. The following reply to that telegram has been received:—

“Arrangements completed. Can carry out all your conditions and give guarantee.”

Prior to the discovery of this blight at Guildford the Minister had decided to send Professor Lowrie to the Eastern States with a view to securing a supply from those districts not infected. While I was in Victoria it was pointed out to me that the disease was practically confined to certain isolated districts which were not in what was known as the potato-producing districts. For instance, I think Warnambool was clear. In some district further to the East they have had evidences of disease, and that district was declared an infected area. It has now been arranged that our representative in Melbourne, Mr. Gilbert, under instructions from Professor Lowrie, will do the work that he himself intended to do in Victoria and so far as possible will take every precaution to see that these potatoes have come from clean districts and are put in clean bags and, further, that the port from which they are shipped shall be clean also. It will now be possible for

importers to arrange for consignments under certificates issued by the Department of Agriculture. During the hon. member's speech he referred in rather severe terms to what he considers the parsimonious attitude of the Government in connection with the administration of hospitals; and he pointed out that it was practically the duty of the Government to provide for all and sundry. Now, while we recognise that it is absolutely essential that the Government should take a lead in these matters, still we realise that there is ample room for economy in the administration of hospitals in many of the various districts.

Mr. Underwood: While you still sweat a little more out of the nurses.

The PREMIER: I was recently given one striking instance. While in a certain district I visited the local hospital where I found a charming matron, a nurse, a cook, a doctor, and one patient.

Mr. Taylor: Were you the patient?

The PREMIER: I wish I had been. The cost of this institution was altogether out of proportion to the benefits the people were receiving from it. It is a well-known fact that there are any number of people who go to these hospitals, while a few could afford to pay for treatment outside. It is the duty of the Government to provide for cases where people cannot afford to pay, but there, I think, the obligation ceases. Another case recently brought under my notice is that of a man who, while he could well afford to pay went into the Government hospital where his dressings alone cost 25s. a day. I know that that man could very well afford to pay. He had a good income and yet the State had to pay for his treatment. Abuses have existed, and we have been assured on all hands that very considerable reductions can be made in the cost of many of these hospitals.

Mr. Johnson: You should have got at that man's income with a graduated income tax.

The PREMIER: Let us look at the cost of the hospitals in some of the other States. In Queensland, with a population of 523,783 persons, the Government expend £51,000 on hospitals; in New South Wales with a population of

1,530,000, the Government subsidy to hospitals amounts to £95,889; in Victoria with a population of 1,258,000 the Government contribute £42,647; and in South Australia with a population of 383,381 the Government subsidy amounts to £36,223. When you compare these figures with our expenditure in 1907-8 of £69,795 on 50 hospitals for a population of 273,000 persons it becomes apparent that economies can very well be made. The Government have no desire to evade their obligations in respect to those people who cannot pay.

Mr. Bath: But you might as well say that people can afford to pay for the inspection of their stock or of their orchards.

The PREMIER: You propose that all people shall be free to go to the hospital at the cost of the Government. I do not agree with that policy. The State cannot afford it. While it is necessary to provide for those who cannot afford to pay, surely we are not to be saddled with those whose means would enable them to secure outside treatment. The question of the retrenchment that is taking place in connection with the civil service was also referred to by the hon. member. Now, as far as the Government are concerned, they felt that in view of the present financial position of the State it was essential that drastic economies should be brought about. All classes of the community have, to a very large extent, felt the prevailing stress of competition, and it was recognised that if it was possible to effect economies it should be done. It had been suggested that percentage reductions should be made on the salaries of civil servants, but the Government were not prepared to go to that extent. Still, they considered it only fair and reasonable that the office hours of State employees should be increased in order to determine, after careful investigation, whether it was not possible that various officers could be dispensed with. With a view to avoiding hardship a certain scheme was evolved under which those who were desirous of so doing might have an opportunity of settling on the land. Now it may be of interest to members to know that at the present time the employees of the State

number 10,616 persons, which, out of a population of 273,449 amounts to practically one in every 25. As far as the service is concerned I believe we have a class of State employees which would compare very favourably with those of any other big institution employing a large number of officers; but in the course of time certain roundabout methods and cumbersome procedures have grown up. We propose to attack this matter at the root, and for some time past the departments have been engaged in making an examination into the methods of working with the object of simplifying the same, and of securing more economical forms of administration. These proposals for reduction will be further scrutinised by the Public Service Commissioner with Mr. McGibbon, who has been appointed to assist Mr. Jull in his operations.

