

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th July, 1908.

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

Prayers.

QUESTION—RAILWAY COMMISSIONER'S APPOINTMENT.

Mr. BOLTON (for Mr. Horan) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is it correct that Mr. J. T. Short has received the appointment of Commissioner for Railways? 2, What are the terms, in full, of his appointment?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes, subject to the approval of Parliament. 2, £1,500 per annum, for a term of 5 years; holidays as applying to heads of branches, and existing rights to hold good.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE.

Mr. WALKER asked the Minister for Works: 1, What amounts have been spent on construction works in connection with the sewerage of Perth and Fremantle? 2, When does the Minister anticipate that the first series of reticulation sewers will be laid and house connections made and rates assessed to cover the cost of the construction of such works? 3, Is it the intention of the Government to form a Water Supply and Sewerage Board during the present session of Parliament?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, On construction, carried out by the Government, of storm water drains and sewers the amount of £151,828 13s. 9d. has been expended. 2, Before the end of this year. 3, It is the intention of the Government to establish a Board when reticulation is sufficiently advanced.

QUESTION—WATER BOARD APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Works 1, Why was the caretaker of the Mount Victoria reservoir appointed in preference to men who had been in the employ of the Metropolitan Board of Works for years? 2, What was his previous employment prior to being appointed? 3, Why was the present inspector of plumbers' work appointed over the heads of men equally capable, with double the number of years' service with the Board?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, The caretaker, Mr. G. Henderson, at Victoria reservoir, was appointed three years ago on the recommendation of the Superintending Engineer, by the the administrator, Hon. W. D. Johnson, after full inquiry and personal interview, and being a trained plumber was considered the most suitable person for the position. 2, Photographic retoucher. 3, Mr. Edward Pennington, Inspector of Plumbing, was appointed to his present position on the recommendation of the Superintending Engineer on February 18th last. Only one employee of the Board, who also holds a responsible position, and who had served his time at plumbing, has a longer term of service with the Board than Mr. Pennington.

QUESTION—FIREWOOD SHUNTING CHARGES.

Mr. COLLIER asked the Minister for Railways: Will he take steps to abolish the shunting charges now being levied upon small wood-contractors on the gold-fields in order that they may have equal privileges with the three large firewood companies which are now exempt from such charges?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The main line trains have to stop in the section to shunt the private sidings of the small wood-contractors, and the usual shunting charge is made. The three larger companies pay a bush haulage charge, and receive from and supply wagons to the Department in full train loads, and pay one shunting charge at Golden Gate. The matter has already

been brought under the notice of the Department by one of the small contractors, whose wood is subject to a second shunting charge at destination, and the whole question is now under consideration with a view to fixing a more equitable arrangement.

QUESTION—LEONORA WATER SCHEME.

Mr. STUART asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Will the returns in connection with the Leonora Water Scheme for the first six months justify the imposition of a water rate of 2s. in the £ for the ensuing half-year? 2, Is it the intention of the Minister to constitute a Water Board for the control of the Water Scheme as originally outlined?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The question of altering the rate which has been struck for the current year is one that it is considered should be left for the decision of the Water Board now about to be formed.

DEBATE—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fourth Day.

Resumed from the previous day.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning): I rise with much pleasure to support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's Speech, and I desire to add my thanks to those already expressed in that motion. Before proceeding with the main portion of my remarks to-day, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on again assuming the Chair at the commencement of this session; and I would like in a general way to congratulate the Premier on the excellent pre-session speech he delivered recently at Bunbury. The speech was most comprehensive, embracing as it did all those features which I take it are necessary, and giving a *resumé* of past work, also briefly stating what is intended to be done in the future. We are merely looking upon these proposals for the future as preliminary, for no doubt as soon as the prorogation has taken place we shall have a more detailed statement of the policy for the future.

There does not appear to be any indication that there is likely to be much change in regard to that policy, and as I have often expressed my opinion in this Chamber on the same subject, I would like to say although many important measures require to be dealt with by the Assembly, in my opinion there is necessity to deal with administrative matters, keeping well in view the conditions of the country in regard to future developments. I am sure we cannot find fault with the proposals of which we have had a few foreshadowed. I am satisfied it devolves on any member of the House who is entrusted with the responsibility of leading it and of governing the affairs of the country to keep pace with the times. In a new country such as this, paramount consideration should be given to the great question of development. As we are calling to our shores large numbers who join with us in building up the country, we shall have to take the responsibility in regard to finance, and for the time being we may find the responsibilities heavier than they have been in the past. The indications of the future, the promising immigration, the promising addition to the numbers of our people, point to the fact that we shall have among us a greater population to share those responsibilities. I have always looked upon mining as the great and important factor that has brought us before the eyes of the world, and placed us in the position we occupy to-day, giving us much assistance in improving our position. I recognise we owe a debt of gratitude to the miner who went forth in the early days, some 13 or 14 years ago, and took up the arduous task of dealing with the development of our great mines, producing as they did the wealth which ultimately did so much in the development of our country generally. At the same time, while recognising this, I feel that the industry which I have been so long personally associated with is the one which must eventually become the powerful factor in building up the wealth of Western Australia; that is, the agricultural and pastoral industry. I am satisfied that we are on the eve of great development, and I am satisfied too that if we are to make progress in the develop-

ment we must nerve ourselves to the task and go forth manfully to do our duty to the country. Land settlement in my opinion is governed by three most important factors, and I take it the great assistance which has been rendered by three factors which I will mention, have done much to help forward our development. We require in countries where there is so much initiatory work, where the people after all are not possessed of sufficient means to carry on their affairs in connection with agricultural and pastoral pursuits, which will enable them to do so without obtaining assistance from other sources, the great factor that has done so much to help the struggling farmer in the past and which will do much in the future, the Agricultural Bank. The Agricultural Bank Act was introduced during the time of the Forrest régime, introduced by Sir John Forrest, and supported by my old friend Mr. George Throssell. By the way, I am sorry to hear Mr. Throssell is suffering from an illness which has prevented him from attending to his parliamentary duties, and I am sure those who know him will join with me in wishing that he will soon be restored to health, and that we shall soon see him again in our midst. I also took an important part in assisting forward that Agricultural Bank Act. Therefore, although at the time it was of a speculative character, an innovation which was looked on by many as a risk, I am glad to say it has been a success. Although perhaps the Act has not been entirely followed by the other States, it has really been the basis on which the other States have formulated their laws dealing with a similar subject. There is also the question of agricultural railways, which I shall deal with in detail. And there is also in my opinion the absolute necessity for interest to be taken by a live Minister of the Cabinet in this special department. We have already seen the introduction of the Agricultural Bank Act, the commencement of our agricultural railways, and we have seen in the present Minister an enthusiast who has done his duty for the country, and taken an intense interest in its welfare. As to the Agricultural Bank Act, although the provisions of the Act prior to the recent

amendment enabled the borrower to receive more money than he is able to do to-day, yet the Act was not taken advantage of to the same extent as it is to-day. When the proposed amendment was brought forward, of which the present Act is the result, and when it was proposed to enable the borrower to obtain £300, being the value of actual improvements carried out, I felt some anxiety as to its operation, I may say, however, I am in favour of giving every assistance that can be given to the genuine settler. Although that Act was an experiment, I am glad to say having watched it since its passing, I am satisfied that with the careful inspection which is made, with the advantages of mature experience in the person of Mr Paterson, who has done so much good in the working of the Act, and with the support of such trustees as one of my old colleagues Mr. Richardson, who was Minister for Lands, together with the experience of Mr. Hopkins, backed up by the untiring and zealous work of the present managing trustee, Mr. McLarty, I am satisfied we are safe in the hands of that management. We have also now a special arrangement made for inspection, and the selection which has been made of suitable men, many of whom I have met, have proved to me they have in view the necessity for improving the public interest and welfare. I am satisfied too, if we are to make a great success of this Act and farther enhance its value, we must have a larger amount made available to the borrower, although it has been pointed out in doing this we are preventing a great number from taking advantage of the Act. However, there must be a limitation of the funds at our disposal. I am satisfied that with such a security as we are offered, we can well vote farther funds for the purposes I speak of, and I commend to the Government the necessity for making an amendment in the direction I have indicated. In addition to the £300 which is available on actual improvements there is also, as you know, £100 available to be advanced against a certain proportion of work done by the holder. There is also another admirable provision, that £100 may be advanced for breeding stock. This has been much