Mr. Taylor: What qualifications has Mr. McGibbon?

The PREMIER: He is a certificated accountant and is recognised as one of the leading accountants in the State. He was appointed on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner after Mr. Jull had received advice from heads of leading business firms in the City.

Mr. Angwin: How long is it since Mr. Jull classified and placed these men in their positions?

The PREMIER: He classified the positions; that is all. It is about three years ago. I do not know that Mr. Jull was likely to have any objection to a proposal to secure the services of a gentleman who, having had an opportunity as auditor of going through the methods of leading firms, was thereby well qualified to assist the Commissioner in this special work. In regard to the particular scheme I may say that the adoption of increased hours means that the civil servants will be employed 36 hours per week instead of 32½. In view of the hours worked by employees in mercantile houses and banking institutions, I do not think that any very great grievance can exist on this score. It is practically six hours a day, and in view of the present financial situation the least these employees can do is to

assist the Government to cut down the cost of administration.

Mr. Collier: Do these hours apply to all the grades in the service?

The PREMIER: To all the clerks, certainly.

Mr. Collier: I saw the sub-head of a department going to work at 11 o'clock this morning.

Mr. Heitmann: I saw one, very little earlier, with a bundle of golf sticks under his arm.

Mr. Gill: What is the penalty if they are not there on time?

The PREMIER: They would be reported to the Public Service Commissioner. Considerable reductions can be brought about, and it is anticipated that something like 100 officers will be retired. Some 70 odd officers have applied for permission to go on the land in accordance with the proposals made by the Minister for Lands.

Mr. Taylor: Have these men been approved?

The PREMIER: These officers have been selected by Mr. Paterson, the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank. The conditions under which they will be put on the land are first of all that the under-secretaries will approve of the retirements of these officers, that is to say that they can be spared from their positions, and that it will not be necessary to go outside the service for any officers to take their places.

Mr. Collier: By that method you will get rid of the best men, the sturdiest and most independent.

The PREMIER: The approval of the under-secretary practically safeguards that. If the under-secretary finds that the applicant is a good man whose services will be required, naturally that man will not be one of the selected. Mr. Paterson has up to date approved of 78 applications. It is proposed to set aside something like 100 blocks for the purpose of this scheme. The names of the applicants have been sent to the Public Service Commissioner and the under-secretaries, and the names of those approved will be forwarded. In addition to the amount advanced under

the Agricultural Bank we propose to make an advance of £100 to each person. A good portion of this will come back to the State in the shape of survey fees and the first year's rent, and the balance will be expended on the erection of a house. In addition, in the case of retiring allowances, we pay one-half in 12 months, and one-half in 24 months, so that if a man goes on the land and does not carry out his original intention the Government will be protected to the extent of half the retiring allowance. Let me remind hon. members that quite recently, under similar conditions, some 50 settlers were located at Tammin, and from what I can gather from the reports of the officers and from the Minister for Lands, success has attended that settlement, and I see no reason why the same success should not attend this.

Mr. Bolton: That is no criterion. It is a different class altogether.

The PREMIER: What is the difference? If a man has pluck enough to leave the public service he has pluck enough to succeed. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that notwithstanding what the Government had been doing there was a considerable amount of dissatisfaction existing. It is not necessary to repeat what I have already said in connection with the construction of railways, but I may point out that during last year, since 1908, the following lines have been completed and opened for traffic:—Donnybrook-Preston, second section, 23½ miles at a cost of £33,959; the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe line, 34½ miles, at a cost of £62,498; the Narrogin-Wickepin line, 27 miles, at a cost of £36,434; the first mile of construction of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway, at a cost of £8,000, while a contract has recently been let for the completion of the whole; also the Wonnerup-Nannup line, 17½ miles, at a cost of £26,500. In regard to the railway policy generally, I think it is recognised throughout the State that it was absolutely essential when the Government came into office that they should devote their energies as far as possible to developing the resources of the State; and in view of the fact that certain members of the Cabinet had special knowledge in

connection with railway construction we were able to cut down the cost of construction very considerably; and although one hon. member the other evening said that he considered that it was advisable that a larger sum should be spent on the railways in order to devote more to ballasting, etcetera, yet I think it must be admitted by those members who have had an opportunity of seeing these railways that those at present being constructed fulfil all that is required from them. I do not propose to-night to speak any further. In the course of some three weeks I hope to be able to bring down my Budget proposals, and I shall then take the opportunity of going more into detail as regards the financial proposals of the Government.