availed of, and has met with great approbation in the country. Where the advance has been availed of great success has resulted. A year ago I travelled through parts of my district with the manager of the Bank, Mr. Paterson, and we selected certain men in different parts who I thought could be safely entrusted with £100 worth of breeding ewes. Most of the men whom I saw agreed to borrow the money, and the result is I have personally seen the stock since then and learnt that the results from the ewes have been from 80 per cent. to 95 per cent. in lambs. As you know, only breeding ewes are purchased, and they were provided at a time when they were in lamb, with the result that the excellent returns I have referred to have been received. This is only the commencement of an improvement in this direction which will mean a great deal to the country. Those who have watched the progress of stock will realise how great are the increases in the country districts of the State. In my own locality, where ten years ago we had only 126,000 sheep, to-day there are nearly 400,000 sheep within the same area, thus proving that the small farmers and holders are taking advantage of the advice often given to them to go in for mixed farming and provide themselves with stock. This will also help in the direction of decreasing the cost of meat to the consumer, for the stock which is required in this country is that which does not have to travel so far as from the Kimberleys. The northern parts of this State we are proud of, on account of the sheep and cattle raising there; but we desire that the stock shall be closer to the central markets. Stock which can be driven or railed from these short distances arrive in a much better condition than stock travelled so far as from the Kimberleys, from whence they have to be sent in ships. We shall see a great change in the direction of small holders providing themselves with stock, and by this means the number of sheep and cattle in the State will be increased very considerably. All the risks taken in the past, and all the doubts that existed in our minds with regard to this innovation no longer exist, for the risks have been justified and the

doubts dispelled. In regard to the other matter I mentioned, namely, the question of agricultural railways, farther additions have been foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech. Although some comment has been made as to the non-paying results of these lines, and the probability that they will not pay for some time, I consider we shall see a great improvement in regard to increased tonnage carried over the lines so soon as the developments now going on reach a more mature stage. It may be pleasing to members to know that the two railways spoken of here about two years ago, when the Bills were introduced, as being projects not justified by existing conditions, are gradually making their way. They are affording assistance to the farmers to a large extent. Although the extension of the Dumbleyung line must come, and that almost at once, yet it has done well so far, for it has tapped a splendid agricultural area, and its farther extension must mean the opening up of thousands of acres for agriculture. Then the line from Katanning to Kojonup, which was mentioned at the time of its proposed construction as being a doubtful proposition, has given a return of 40 per cent over and above the other line going east; and its farther extension into the country towards Dinninup and the Balgarrup River must add materially in the future to the earnings. I am so satisfied about this line that I feel that whenever there is sufficient justification from a developmental standpoint, the small cost of building the lines—which after all is not much greater than the cost of an ordinary road—should be incurred, as the construction of railways provides an important factor in the building up of the country in directions where it was out of the question to grow wheat previously owing to the long distances which the product had to be carted. The construction of farther lines means adding more money to our indebtedness; but we have also to look at the fact that the more people we get on the land to develop the country in the way in which we wish to see it developed, the less amount per head will be the public indebtedness of the country. So satisfied am I of the earnestness of the Leader of the Opposi-

tion, and his desire to see the country developed, that I was sorry to see a few days ago he referred to the railway lines in a way which I thought, upon farther consideration, he will see was utterly unjustified. He referred to the fact that those "in the know" were "mopping up" the land to be served by these lines. None would be better pleased than I to see a return prepared of applicants for land in the neighbourhood of these railways, for I am sure that by this means it would be proved that the selection which has been made in those directions has been by legitimate settlers, who are taking up these holdings for development and for no other purpose than to make the best they can out of the soil. [Mr. H. Brown: What about the Denmark railway?] That has already been built, and the land within reach of the railway has been purchased from the original holder, for settlement. I understand the Government have not disposed of any of this land and that they will give everyone an opportunity to apply for it when they are prepared to put it on the market. I am hoping to see farther development taking place throughout all the country tapped by these agricultural railways; and I commend to the House for their earnest consideration any proposals to construct additional lines. I shall be quite satisfied for each proposal to stand on its merits, and if the House is content that the proposals are in the interests of the country and will open up agricultural areas, then let members approve of the works being undertaken. I urge members who do not believe that this system is a success to travel through the country themselves and see with their own eyes what is going on. They will then realise the conditions under which the railways have been built, or are to be built, and will appreciate the advantages that will accrue. In regard to the Minister for Agriculture I would say I desire to congratulate him upon the excellent work he has done. It has been said in my district recently that Mr. Mitchell was a bank clerk and the sooner he was relegated to his old position the better. That was said a few days ago. [Member: In Katanning.] Yes, in my own town; and I think this.

that if we had a sensitive man filling such a position it would deter him from continuing to prosecute such important duties in the country. I want to say although we do not expect a perfect man, yet we do hope that the country will recognise the earnestness and enthusiasm, and the fearlessness and justness of the present Minister. He may bring forward, as he has done, proposals which are not perhaps so practical in certain directions as one would like, yet it is by these means that we get new ideas for members of the House to deal with. These are what we as representatives of this great country want to see in order to bring about development. I merely wish to pay this tribute to a man with whom I have travelled recently. Although he may have gained much of his experience as manager of a bank, that experience must have been of the greatest value because he had been looked upon as a most practical man, indeed as the most practical farmer in the Eastern districts, and one whose operations may well be followed by others with profit. We should congratulate ourselves on having a man who is ready to start innovations, because with the experience he possesses he has done much good. He has been cavilled at for travelling through the country, but I would point out that that is a necessity. Members cannot do better than travel through the country and gain experience of its capabilities. He has been taken to task for the importation of sheep and dairy cows. I have not seen the cows yet, but I know many of them have filled the purpose for which they were brought here. With regard to the sheep, I have had opportunities to see the results of their importation, and I have some figures here which I shall give to the House. There were 21,562 sheep imported, and if we take the ordinary loss at five per cent., we will have left say 20,500 breeding ewes. This is the number taken over by farmers in the country districts, and in nearly every instance in very small lots. If we take the ordinary increase allowed by the average farmer and put it at 80 per cent., we get 16,400 lambs, making a total with the ewes of 36,900. This is the result of that importation. If we take these 16,400

lambs and value them at an average of 10s. per head, we get £8,200 as the value represented by the lambs as the result of this importation. Perhaps I am a little high in my estimate of the value because I understand the price of lambs is not so high this year as it was last year. [*Mr. Butcher*: Not as lambs.] With regard to land settlement I wish to congratulate the Minister for Lands upon the success of the Amendment Act, and I also congratulate Parliament upon the thought they gave to this measure when it was brought forward. That Amending Act has resulted most successfully, although exception has been taken in some quarters—I am sorry to say again in my district particularly—to the limitation of the areas. It has been pointed out there that 2,000 acres is not sufficient, and fault has been found with me for having supported a measure which reduced the area to be taken up to 2,000 acres. I am sure however that under the provisions of that Act, people overlook the fact that a man can take up 2,000 acres in his own name, and if he has a wife he can take up a thousand acres in her name, and then if he requires a grazing lease he has a right to take up 5,000 acres under grazing lease conditions. If this is not enough then I think there must be something wrong with the character of the land itself. I think under the best conditions it is sufficient. I think too that when they look into this more closely it will be found to be quite sufficient. I am astounded at the increase of settlement. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned that the years 1904 and 1905 were the greatest in acreage selected. I notice on referring to the statistics that he was right about 1904, but there was a large area of land selected under grazing lease conditions, which are not so valuable as the conditional purchase conditions, which require more improvements to be carried out. I feel that this year's selection has been greater than that of the former year mentioned. I will not make invidious comparisons, because I feel that every man who has filled the position of a Minister of the Crown has honestly endeavoured to make a success of his department and has done his best in accord-

ance with the conditions under which he was administering that department. There is one important feature which should not be lost sight of and which I understand is to be put into operation as soon as the question of decentralisation is determined. Those who have had anything to do with the Lands Department recently must admit that prompt treatment has been received by applicants. We have already seen a very great improvement in this direction, and we hope by the decentralisation methods which are to be adopted, even greater expedition will follow in connection with selection, that is where there is a large number of applicants, because local boards will deal with them and deal with them promptly, disposing of any question of doubt, instead of keeping applicants in suspense for weeks as has been the case in the past. The establishment of the Melbourne Agency has resulted in a great many people coming over from that State to take up land in the different parts of this State, and although I do not consider that we should depopulate the Eastern States or endeavour to populate our country at the expense of the neighbouring States, still if there are people who are desirous of leaving those States, then by all means let us attract them here rather than allow them to proceed to South Africa or other distant places. I have had letters only this week from two men, one in Victoria and one in New Zealand, both of whom have £500 or £600, asking for information regarding this country and stating that they had made up their minds to come over. I took a broad-minded view of their requests and I went to the Lands Office and asked them to send the necessary information to these intending settlers, at the same time giving them some practical information in regard to fencing, ringbarking, and other matters. There is another thing I would like to refer to, and that is the proposal in regard to the London immigration commissioner. I understand the Government are sending Mr. Ranford, who has done such excellent work in different parts of this State. He has been rightly called the veteran of land settlement. His enthusiasm some say should be avoided,

because he has sent men on the land which they have found has not been as good as he represented it to be. I have had letters from friends in Tasmania who had listened to some of Mr. Ranford's lectures, and they all told me that he has been very careful in regard to his statements, and that he has not painted the picture in a more glowing manner than was justified. I am glad Mr. Ranford has been selected and I congratulate the Government upon this appointment. I am sure we shall see very good results from it. Mr. Ranford is not likely to send us men who are not capable of developing the land, not immigrants like some who have come here from offices, and who are altogether unsuited for the work in connection with the development of the country. That is what we want to avoid and there is no better man to judge a prospective successful farmer than Mr. Ranford. With regard to production, it has been pointed out that we are now making rapid strides in that direction. I would like to point out what the success has been. Although wheat has been looked upon as the easiest handled of our products and likely to find a ready market beyond the shores of Western Australia, we have other cereals, and we have also that great industry the pastoral industry, with its wool production, and we have also the stock industry, about which we have heard so much during the last few days in connection with what is called "the meat ring." With regard to wheat, I find that the greatest importation that we have had of flour in this country was in 1897 when we imported 15,982 tons. The next highest total was in 1903 when we imported 15,242 tons, and if we take these figures on a population basis we will find that in 1903 we were consuming per head of the population 134 lbs. of imported flour and 121 lbs. of local flour. In 1907 there was a gradual diminution. We imported 3,265 tons and we manufactured in the State 28,000 tons. We therefore consumed 25 lbs. of imported and 212 lbs. of local flour per head of the population. For 1908 I have been able to get the figures for the first six months, and I have doubled them for my purpose. I find the

total tonnage imported in the six months was 1,046 tons; that doubled would give us 2,092 tons, and basing it on the population to-day of 286,000 people, we find it gives us a consumption of 16 lbs. per head of imported flour consumed in the State to-day. It has become a reducing quantity and I am glad to say in the Northern areas, which have been the largest importers because of the reputed keeping quality of imported flour, the reduction has fallen something like 1,000 tons in the last 15 months, and to-day they are using 1,000 tons more of Western Australian production than they were using a year ago. [Mr. Collier: I thought we were entirely supplying our own market.] So we are. I am pointing that out. We are more than supplying our own market. Last year we imported 3,265 tons of flour and milled 28,000 tons, but we exported flour and wheat to the equivalent of 695,300 bushels, this including 4,100 tons of flour, an excess over the importations of 835 tons. It proves that we are producing sufficient to meet our own requirements; and as soon as the prejudice that has existed entirely disappears, as it will no doubt in time, we shall be importing very little flour. There is also another factor. This year we have only imported from overseas a matter of 162 tons of flour, that is from Canada, America, and other places outside Australia, as against 466 tons in 1903. So we see that importation has fallen off. It shows that we are gradually gaining in regard to the local use of our own produce, proving its superiority in certain directions.

Mr. Angwin : Have the Government given up calling for tenders for imported flour?

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : Yes; now it is all local flour that is used by the Government. I merely mention these figures to show that we have made great strides; and although the exportation this year is not nearly so much as it was last year, yet we have the remaining half year to go, and it was in the last half of last year that the greatest exportation of wheat took place, also the holders are able during the last half of the year to know definitely what the local requirements are and so arrange

to ship the surplus. Again in oats we are fast overtaking our demand. That is another great thing, because for some years we were sending a great deal of money to New Zealand for oats, while to-day we are supplying two kinds of the requirements of West Australia. There was some controversy recently in regard to the manufacture of implements in this State. I may point out that for the ten years preceding the end of last year the machinery purchased by farmers for the improvement of land in this State cost £613,510, and the buildings for protecting stock and produce which the farmers have erected, irrespective of fencing, building of houses and other improvements in connection with the development of land, cost £533,869, making a total of £1,147,379 spent in these two directions. So it will be seen that the farming industry is an important factor in this State and closely, I take it, competes with the tremendous amount of money spent in our mining industry. In fact the agricultural and pastoral industry and the mining industry are the great industries to which we all look for farther development. Next comes the question of railway rates. A promise has already been made that the railway rates will be reconsidered with a view to giving cheaper rates for exporting from the country. A portion of this was agreed to last year; but I feel that to bring us into line with the Eastern States, such as New South Wales, a farther reduction should be made; and I am glad to say that a definite promise was made by the Minister some time ago that this question would receive due consideration. It was owing to the absence of the Premier and other matters, that the proposal has not yet been brought to a definite conclusion; but I am anxious to see whatever change is made brought into force not later than the 1st November; because the complaint made in the past is that alterations in rates have taken place mostly in March or April, and that therefore the farmer has not benefited to the extent he should do. However, this will be remedied I take it this year, and this new arrangement made so that the rates can come into force not later than the 1st November. The ques-

tion of freights through mills is one that has received considerable attention at the hands of farmers. They are of opinion that it is not advantageous to them, and some time ago they expressed that view to the Minister, but since then I think they have come to the conclusion that they were in error in arriving at the decision they did, so that there is likely to be a proposal put forward for the continuance of these through rates in the future. One thing that has been disturbing the condition of affairs with regard to farming during the year was the action of the Commonwealth authorities in altering the size of the corn-sack. Although the corn sack has been made in the past to carry from 250lbs. to 280lbs. of wheat, it has been thought that it should be reduced in size. Well, from my standpoint, or from the standpoint of those who have to use the corn sack in trade, the alteration is immaterial in many respects, except that as the wheat becomes heavier as the result of the improved conditions in regard to seed these sacks certainly become very cumbersome and no doubt are a tax on those who have to handle them. But the farmer thinks, and rightly so, that he is suffering in consequence. [*Member: Why?*] Because it takes 16 of the new sacks to carry his wheat instead of nine of the old; and the difference in price is so immaterial, being only a matter of about 1s. 8d. a dozen in favour of the new sack as against the old; but it puts the farmer in the position of having to pay more for his sacks, while he may not receive more for his produce than in the past. Generally, I think we have cause to congratulate ourselves on the progress made in the direction I have indicated. I do not intend to deal with the question of the finances, because there have been so many who have dealt with it and who have gone more closely into these matters; but at the same time our thanks are due to the Treasurer for the exposition he has given of the affairs of the country. And although there have been comparisons made between the present condition and the days of the Labour Government, yet after all we must not forget that the provision for sinking fund and for interest on our increased borrowings means that with a falling revenue in