Mr. Scaddan: Question! Let us get on with the business of the country.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I wish to make a few remarks on this solemn and serious occasion. I wish to congratulate the Government on their success as political lassoers. I have recollections of the last night we spent in this House last session hurrying to close Parliament before the member for Murray (Mr. George) could take his seat as an opponent of the Government. Now I am pleased to see the Government have him to move the adoption of the Address-in-Reply. I also wish to congratulate the Attorney-General on his accession to office. Being an Australian I have, as an Australian, the sporting instinct, and I admire a champion; and as a political acrobat the hon. member is in a class by himself. It has been said that poverty makes strange bed-fellows; so does politics. The recent happenings in politics have given us what appears to be a new party in Australian politics. We read in this morning's paper of an entirely new policy, that of "Government supporters with drastic reservations." I feel sure the Premier will appreciate this new party. It does not speak highly of the electors of Perth and Fremantle, when we find that there is not a representative of the whole metropolis in the Ministry. I think that at least one representative

of the City and suburbs should find a place on the Ministerial benches.

Mr. Jacoby: Do you make a geographical qualification for Ministers?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I look for a little intellect occasionally. The hon. member is outside that scope. I find in looking through the Governor's Speech that we have many things that were in the previous Governor's Speech and in the Speech before that. There is one I think I have read before somewhere:—"The development of the agricultural industry which has been so remarkable a feature in the progress of the State for several years past continues in accelerated volume." Yet the hon. member for Cue tells me that he is getting scurvy for want of potatoes. The industry that has been going on with leaps and bounds for the last four years has landed Western Australia in a potato famine. Outside the question of potatoes I come to my old friend the *Statistical Abstract*. I find that the volume of settlement has been accelerated just a trifle. As I previously reckoned it out we have been bringing under cultivation about 35,000 acres per annum, but last year we had 50,000 acres. I said previously that it would take us 300 years to bring our 20 million acres under cultivation, but at the accelerated speed we made last year it will now take us only 200 years. Of course the *Abstract* speaks for itself. We brought under cultivation during the last year for which we have figures about 55,000 acres, that is there were 55,000 acres more under cultivation than was previously the case; and we are still going on at the same ratio of parting with our land; we parted with over a million acres of land, and about 50,000 acres of it was brought under crop. The Governor's Speech seemed to think this a cheerful state of affairs. I must say I cannot join in that cheerfulness. There is another very old friend in this Speech, where it says, "A measure will be brought down for the reform of the Legislative Council." I recollect that almost the first Bill I saw on my table when I came to this House was a Bill proposed for bringing about that much needed reform. At the rate we are pro-

gressing I should say we should have that reform about the same time that we are getting our land under cultivation, that is in about 300 years. But we are really going back in this respect. When I came to this House we had a Bill before us, now we only have it in the Governor's Speech. Here is another old friend—"A comprehensive liquor Bill, a Bill dealing in a comprehensive measure with the liquor question." That is an old friend, and I feel sure we will have it in the Governor's Speech until the end of the Moore Government. I can only say that should the Government ever happen to bring that Bill forward I shall have one or two words to say on it, but I have serious doubts whether they really ever intend to bring it forward. There is one thing they have not put in the Governor's Speech, and that is in regard to an amendment to the Electoral Act. Perhaps the new Attorney General will give a little attention to this matter. I do not wish to go over the old question again, except to say that this House passed a measure with a certain object, namely, to prevent an appeal in the case of an election on the qualification of electors whose names appear on the roll. Judge Parker said that we did not mean what we said, and I think it is up to this House to put it in again and tell Judge Parker that we did mean what we said, and that we say it again. It is up to the present Government to deal with the question thoroughly. The position as it stands now is certainly discreditable to Western Australia. There is no possible shadow of doubt that the electoral law has been broken, flagrantly and openly. I have said it outside Parliament, and I say it inside, that it is equally a breach of the law to make a false declaration in connection with an Electoral Act as it is to hit a blackleg on the head with a brick. Unless the Government can keep the law themselves, it is no use for them to cry law and order when it comes to the miners or sailors or other workers of that kind. If the Government do not keep the law they cannot expect others to do so. For their own credit they should deal with this matter. There are

a few matters in connection with the large and important district which I represent that I would like to bring before the attention of the various Ministers. Before doing so, however, I would say that I am of opinion that the proposed increase in the charges for crushing at State batteries is unwarranted. I am convinced that with proper management the increase is unnecessary. In the first place the manager of a battery should be a competent man, and one whose competency should be properly paid for. The superintendent of batteries should pay visits to the various batteries and not sit down in his office in Perth. It is impossible for any man to get good work done if he sits in Perth and does all his inspection by letter or wire.