certain directions the Treasurer must exercise greater caution and more prudence than was perhaps required in those days referred to. In regard to the depression and the unemployed referred to by some members, I do not think the depression is nearly so acute as many would lead us to believe. It is admitted that there is depression in certain directions and that there are unemployed; but in that great and promising country of New Zealand, so often referred to, we see indications of the same state of things. The trouble in getting employment for every man is that every man is not suited for the class of employment for which he is required. It means that if we have to educate a man to the standard of work we require, that man is often passed by in favour of men who have had experience. We might just as well take a lot of boys and teach them; in fact it would be better because we can develop them; but men who have settled occupations in life are difficult to train. That is the reason why men have to pass farms and other places and cannot obtain occupation. If we take account of the indication given in connection with our Savings Bank deposits, we find that there has never been so much money in the bank before. [Mr. Collier: That is not a reliable guide.] It shows that there must be some progress among the people, and that they are living within their means and making a profit. But we cannot altogether congratulate ourselves upon this state of affairs, because it shows that the money is not being invested in certain directions. And what applies to the Savings Bank also applies to our local banks, because in them we find something like five million pounds lying idle, a large proportion of it awaiting investment. One of the reasons why this money is not used as it should be is because of a doubt amongst some people. They do not care to invest their money because they consider trade is not as buoyant as it was, and they are not prepared to launch out in the way we would like to see them do. We find also they are not inclined to advance money outside the greater centres, Perth for instance. If one wants to get money for development in the country he cannot get it. However, I am glad to say there

is a change in this direction. The banking institutions are turning their attention more to the country for securities, and we find that the other institutions, such as trustees and insurance companies and others with funds to dispose of, are giving attention to the broad acres rather than to the circumscribed divisions in cities, which, when the time of distress comes, or when there is a set-back, are more likely to suffer than country lands. The member for Guildford remarked yesterday that trade was never worse than it is now; but as one who has had to do with the commercial trade of the country for the past 30 years, I interjected that I could trace much of it to over-trading in the State. It is due no doubt to the concentration of the energies of business people in larger concerns that are squeezing out many of the smaller ones. I do not say this is desirable or perhaps beneficial, but it is the case. Also in a large measure it is owing to the importation into this State of large quantities of goods, more than are required for the consumption of the people, which means that there is always a surplus over and above what might be called the actual everyday sales, and therefore profits in this country are lower than they are in any other part of Australia among business concerns to-day. We have this cause, the great competition that exists, and again there are the high rates of pay and other things in various businesses as compared with the Eastern States. All go to show that the profits are much less, so that people who have not capital to withstand the forces, as it were, of the greater concerns go to the wall; and that is why we have heard of so many bankruptcies. It does not mean that the country is any worse; but it is because of the centralisation in large business concerns. And it comes back to this, as mentioned by several hon. members, such centralisation in what may be termed rings or combines is not as beneficial to the country as the old order of things which enabled traders to carry on their businesses in different directions, perfectly untrammelled in this way. [Mr. Collier: That is just the cause, the big combines squeezing out the small men.] We cannot call them combines. It is an axiom among

people who manufacture that you must get your work done, if you would do it economically, under one roof; that is, you must make your concern big. The public demand lower-priced articles, and the manufacturer has to supply them. The manufacturer has to increase his capital in certain directions by bringing the people together. We find the cry for cheaper goods causes bankruptcies because of the inability of certain people to supply lower-priced articles. As to the legislation foreshadowed, I hope we shall have the Roads Bill, which has been promised so long, passed into law. It is necessary that we should have a comprehensive measure or some Roads Act, for at the present time a great deal of trouble occurs in country districts through the dual control of municipalities and roads boards. I think they can well combine under the shire system, or perhaps a modification of it, which has been so successful in other parts. The local option question is one which we shall have to deal with, and no doubt it will, at the proper time, receive consideration at the hands of the Government. In regard to public works, I am glad to see some decisive action taken respecting the dock at Fremantle. I have already supported that work, because I feel that in a country with promising prospects such as we have, there is need in the chief port for the convenience which a dock must give to shipping; therefore I feel that we should do our duty to the country and to those who come into the country, and provide the necessary means for repairs by this dock. Before concluding, I would like to say I am pleased to notice the Government have recommended, or intend recommending to the House, the confirmation of the agreement appointing Mr. Short as Railway Commissioner, and I feel they have acted justly to a most deserving officer. I do not for a moment wish to make comparisons between Mr. Short and his predecessors; I speak of him as I know him. I know him to be a man thoroughly upright and determined to do his duty. I also know that he has experience which he has gained in this State, and although we have heard comments made as to the reason why the expenses were not reduced

earlier when Mr. Short had an opportunity of dealing with the management, yet as one who knows exactly what did take place I may tell the House. Mr. Short only acted as Commissioner on two occasions and was not in full charge of the work, but was keeping the office going as *locum tenens*, pending the return of the Commissioner. He was simply filling the position for the time being. In Mr. Davies's term he acted for six months; that was when I was in office. He acted again between the time of Mr. Davies's departure from this State and the appointment of Mr. George. Since then we have had Mr. George in office for five years, and we have had the experience of Mr. Short during the past 12 months. If Parliament decides to give Mr. Short full authority to carry on the work I am satisfied, if he is given that authority and given an opportunity of seeing what he can do, we shall see good results from the work which he has in hand. In my opinion the difficulties in obtaining railway officers are very great. Inducements have been held out in various parts of the world to get good men to take up great concerns, yet these efforts have not always been successful. At the same time I think although there may be opportunities of getting experienced men from other parts of the world, yet we must not forget that a man with a knowledge of the country's railway workings and local experience, a man who can be thoroughly trusted by the employees, and who has a desire to do his duty, a man who is credited with experience which he has gained by long years of service must be suitable for the management of our railways. I congratulate the Government on the selection they have made, and I hope the result will bear out their action. As this is the last occasion before the prorogation on which I shall have an opportunity of speaking, I desire to say I hope we shall have opportunities of meeting here again later on. I would like to say in regard to some of the remarks that have been made, that I do hope these recriminations which have been passed from time to time on either side of the House as to the work of various Administrations will cease. They are not always con-

ducive to gaining that full respect of the people who are responsible for our coming here, that we would like to enjoy. Every Administration carries its responsibilities. A Government is made up of men who are trying to do their best in the interests of the country. I am not speaking of what I do not know, because I have filled these positions myself. I have seen 120 men come and go from this House from time to time. Seeing, as I have done, these many changes from time to time, and recognising as I do the time that these men give to the work, and recognising too how little we are thanked for it, having put our hands to the plough and taken up the work we should do our best to fulfil the functions entrusted to us. I shall not have an opportunity of speaking again during this session, and I may say as one who has seen, I think, 24 sessions pass, that I cannot conclude without expressing my feeling in regard to this matter, because I am satisfied we have great work to do, and on the whole that work has been done in the most friendly way, although at times charges are made which savour somewhat of political scavenging.

Mr. E. E. HEITMANN (Cue): The few words I shall have to say on the Address-in-Reply will deal with subjects different from those dealt with by the member who has just sat down. After listening to speeches by different members it seems that all are inclined to deal with the various industries of the State almost entirely from their commercial aspect only. I would like to get away from that aspect for a while, and draw the attention of members—it is impossible to draw the attention of the public at the present time, owing to the strike of the Pressmen—[*Mr. Hudson*: It is a lock-out]—I want to draw the attention of members to another phase of the question, the point of view as it affects those working in the industries of the State. We are all ready to get up and tell the country what a fine mining industry we have, and to say a good deal about the farming industry; but we are too ready to forget the effect these industries have on the people employed therein. I shall refer

more particularly to the miners. We have had recently travelling throughout the goldfields areas the Minister for Mines, I suppose a man of the greatest importance in that industry, and he has made no mistake about telling the people what he has done in the past and what he is likely to do in the future. He stated in no uncertain terms that we had on the statute-book of Western Australia the finest Mines Regulation Act in the world. I will not dispute the value of the Act, but I say this, that in no other part of the world at all events have they the same kind of administration that we have in Western Australia. I believe this Mines Regulation Act is good, as good, I believe, as any of the Acts in Australia, at the same time a good Act is useless unless administered with some sympathy for those whom it affects. In support of the statement that the Act is not being administered properly, I would like to say one or two things. It is not administered as far as the Sunday labour provisions are concerned. At present on the Murchison there are many mines working on Sundays, and they have even got to that stage of carelessness that they do not even ask for a permit to work on Sundays. It is almost a general thing to find the batteries going, and in some cases the miners working on Sundays. The Minister has said it is the finest Act in the world, but I say that unless the Act is administered with some sympathy for the people whom it affects, then the Act might as well not be in existence. There is another laxity in the administration of the Act. I refer to the language test on the mines. I have brought this under the notice of the Mines Department time after time. Men are coming to this country straight from foreign parts and are dumped into the mines. I drew the attention of the inspector at Cue to the fact, but it still continues. A stranger can go on to the mines at any time and find men who are not able to speak half a dozen words of the English language. These men are given work in preference to our own miners. I do not object to these men being employed, but I object to these men being employed, supported by the Mines Department, to lower wages,

and to be used as levers against the British miner. The Italian and Austrian, who cannot speak English are found on the mines. There is no better miner than the Australian. But the reason the mines employ Italians is because the foreigners work in places where the Britisher will not work; by that means the mines are enabled to work places and evade the Mines Regulation Act, and at the same time to force the British workmen to work in places not favourable to good health. In connection with this language test, I wrote to the inspector of mines in the district, and he replied that he would make inquiries. He did make inquiries, but it was the usual kind of inquiries and inspection, which is held in the Mines Department. Word is sent to the mine manager that he may expect the inspector on a certain day; everything is fixed up, the Italians who cannot speak the English language are hid away and the inspector finds nothing wrong. I do not think he would have much to say if he did find anything wrong. I am referring to the inspector on the Murchison at the present time.

The Minister for Mines: Where is this being carried on?

Mr. HEITMANN: It is being carried on at the Fingal mine, and has been carried on for months past.

The Minister for Mines: Did you not recently go through the Fingal mine?

Mr. HEITMANN: I went through the Fingal mine. I wrote and made an appointment, and I have reason to believe that similar arrangements to those made for the inspectors were made for me. I found nothing wrong with the Fingal mine. I could complain in no way after having gone through; but I found that instructions had been given the night before that no firing was to take place from four o'clock in the morning until I left the mine at 12 o'clock midday, and everything was to be put in ship-shape order. This is what is done when the inspector arrives. I noticed the men were waiting at their stopes for me to pass through, so that they might fire. During the progress of the Mines Regulation Bill through this Chamber, the members on this side of the House pleaded with the Minister

to have check inspectors appointed, and asked that such officials should be men who were independent of the mine. The Minister would not agree to that. He had a certain clause introduced into the Bill, and in my opinion both his officers and he knew when that clause was drafted that it would be impossible to appoint to the position of check inspector a man who would be able to have any degree of freedom. Up to the present there has not been one check inspector appointed in Western Australia. The department barred certain men. There is no use hiding the fact that we want to appoint as check inspectors independent men who will not be liable to get the sack if they report adversely on the mine. Either the Department must pay men to do that work solely, or they must employ the union secretaries. They barred the latter from the position. Recently the Day Dawn miners union inquired from the Minister as to how they could have an inspector appointed, and from the reply they received they could see at once it would be impossible for them to get such an official appointed. That part of the Act is a dead letter as are many other parts of the measure. The Act is a good one, and the Minister might take credit for it, but without fair administration it is useless. When we asked for independent check inspectors we said we feared if these officials were not free and independent the moment they reported on any particular mine unfavourably to the company, that would be the end of them as far as work was concerned. The Minister ridiculed the idea, and said the mining managers would not stoop to that sort of thing. We have had experience lately on the Murchison of the managers sacking men because they had had dealings with the unions. In one case two men were sacked because they took up the duties of stewards of the mine. In another statement by the Minister made at Menzies and at Day Dawn, he declared among other things that his first object was to encourage mining in every possible way, and especially by giving better security to the leaseholders. He also declared that his Government were one with a policy of unadulterated

democracy, and that the administration of the Government was pure and beyond question. He added, and this is not the first time he has said this, that he desired to place greater responsibilities upon the wardens of the State. How he can reconcile that desire with his own actions I do not know, for time after time we have had recommendations from the wardens negatived. After hearing cases for forfeiture or applications for leases, they reported to the Minister and their decisions were reversed. I fail to see how the Minister can lay claim to clean administration. One case of many occurred recently. I have no doubt the Minister will have some excuse, but it will have to be a fairly good one to satisfy the people of Birrigrin. That town is a small mining locality of about 60 or 80 people, situated 38 miles north of Sandstone. There is a mine there known as the Wheel Ellen, which was found four or five years ago by the Johnson Brothers. They took about £10,000 worth of gold from the property which was afterwards taken up by Mr. Read and floated. One of the local managers was Mr. Peacock of Victoria. The property was worked by the company from March of last year until about November. They took out no stone from May, and had not a crushing. They then applied for exemption which they got. When the exemption was up they got a farther term of protection, and later on when it was found they were not complying with the Act, someone in Birrigrin put in an application for forfeiture. The application for forfeiture was made in March, and at that time the company had practically abandoned the mine, as the windlass was taken off, the ladders were taken up, and the camps were sold. Thereupon the company applied for six months exemption. The warden refused the exemption, and, I believe, fined the company. He said at the time he was pleased that a petition had been put in from the people of Birrigrin, as it supported him in his recommendation to the Minister. He recommended the fine, and that the people should work their show. Although the application for the six months exemption was made in March, a notice was

subsequently posted on the mine granting exemption, not from the date of the application, but from May. If the Minister can satisfactorily explain his action in this direction he will do more than I anticipate. He has declared he wants to encourage mining and to assist the industry, and yet here we have a town which was once in a flourishing condition dying away simply because the mine-owners are allowed to lock up their shows. The company in question is not even a local one. It was the very same company which held the Birrigrin gold mine. Such a thing as that does more damage to the community than anything I know of. As soon as the yield from the mine fell off the company said the miners were stealing the gold. This is only one instance of the pure administration of the Minister and his Government. Another instance is provided by the case of the Star of Aberdare mine. This is old history now ; but, seeing the Minister is going through the country impressing upon the people his virtues in administration, it is as well they should know something of these particular cases. The Star of Aberdare was another case where the warden made certain recommendations, and I say here that had not pressure been brought to bear upon the Government or the Minister in some way or other, the warden's recommendation would have been adopted. [Mr. Holman : Backstairs influence.] Another case is that of the Legacy South. This is a case where four or five men had worked a certain show, and who, after spending all their capital upon it, decided to go away and earn more money on wages so as to enable them to return and again work the show. As the warden told them, they did wrong in not applying for the protection they could have obtained. [Mr. Holman : They did not have the money to do that.] Later on a gentleman named Thompson, who is I believe one of the Minister's particular friends, and of the class he seems to encourage, a wild cat promoter, applied for the forfeiture. The case was heard in Cue, and the trial lasted for two days. After hearing the case the warden recommended that the lease should go back to the working men.