Mr. Collier: He goes round the country at election time.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: He has not been in my district at election time. As to the State battery at 20-Mile Sandy, the manager there is working under very great disadvantages, and the fact that he makes anything like a show speaks well for his abilities. There is still a connection flange and a nine-pound hammer hanging on the end of the safety valve lever of the boiler. There are no proper attachments to the machinery there, no locks in the doors protecting the lip plates, and in fact generally the arrangements are most unsatisfactory. I have a photo, which I will show the Minister of a prospector endeavouring to grind up a bit of amalgam with primitive appliances. Another great disadvantage is in connection with the stores. Quite recently I noticed a set of dies which had been sent at a cost of £20 cartage from the ship to the battery which were four inches too high for the boxes. In the Perth office the officials had the measurements of the battery and I know that those measurements were also sent down with the order for the dies, but when the dies arrived the size was too great. As I have said the cost of land cartage was £20 per ton, and in addition to that there were the shipping charges and the purchase cost of the dies, and yet the mach-

inery was absolutely useless. The same mistakes occur in connection with almost every order the manager sends down. He asks for a certain kind of packing and he gets something entirely different. It appears that they send him up anything that is of no use to anybody else. This creates the impression that someone is shipping stores to him that are no good to anybody else and send them up there, because there is no chance of their coming to light again. That the civil service requires reform all admit, but the man who sent those dies to Nullagine knowing that they were absolutely useless—or he should have known they were so—should get the sack. A regulation should be made whereby a man doing a thing like that should be put out of the service, and until we have such a regulation we are liable to have a continuation of this sort of thing. As the Premier has just remarked, they are plucky men who would get out of the service. Evidently that is so, and they seem to know when they have a good home. It reminds me of a story of a man who was told by his boss that he wanted him no longer. He replied, "I know when you have a good man and I know when I have a good job." A good many civil servants know something similar. As to the charges at the battery another point is in connection with the cost of cyaniding. The Minister has proclaimed over and over again that he reduced the crushing charges. I still maintain that he has increased the cost of treatment. As I have explained before in the House, we now have to give a certain percentage. We only get 85 or 86 per cent. of sands for stone and have to accept 75 per cent. extraction. This works out in many cases that the Government make a very considerable profit out of the cyaniding over and above the actual cyaniding charges. We members of Parliament and the public generally should know exactly where we stand in this matter. Under the present system the Government profess to crush for 19s. a ton and say they very nearly make it pay. As a matter of fact a great deal of the revenue comes from the cyaniding, not from

the actual cost, but owing to the excessive gold obtained from the sands not returned to the prospectors. I believe in making the batteries pay; but at the same time it is advisable for the proper management of the plant that the working of the battery should be open for everyone's inspection. We could then check our management, but while the manager of the battery has 10 per cent. sands and possibly 10 per cent. extraction "up his sleeve," one cannot check his work. There is any amount of improvement possible in respect to the management of State batteries. As to the increase in price I hope the Minister will not bring that into effect at 20-Mile Sandy. Although he reduced the crushing charges throughout the State, or he stated that he did so, he actually increased them by one shilling a ton. Previously to the Minister's "reduction" we paid 18s., but now we pay 19s. Perhaps the Minister will explain how this is a reduction.

The Minister for Mines: Why do you not take some stone there?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree with the remarks of the Premier that the present Government have paid a little more attention to the North-West portion of this State than any previous Government, and at the same time I wish to say most emphatically that the North-West is well worthy of that attention; in fact it would be the rankest folly to leave that portion of the State neglected as it has been in the past. We are going to have a railway constructed from Port Hedland to Marble Bar and in order to make that railway a success it is necessary to develop our mining resources, and to accomplish this the Government must erect State batteries in the various centres where there is likely to be stone produced. During my recent trip through the Pilbara district I found that there existed a more solid appearance of progress than I have ever seen there before. At the same time it is necessary that crushing facilities should be provided, or the mining there will languish notwithstanding the construction of the railway. There is another point I would like the Minister for

Mines to pay a little attention to and that is the continued exemptions given to certain mine owners in that part of the country.