Mr. Thompson was not satisfied with that. He got hold of two of the papers in Cue who "barracked" for him, and then got hold of the Minister and some of the officers of the department, with the result that instead of the warden's recommendation being adopted the case was given against the men. Yet the Minister says his Government is one of pure administration. It is administration for one side only. I have come to the conclusion that where the interests of the poor prospector clash with the interests of the hoodler, the wild cat promoter, the former has not a possible chance with the present Government. It is no use saying one thing if one thinks something else, and that is my opinion of the Government. Another case occurred only recently, and our old friend Mr. Thompson is also interested therein. Instructions had been given by the department, and I give them all credit for it, to use a bore in and around Errols to try and get a better supply of water. After boring for two or three months water was located and a well was put down, and but little work was required in order to enable the water to be obtained. Mr. Thompson then found that the well was not near enough to his lease, and although the people of Errols were quite satisfied with the locality of the well, Mr. Thompson declared that the well was too far away, and set about getting the site changed. As a matter of fact, the people were thoroughly satisfied with the well as it was so handy to the town, and they signed a letter to this effect. Mr. Thompson asked the engineer at Day Dawn to alter the site, and on that official refusing said he would soon alter things. He then went to his old friend the Minister and had it altered although the well was down, and very little remained to be done before obtaining a good supply.

The Minister for Mines : That statement is not correct.

Mr. HEITMANN : At all events, Mr. Thompson says himself that he altered the site. I have a letter from the department saying that the water was not satisfactory, but I am prepared to abide by the decision of those who had to use it as to whether it was satisfactory or not.

This Mr. Thompson is able through his influence to have Government money spent in his particular locality in order to better his mine. Regarding clean administration, I would refer once more to an old matter, and a very sore matter so far as I am concerned ; that is, the Royal Commission appointed some 12 months ago to inquire into charges made by me. The Minister says his action was perfectly clean and open on that occasion. I will challenge him to say it. I will say this, that from the time the commission was appointed their object was to settle the member for Cue. And they were not afraid ; they even stooped to try and accomplish it. The actions of the Minister or some of his officers were not the actions of honourable men.

The Minister for Mines : I think, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is going too far. He says that my action was not that of an honourable man.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Mr. HEITMANN : I will withdraw it ; but I am sorry I cannot put it into any other language which would mean the same thing.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must withdraw unconditionally.

Mr. HEITMANN : Very well ; I withdraw. I am not saying it here to get the protection of the Chamber, or under cover of the privileges of the House. I have said the same thing on the public platform. I have charged the Government with doing certain things, which if it had been found had not been proved would have placed me behind bars at Fremantle. I am convinced of this, that so long as the Royal Commissioner is a man who can be possibly put under the control of the present Government, and especially of the present Minister for Mines, neither Heitmann nor any other Labour man will ever get a chance. They did their utmost, and they even extracted from the files certain telegrams that they were not prepared to have before this Chamber. When they appointed one of the finest wardens in the State—

Mr. SPEAKER : Do you mean that the Minister withdrew those telegrams ?

Mr. HEITMANN : I say he refused to allow the file to come here with those papers on it. Certain information was extracted from the files. After the Commissioner was appointed, a wire was sent by a certain influential man from Cue, asking that Warden Troy should be relieved, simply because they knew that Warden Troy was too far above them to be approached.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must not persist in that strain. I cannot permit such a reflection on the Minister, or on any of his officers.

Mr. HEITMANN : I am sorry, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. SPEAKER : There is no question about it. The hon. member said they appointed Mr. Troy because Mr. Troy could not be approached. It is most unjustifiable to use such language.

Mr. HEITMANN : I will withdraw what I have said. But I mean to reflect on those gentlemen. They reflected on me ; they tried to hound me out, but the Ministry failed. They did not treat me as an honourable man.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must not use that language, and he must withdraw that last remark.

Mr. HEITMANN : Very well, Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw it ; but I will take the first opportunity of making these remarks in a place where there will be a possibility of my getting them heard. I will state the facts, as I have stated them before. I have invited them to bring me up for criminal libel ; yet they won't touch me. I declare I have not had fair play. I am doing this personally ; I am doing it with the object of removing this man Lander, whose presence in the Mines Department and whose occupation of the position of mining inspector is an absolute menace to the well-being of miners on the fields. As long as I find this man there abusing his privileges, then I will endeavour to remove him. This inspector, who has caused all this discussion and been responsible for harsh words, is employed by the Government to administer the Act that has been brought in solely for the miners—as far as the mine-owners are concerned there is no

necessity for mines regulation or mining inspectors. If, as I said, this gentleman were to administer the Act as he should, if he were conscientious and honest, there would be no greater friend to the miner, no greater protector to the miner, than Mr. Lander ; the miners would look to him with a great degree of safety ; but instead we find him hobnobbing with the managers, and closing his eyes to dangerous places. Not only that, but we find him, in the case of fatal and serious accidents, starting out at once to hide things which might go against a company. I have proved this, and I can prove it again with a fair man on the bench. Give me a Judge of the Supreme Court, and I will more than prove the charges. During the investigation, I was on my trial : and if I had failed, the Ministry would have made me resign or compelled me to apologise to the Government. They failed, and I am prepared to say this : I did not get a fair deal. But it will continue. This man acted in such a way that if the Minister for Mines were as much concerned about the lives of the miners as the inspector is about the boodlers in the East or in London, he would remove him from his position at once. Recently a man was killed at Errols, and the manager or someone in connection with the company should have been placed in the dock. Even an amateur miner could see in that case that the mine was absolutely dangerous. This was bad enough ; but the inspector of mines went to this place and drove out—though I will not object to that—with, I believe, the mine manager to view the place ; and he took charge of the inquest on that night. The inspector of mines, supposed to administer an Act brought in solely for the workers, acted as council for the company at that particular inquest. A man has only to look at the evidence and the report of this individual to find that he is prepared to tell untruths even over the body of a miner, to protect a company. This is another serious charge I would invite the Government to inquire into ; but I know they will not. I have proved him to be a liar before, and I can prove it again in this particular case in connection with the proceedings at the inquest. When expert evidence was

brought in by the police to show on oath that the mine was unsafe and that they considered that no one should have worked there, yet in the face of this Mr. Lander passes over this quietly in his report as if it was to be. Break a huge engine on one of the Boulder mines and there will be great trouble. You can pull up the driver who caused it. But here is the Mines Department responsible in many cases for the lives of miners allowing such things as I have stated to pass by. A man has only to follow this particular inspector and his tactics, to find out that he is absolutely unscrupulous and not only prepared to allow mines to be worked dangerously, but we find men killed, and this inspector going there with the object solely of covering up any evidence that there may be against the company. One only has to look at the evidence at this inquest and see in the first place that the brother of the deceased asked for an adjournment on the ground that he was not accustomed to court procedure. He applied to be represented by counsel at the inquest. Mr. Lander objected; and I have it here on a sworn declaration that he went from one end of the table and walked to the other end and whispered to the coroner, who afterwards refused to allow the adjournment. Here is a man trying to find out who is responsible for the death of his brother, and Mr. Lander said he could not allow an adjournment because he had more important business in some other part of the community. And on leaving the scene of the accident he left with the manager. He was met some 14 miles from there and asked how he got on. He laughingly declared, "We beat them," meaning that the mining manager and he had beaten the unfortunate relatives of the man who was killed. You can go from one end of the Murchison to the other, you can converse with the miners north, south, east, and west, and you will find that if this inspector is not ridiculed, the feeling towards him is that of extreme hatred. In connection with this fatality—to give an idea of the justice that is dealt out on the goldfields—the inquest was started—in the hurry on the part of the inspector to get it over—in the afternoon, and at 2

o'clock in the morning the jury were in the bush, around a camp fire, considering their verdict. That is what they think of the life of a miner in that part of the country. We find in the Mining Act that certain people are disqualified from sitting on juries; yet two of the gentlemen who sat on this particular jury were in my opinion disqualified under the Act. But when the jurymen brought in their verdict, the foreman of the jury declared the verdict to be one of accidental death; and then he paused. He knew that the other two jurymen were against him, and he wanted to add a rider. The inspector said, in a pointing way, "No blame attachable to anyone?" The foreman of the jury did not reply, and the others agreed with him. In my opinion it had been arranged between the company, the inspector of mines and the jurymen.

At 6.15, the Speaker left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. HEITMANN (resuming): I am dealing with the inquest into the death of the man Smith at Errols, not because it can do any good to the unfortunate man, but so that if possible the disgraceful proceedings that took place after the death may be avoided, and so that the working of such dangerous places in mines may be avoided, and also to draw the attention of the public to the action of this man who should be an honourable servant of the Mines Department. Here is an extract from the report of the Inspector of Mines upon this accident:—

I beg to report on the accident as follows:—Nearly all the ore that has been taken from this mine has been worked from an open cut. A gradual slope was made from the surface at an angle of about 11 degrees, and a tramline laid to enable the ore to be drawn in small wagons by a horse to the battery. A portion of the hanging wall in the open cut was left standing; it was this that fell at about 10.50 p.m. on 21st May, 1908, killing Frederick William Smith and his horse. On examination I found that the hanging

wall had been supported by 4 "toms," head-boards and foot-boards which were placed on a building interlaced with timber. It will be seen by the statements made by that he examined the "toms" 30 seconds before the ground fell and concluded that there was no danger.

There is one statement in the report not borne out by the evidence. The inspector stated that there were four "toms" or pieces of timber holding up this ground. There were four witnesses, except the manager of the lease, and three of them said there were only two pieces of timber, while another said there were three pieces. Mr. Lander said about one hundred tons of stuff fell down, but the evidence of experts sent by the police to examine the place shows that from 150 tons to 300 tons of stuff fell. Mr. Lander winds up his report by saying :—

From the evidence before us, I conclude that the mass had been settling for nearly an hour before it fell. But the movement was so silent on account of the natural cleavage, that the only indication of danger was the falling of the fine dirt, which was attributed to the wind. I quite agree with the verdict of the jury that no blame was attachable to anyone, and I also agree with the rider "that loose dirt should not be allowed to lie on overhanging ground."

As a matter of fact, this is Mr. Lander's own verdict, and I say here, and it can be borne out if inquiry is made, which I certainly expect to be made, that Mr. Lander, the Inspector of Mines, took charge of the inquest. The acting-coroner, who went out to hear the case, was a man who had never sat on the bench before, and the moment a point arose as to what questions might be allowed to put to witnesses. Mr. Lander rose in the court and walked from one end of the table and whispered to the coroner, and the coroner disallowed certain questions. Mr. Lander says that he agrees with the verdict. Then let us hear what some of the miners who worked in that place and left it only on the day

of the accident have to say. Here is the sworn declaration of one man :—

I declare that I am a miner of twenty years' experience. I was employed as miner at the Wha Gold Mine, Errols, for about three months prior to the 21st May, 1908. Most of that time I worked in the open cut. I am well acquainted with the workings at the spot where Smith was killed. For some time previous to the fatal accident I considered the place absolutely unsafe for anyone to work in, and about a month before the fatal accident a fall of ground took place, partly burying a man named Bonham who had to be released by his mates. I had complained of the unsafe conditions to the underground boss, Pooley. I asked him to put in bulkheads to hold up the ground. Pooley replied that he could not get the timber required. During the time I worked there, four falls of ground had taken place, one time as much as 30 tons falling. About 500 tons fell when Smith was killed. About a month before the fatal accident I was ordered to shoot away a pillar from under the ground which fell away. I told Pooley that when the pillar was taken away the whole lot would come in. The dangerous state of the mine was the subject of comment on the part of the miners generally. Practical miners coming to Errols after getting a job had refused to start on account of the unsafe state of the mine. I expected the fall and was not surprised when it took place. I left the mine after having a few words with Pooley, because I was not satisfied with the conditions.

That is one man's view of the condition of the ground which the inspector considered practically safe, otherwise I consider he should have taken action. Here is another man's opinion :—

I declare that I am a miner of fifteen years' experience and that for three months prior to the day of the fatal accident to Smith I was employed as miner at the Wha Gold Mining Co., Errols. I remember the fatal accident to a man named Smith. I had worked

in the open cut where the accident happened. I had complained to Pooley, the underground manager, of the unsafe conditions of workings. Several times I had complained and asked him several times to put in pigsties. On the day of the accident Pooley asked me to go and work in the place where later in the day the accident happened. I refused and left the job. The place where the accident happened had given signs of its unsafe state.

Here are two men, one with twenty years' mining experience and another with fifteen years' mining experience, who left the job because they considered it was unsafe ; but in face of this, the miner's friend, Mr. Lander, the Inspector of Mines, declared that he agreed with the verdict of the jury, a verdict which he himself was instrumental in having placed on record. During the time this inquest was being held, Mr. Lander interjected on many occasions. He seemed to take charge of the whole proceedings ; and generally speaking, as I heard one man say in Errols, when I made inquiry into this, a stranger would naturally have thought they were inquiring into the death of the horse instead of into the death of the miner. Later on, the jury were forced to go out into the bush and light a fire to keep them from freezing while considering their verdict. This is the kind of justice dealt out to out-back miners in Western Australia by this so-called conscientious servant of the public, the Inspector of Mines, Mr. Lander. To conclude this, Mr. Lander, after the verdict was brought in, went to one of the jurymen, and in his usual patronising style said, "You have done well ; it is very cold ; here is half-a-sovereign to buy a bottle of whisky." I want to know who is paying for this whisky, and what does it mean that the inspector of mines should be buying whisky for the members of a jury? There is no doubt about this, and if the Minister for Mines will make inquiry, he will find that everything I have stated is correct in connection with this case. But it is not only on one occasion that this gentleman has acted in a like manner. As I have said before and as I will say until he is removed from his position,

as long as there is a possibility of hiding any evidence that will support an injured miner he will hide it. [Interjection by Mr. Taylor.] He has no consideration for widows or orphaned children ; and it is well known to the Minister for Mines this man was removed from Kalgoorlie ; and without any trouble we can get to know what people think of the inspector from one end of Western Australia where they have had experience of him. The Mines Department know it, the Minister knows it, and I consider the Minister is just as bad as the inspector to allow this to continue year in and year out. I can assure the Minister and the Government that as long as I can I am going to endeavour to protect the workers. It is all very fine for the Government to say they are doing things to assist the mining industry, but let them for a moment not altogether devote their assistance to men working their shows, or prospecting, or the men who put capital into shows, because they are not the most important factor. Let them for a moment consider the men working in the mines under conditions not altogether favourable to health, and let the Minister endeavour to give the best possible inspectors of mines that they may guard in every way possible within the limits of the Mines Regulation Act the working miner. I conclude this subject by hoping that the Minister will make inquiries into it. It is the subject of talk right through that part of the country ; one can hear it anywhere ; yet this inspector goes smiling on his way. No notice is taken of it ; no notice is taken of any charge that may be made before the Minister ; but I am going to continue whether I am accused of personal spleen or not, and even if the miners themselves turn against me, I am going to follow this man until he is removed, so long as he acts in the way he has acted in the last two or three months. Once more turning to the assertion of the Minister for Mines, who has been travelling through the country of late, and one would be inclined to think that he was a model right enough as a Minister, we hear him talking of his unadulterated democracy. Where was his democracy when he refused his own elec-

tors votes, when he issued writs to prevent 570 names from being entered on the roll of his own electorate?

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must recognise the Minister's office. That is a reflection. It is a distinct charge that the Minister was guilty of an act unbecoming to a Minister, and not alone to a Minister but to a member of Parliament. I cannot allow it.