The Minister for Mines: We are altering that condition of things now.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I hope the Minister will alter it at once. I do not want to go over the whole question again other than to say that the mines I have referred to on many occasions since I have been in this House are still under exemption and, so far as anything has been announced up to date, it appears that they will be exempted for ever. The Minister has been strong on the question of security of tenure, but if the Morgans company have not security in Pilbara the owners must be "whole hoggers" on that question. It is to be hoped the Minister will see either that the mines are worked, or are forfeited and someone else allowed to try and obtain the wealth which undoubtedly exists there. Another question requiring attention is that of the classification of the pastoral lands. Western Australia has a very great inheritance in the pastoral lands in the North-West. Under the present system those who have the land in the best situated places are paying less rent than those who are now taking it up and have to accept land which is not so good. The member for North Perth will be able to speak on this question as he has been right through the favoured pastoral parts of the North-West. What is necessary, and I would like the Minister for Lands to pay attention to the question, is a full reclassification of all the pastoral country of Western Australia. There is any amount of country for which 10s. per thousand acres is now being received, and yet it could well afford to pay even £10 per thousand acres. On the other hand there is much of the country the value of which is about 10s. per thousand acres. Those who arrived first got the best of the land and I do not begrudge it to them; but now that they have had their leases for 21 years they have had time to be well repaid for the hardships they endured at the outset and could well afford to pay a higher figure. There is no industry in

the State, not even mining, that a man can make money at so rapidly as in the pastoral industry here. Almost all the men of money in the State now are those who took up country in the North-West. I can assure the House that there is scope for the Government to obtain considerably more revenue from the pastoral areas than they do now without retarding the industry or injuring the pastoralists. I hope the Government will have a comprehensive classification of the pastoral lands made and a very considerable increase decided upon in the price of land in the more favoured parts of the State. A perennial complaint of members from the North-West is with regard to the police. I do not wish to go into the question of police management now, but I will bring one matter under the notice of the Minister controlling the department and that is the treatment of the men with regard to their annual leave. The position is this. A man goes to the North-West for three years; ordinarily speaking he is entitled once a year to one month's leave on full pay, but if he goes to Nullagine it takes him almost a fortnight to get to Port Hedland and the same time to get back again from Port Hedland to Nullagine; therefore his month's holiday is absolutely of no use to him. As a matter of fact the men very rarely take their leave at all, as a month is quite insufficient for a holiday. What has been asked time and again is that they should be allowed to have accumulated leave. If a man has been three years in the North-West and he is entitled to a month's holiday a year he should be given, at the end of three years, three months' leave. That seems a fair and equitable proposal, yet I am informed that the department make it a practice—almost a rule in fact—of refusing to give extended leave, and therefore almost all the policemen who go to the North-West practically lose their month's leave. This should work badly for the department as well as for the men. If a man takes his month's leave in those districts another man has to be sent up to relieve him, and the fares alone cost the Government a con-

siderable amount. I trust that the department will look into this matter, and that they will give these men—certainly worthy servants of the State, and not overpaid—at least as fair a chance as is given to men in more favoured situations. This is only what they are entitled to, and I trust they will get it. There are one or two other matters of general importance that I would like to say a word or two about. One is in regard to what Miss Grace Watson would call “purity of the home life.” I rather like that plank in Miss Watson’s platform, and I have been thinking that, to carry it out more effectively, it would be necessary to bring in some measure which would punish bankers, principals of commercial houses and others who endeavour to prevent their employees from marrying. Of course we know that lack of marriage causes immorality. It is a positive fact that bank clerks are not allowed to marry until they are drawing a certain salary. I hold this, that the ultimate object of man is to marry. If he has any manhood in him at all he should marry and reproduce; yet we have these people—bankers, insurance men and others connected with great firms, who pay Grace Watson to go round the country lecturing and talking against the Labour party in order to maintain the “purity of home life,” and at the same time they will sack a man if he gets married before he draws a certain salary. I intend to introduce an amendment to the Criminal Code (laughter). I do not know why there should be this levity; it is my intention to introduce an amendment to the Criminal Code making it a criminal offence for any employer or any person to in any way attempt to coerce a man or prevent him from getting married. I maintain that every Australian is entitled to get married, and a man who is to seek the boss’s consent is degrading himself and the country that permits it, to say nothing about the boss who is too degraded to get any lower. I will give these people who are so strong on the “purity of home life” a chance of carrying it out. There is another point in connection with this, and in regard to

which the Criminal Code should be amended; that is with reference to newspapers which publish advertisements from people who want married couples without encumbrances. When we come to the “purity of home life,” what is home life without children? Such home life is not much, yet we have it flagrantly advertised in the papers, practically offering a reward to married couples not to have children. Coming back to the “purity of home life,” Grace Watson wants to look into the working of those who pay her salary. I shall endeavour to carry a measure in this House dealing with this question and making it a criminal offence to advertise for married couples without encumbrances; and also those who interfere with clerks or other employees who desire to get married. If they are not drawing sufficient salary to get married on, then why in the name of Australia are they not paid sufficient? It is only a fair proposition, and the bankers and big business men who would have the impudence to employ men and pay them a wage on which they cannot get married should not be encouraged in Australia where we want population. There is another small matter in regard to the Nor’-West, of importance not only to that district, but to the whole of Australia, and that is in regard to the Asiatics. I was undoubtedly amused when I read the other day that the hon. member for Kimberley had entered a vigorous protest against the admission of a Japanese doctor. That gentleman certainly has been as vigorous an advocate for the admission of Japanese and everything else except members of Parliament.

Mr. HORAN: Japanese members of Parliament.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes. This question is of course one of selfishness. I am strongly anti-Asiatic myself, and perhaps as soon as these people come into competition with doctors and others, hon. members will feel just as I do. It is only a pity that these Asiatics have not been brought into competition with members of Parliament—with the Attorney General for instance. If that had been done we would have had a

truly White Australia. Japanese are experts at what you call Jiu-Jitsu, still I would back the Attorney General against them. There are other questions bound up in this, and as I have said before, it would be better to close down the pearling industry in the Nor'-West rather than carry it on with Asiatics. The more experience I have of those Asiatics the more I am convinced that they are an absolute menace to Australia. Although it is a Federal subject, the Government should be able to do a great deal more if they only decided to do it. Quite recently an application was made by an Asiatic for a business license in the Pilbara district, but it was refused. Storekeepers and business people of course were prepared to make mighty protests about the Afghan being allowed to open a store; at the same time these same business people have employed Afghans until they have driven every white teamster off the road up there, and there is now only one white teamster, a friend of the hon. member for Mt. Margaret, on that road, and he was too tough even for the Afghans to knock out. The position is that the Asiatics have driven off the white teamsters, and if they are allowed to go on as they are doing they will drive out the white storekeepers. At Roebourne they have practically monopolised the trade; they have driven out firms like Dalgety & Co., W. D. Moore & Co., and H. J. Watson, and at the present time the whole of the trade of that part of the Nor'-West is in the hands of Asiatics; and we will find that that will be the result also at Hedland, at Broome, and Marble Bar if they are allowed to go on. It would seem fair, having allowed the Asiatics unlimited competition against teamsters, divers, and pearlbers, that we should allow unlimited competition by those same people against doctors, lawyers, and others. I would extend protection to the storekeepers and everyone else in the State. One proposition suggests itself to me, and that is that it would be advisable to prevent Asiatics from entirely monopolising the whole of the business in the Nor'-West portion of the State by the

Government passing a law compelling all business people to have a license, and giving power to the Minister to refuse the license to whom he pleased, and refuse it of course to Asiatics.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They would get round it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The hon. member for Forrest says they would get round it. Possibly they would, but we would introduce something else to stop them just as they got to the corner. I have studied this question to some extent and find that if you leave the Asiatic in unrestricted competition with the white man he will work out the white man and after he has done that it is the end of the lot. You have only to look at Palmerston in the Northern Territory to see that. After all, except in competition with the white man, the Asiatic is not worth anything in developing the country. The Asiatic can come along and take advantage of the work that the white man has done in opening up the country; but take the white man away and the Asiatic totally fails. I do not think that Australia intends that the white man, after having opened up the Northern portion of the State, should allow the Asiatics to have it. I trust the Government will take up this question and take it up seriously, and endeavour to prevent the continuation of the present system of working the pearling industry at Broome by black labour. There is no doubt that white divers can get those pearls just as well as white cane growers can cut the cane in Queensland. This has been demonstrated indisputably by the fact that many white divers are at work, and I saw a white diver engaged at Port Hedland only recently. A phase of this question which the Customs department should take some notice of is undoubtedly the amount of smuggling which is done by the Asiatics in the northern part of this State. It is a question for the customs officers, and the State loses a considerable amount of revenue through the smuggling that takes place.

Mr. Swan: Hear, hear!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is a pity that more members do not go to the Nor'-West; more would then say "hear, hear."

Statements have been made to me by thoroughly reliable men that cigars are being sold at Port Hedland and Broome at less than the duty that should be paid on them. Clothes are being sold under similar conditions. We know too that Asiatics are being smuggled in by the hundreds. Notwithstanding that an increase is not supposed to be allowed, it is an absolute fact that in Broome there are hundreds more than there ever were. There are more also in Port Hedland, and I believe more than in any other centre. Customs regulations are being evaded from one end of the northern coast right down to Geraldton. I have had instances where Afghans have come into the State ostensibly to collect accounts of deceased relatives and to wind up estates and various other things of that description, but they have worked all the time they have remained in the State, and on going away they have received a passport to come back again. I have another instance, of two who were brought here to wind up an estate. They said they could not get drivers. They were landed at Port Hedland under protest. There was a bond of £100 on them. They went overland to Peak Hill, where they stayed for a time. Then they came back to Port Hedland. They have now gone to Broome, and are getting teams to go out to Tanami. These statements were made to me by responsible men who are prepared to vouch for them. These two Asiatics were under a bond of £100 each; Dalgety & Co. were the bondsmen. That bond has never been lifted, yet the two men are still in Western Australia. I trust the Government will fully consider this question. It is worthy of consideration, for it points to a leakage in revenue. Of course, if the Government do go into this it is possible that they may lose the support of the member for Broome but, on the other hand, they may gain the support of another just as valuable. There is one other matter that affects the Minister for Mines, and this is in connection with the Asiatic gardeners. Most of you know that Asiatics are not allowed to work on authorised holdings; you know also that a garden area is an authorised holding. Yet right throughout the Pilbara we find men taking up garden areas and sub-letting

them to Chinese. The result in one or two places has been that where in the past there was only sufficient demand for one gardener—who was a white man—that gardener, finding himself in competition with the Asiatic, has thrown up his garden. And since the Asiatic has forced out the white man he himself has become useless as a gardener. Yet, before the Chinese came there, the white man was supplying us all with vegetables.

Mr. Gordon: Who bought the Chinese grown vegetables?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I cannot say. I would like to point out to the Minister for Mines that this is a distinct breach of the Mining Act, and I would ask him to inquire into this question. I can give him dozens of instances of garden areas on which Chinamen are working and which are being dummied by white men for the Chinamen. This is undoubtedly contrary to the wording and the spirit of the Mining Act, and I hope that in this as well as in the exemptions, the Minister will endeavour to enforce the Act in the Pilbara district. In respect to the aborigines question we learn from the report of the Chief Protector that a considerable amount of work is being done in this department and that a considerable sum of money is being spent. We must all agree with the Chief Protector that the money is being spent, but as to the good that is being done, for my part I am very doubtful of it. In respect to these hospitals for aborigines which have been established in the North-West, they are supposed to be for the cure of disease. We find that the project is absolutely useless. In fact, in my opinion, it is sheer waste of money because there are so very few natives taken to the hospitals. The methods of obtaining the diseased natives are so clumsy, so bad, that it is only an odd one who is secured. This, on the face of it, in view of the hundreds who are infected, is simply useless. Of course, to an extent, it is humane to cure even one; but when it is remembered that the one when cured goes back to the diseased area we must admit that it is nothing but a waste of money. I have pointed out once before that the system of making the

police collectors of these diseased persons is a bad one. Again, we find that there is no provision made for removing them across the water to the hospital. Some of the steamships on these coasts will not carry these aborigines, and they are left waiting for weeks, perhaps for months, for some schooner to come down and take them off to the islands. During this time, of course, it is practically impossible to attend to them at any of the centres to which they have been brought, and perhaps it is for this reason that more are not brought in. It is only just the few who happen to be brought in at the time when a boat is arriving that are sent off to the island. No doubt the movement deserves the best support of every member of this House if only it were properly carried out. But it is, as I have already said, nothing but a waste of money. The present system has failed, and it will continue to be a failure unless some improvement is made in the method of collecting the diseased natives and forwarding them to the hospitals. The question of feeding the aborigines is much as it was when last I dealt with this question and, in my opinion, it is still most unsatisfactory. The system is that the police receive so much per day to feed the natives. In some instances, the police go out and gather them in and say they have fed them. The inspector himself in his report states that there is practically no check upon this distribution. Now, there is no possible reason why there should not be a very good check upon this distribution. If the Government would allow some business person in each district to take a contract to supply the natives with food, and then require the police to attend when the food is being distributed, and see that the natives get what the Government were paying for—this would be found a simple method, doing justice both to the natives and to the department. I venture to say that at the present time not 30 per cent. of the money spent on rations for indigent natives reaches its proper destination. Again, we have the question of inspectors of aborigines. When last I was speaking on this question I pointed out that

the inspector who is supposed to be in part of the electorate which I represent had not been in it for 18 months; that was practically 12 months ago, and now I can say that he has not been there for two and a half years. The fact seems to be that Mr. Isdell has settled down in the vicinity of Broome and remains there, and the whole of the other parts of that great Northern area are entirely without the services of an inspector. I hold that if the Pilbara district and all the East Kimberley districts can do without an inspector, then we can do without an inspector altogether. On my experience we can do just as well without inspectors as with them. As a matter of fact, the inspectors of the North-West and the Gascoyne and Ashburton districts are not worth, either to the natives or to the department, the money it costs to print their reports. I would suggest that either the protection be done thoroughly and properly, or that the money be saved. The whole expenditure on protectors, inspectors, and hospitals for the aborigines, if the work be not properly carried out, is an absolute waste of money. I submit to the Government that they should either stop it altogether, or see that the work is properly carried out. In regard to another question which bears, to an extent, on finance, I would like to say that I am convinced, after careful study, that it would be considerably better for this State if the roads boards' subsidies were entirely abolished. On looking through the payments for the year ending 1908, I find that such districts as Marble Bar received about 13s. in the pound, whereas, if we come down to Fremantle, we find the subsidy to be something like £2. Now, if any difference is to be made at all, I contend that those entitled to the best terms are the boards away out-back which are trying to open up new country. Districts such as Fremantle, Greenbushes, and others close to settlement, should be able to pay their own way. And yet we find that those nearest the seat of Government, those which have the pull, get the money while those far away from the Government get no consideration whatever. The fairest and best way of settling this ques-

tion is to abolish the subsidies altogether. If they are not abolished, then I say that every board should receive a similar amount, a percentage on the rates collected, and there should be no differentiation whatever. I will strongly oppose any roads board subsidies when we get to the Estimates. The Government should take this means of saving a little towards paying off the deficit which the late Treasurer built up in such a masterly style.

On motion by Mr. Heitmann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.4 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 1st September, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Municipal By-laws of Northam-York; 2, Pharmacy and Poisons Act, 1894: Regulation 42; 3, Fremantle Harbour Trust: Regulation 117; 4, Port Regulations: Amendment of No. 59; 5, Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act Regulations.

QUESTION—MEDICAL OFFICER, MARBLE BAR.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER asked the Colonial Secretary:—What steps are the Government taking to fill up the position of medical officer at Marble Bar?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY re-

plied: The District Medical Officer (Dr. Durack) obtained leave of absence, and Dr. Thurstan was appointed to act while the former was away. It was arranged for Dr. Durack to return to Marble Bar by 28th August, but owing to illness he was unable to leave Sydney. An endeavour was made to obtain a *locum* in Perth to relieve Dr. Thurstan (Acting District Medical Officer), who was compelled to return from Marble Bar on that date, but no medical man was available. Dr. Durack will leave for Marble Bar by the "Koombana," sailing from Fremantle on the 3rd instant. Dr. Thurstan was asked by telegram to remain until Dr. Durack returned, but he was unable to do so.

BILL—POLICE (CONSOLIDATION).

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary, and read a first time.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.
Hon. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): I do not propose to say very much with regard to this Bill. I am not entirely in sympathy with it, but as it passed this House last session I intend to offer no objection to it on the present occasion. I think a Bill dealing with this question should pass this House, and as nothing fresh has arisen since it was debated last session to induce me to oppose it, I will support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—List of charges to be posted:

Hon. F. CONNOR: In what way were the charges to be made up? Would it not be better if the rates were fixed?