Mr. HEITMANN : The Minister declares his policy is one of unadulterated democracy.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. HEITMANN : I withdraw that statement I made, but let us take our minds back a little while, and we will remember the returns laid on the table of the House showing that at the time of the last general elections there were 570 applications for votes that had been matured but were in the office of the electoral registrar at Menzies. It is a well known fact that a telegram was sent from Menzies to Perth notifying certain people that such was the case, and before these applications had time to mature the writ was issued. Was this the act of a democrat when one refused to give his own constituents votes? If so, I do not know what democracy is. Only recently we have had another example of the democracy and clean administration of the Government. Only recently we had an election for the Legislative Council and in that case we find that the date of the issue of the writ was known to some people before it was known by the public generally.

The Minister for Mines : May I ask who issued that writ?

Mr. HEITMANN : I do not know.

The Minister for Mines : It was issued by the President of the Legislative Council.

Mr. HEITMANN : He is going to act in accordance with the wishes of the Government, for the Government is above him. After this notice was sent out, there was a supplementary roll issued for one of the provinces and on this supplementary roll were the names of the democrats of the type of the present Government.

On the supplementary roll was a total of 51 ; freeholders 2, shift bosses 2, firemen 5, chemist 1, assayers 4, mines inspector 1, electricians 3, mine managers 7, accountants 4, coachman 1, mining surveyors 3, leaseholders 2, inspector of police 1, clerks 3, engineers 3, metallurgists 4, sampler 1, auctioneer 1, storekeeper 1, grazier 1, time-keeper 1, and miner 1. They must have made a mistake. This is another example of what we can expect in connection with the various Acts which we have on the statute book. It is all very well for the Minister to go through the country taking credit for the Mines Regulation Act, the Electoral Act and various other Acts, but these Acts are not administered as they should be. The Mines Regulation Act should be called an Inspection of Accidents Act, for it is only when an accident happens that any notice is taken of this Act.

Mr. Scaddan : They are busy at present at Kalgoorlie taking action.

Mr. HEITMANN : Very likely, for something has happened there. As far as the Murchison is concerned, the Act is a dead letter. In conclusion I can only say I have brought this matter forward so as to have it ventilated. I should have brought it forward in the shape of a motion, if I had thought there would have been time to deal with it. No doubt this is the last time I shall speak in the House before the elections, but I trust when we come back again some of the Ministers at all events will be missing.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. Mitchell) : I regret to say that no one listening as we have done during the last few days to the speeches delivered could come to any other conclusion than one against our system of party government. It seems to me this country is not getting a fair deal. We ought to be able to consider every question brought before the House in a calm and dispassionate manner. It ought to be possible for the best men in the country to give their best judgment on questions affecting the people. As this is party government, we hardly find this to be the case. But we have the system and it is no use saying much against it. But from the speeches

delivered we are bound to realise that there must be something better. It seems to be wrong that we should come here and spend our time in delivering speeches which can hardly be expected to advance the interests of the country or its industries generally. I do not propose to follow in the same strain. I do not care, so far as I am concerned, where the ideas come from so long as they are good. If my friends opposite can formulate a policy more likely to make for the good of the country, that would be a more liberal and better policy than the policy formulated by the Moore Government, then I am here to say that I would be very glad indeed to follow them. But can they do it? Have they done it? I think not.

Mr. Walker: You are following the Labour policy; that is all you are doing.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Then if I am following the Labour policy, I am following a very good policy indeed; but I venture to say the judgment of the people would be against my learned friend. I have yet to learn that anyone sent to Parliament has the right to give expression to any idea, and then say no one else is to mention it, no one must think of it, you are not to touch it, it is mine. That is not the position. If an idea comes from another part of the House and is considered good, I shall be very glad to support it. The hon. member said that we got their ideas in regard to the land tax. I do not know if that is so. I think his ideas were more strong on that point than ours, and I think that if he had had his way the land tax would have been a very different one, and a very different thing for the lands of the State. I want to say that whilst I hold these views—and I said I would support any good idea, and I mean that entirely—no matter where I sit at any time while I am a member of the House I will undertake not to oppose anything that is good in my opponents, or anything good that is suggested to the House, no matter where it comes from. The member for Guildford has claimed that the Government through a Royal Commission instituted the system of agricultural railways. That may be so; I believe it is so. That Commission made many excellent recommen-

dations, and it made many recommendations which I think the hon. member would hardly like the Government to give effect to. I am quite willing to concede that the recommendation for building cheap agricultural lines did come from the Royal Commission. I would like to read a little of the report of that Commission, since the member for Guildford takes so much credit for the appointment of that Commission, so that members may see what that Commission did. There are a few words I want to read to members in order that I may prove what I have said is correct. We are perfectly willing to take ideas that are good from any commission, and as the member said we took the idea of building agricultural railways from the Commission, that was a good idea, but it was left to this Government to give effect to the recommendation. [*Mr. Scaddan:* When was the report submitted?] The hon. member knows very well when it was submitted. I have nothing to say against the report, for there are many excellent recommendations in that report. If we were to carry out every idea that comes to us even from the other side, probably we should not be doing our best by this country. Paragraph 42 of the report of the Commission deals with the Agricultural Bank, in which, as members know, I am interested. It says:—

“Closely associated with the development of land settlement during the last few years have been the operations of the Agricultural Bank, and while the problem of economical clearing and cultivating was being solved, its aid was invaluable to the struggling settler as well as beneficial to the State in aiding in securing abundant practical proof of the value of our land. Having accomplished these purposes, the time appears to be opportune for considering what is to be the future scope of this institution. Is its aid required in demonstrating the capabilities of our land? The Commission is of opinion that the sworn testimony of the clients of the bank, and its own records, give ample proof that its aid is no farther needed to prove the high value of the State's agricultural lands. The remain-

ing province left to the bank would thus appear to be mainly philanthropic, viz., financial assistance to persons with little or no capital. The question may then be asked: Is the State justified in following this philanthropic practice, after having, in conjunction with the pioneers of the newer methods of farming, shown to the world the excellent opportunities open to farmers with moderate capital upon its wheat lands? The Commission is of opinion that the time is approaching—if it has not already arrived—when the funds of the bank should not be available for persons outside the State, and consequently should no longer be used as a means of attraction. Splendid work has been done by settlers and the bank in demonstrating the great field open to farming enterprise, and it is reasonable to require of those who desire to avail themselves of the opportunities thus displayed that they must bring money or credit wherewith to establish themselves, or wait till they have earned either one or the other. Why should the savings of the people, it may be asked, or the credit of the State be absorbed in giving monetary aid to strangers, while thousands of residents are hampered and State lands left idle through lack of railways?"

Mr. Scaddan: There is good solid sense in that.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member says there is good solid sense in that. I venture to say there is not much sense in that part of the report, although there is a great deal of good in the report. There is no doubt that we are prepared to support any good thing suggested by the Opposition or through a Commission appointed by the Labour Government when in power. But I am not going to follow blindly any recommendation, particularly such a recommendation as I have just read in regard to the Agricultural Bank. As I have said I hold it to be right to follow every good suggestion which is in the national interest. I have no sympathy with the cry to "straighten the finances at any

price," of which we hear so much. I suppose what is meant by straightening the finances is to make both ends meet. If we have not made both ends meet this year then there has been a very small margin. Of course the deficit is not to be paid off in one short year. If we are living within our means we are doing all that can be expected of us.

Mr. Bath: You have had three years.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member was a short time in power, but he was not there long enough to get a grip of his office.

Mr. Bath: I had three weeks.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think that was long enough for the hon. member. We are in our third year, and during that time the Government have lived practically within their means.

Mr. Bath: You were expected to do better when you were in a bank.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, if I made people pay eight or ten per cent. there would soon be an outcry. The Government came here to straighten the finances. I think we have straightened the finances and I think every credit is due to the Treasurer for what he has done. It is not possible to pay off the deficit in a short period.

Mr. Stuart: The deficit is £211,000.

The HONORARY MINISTER: What is £211,000 to a great State like this?

Mr. Stuart: It is still increasing.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Would the hon. member have us stand still? Would the country endorse the policy suggested by my honourable friend? Standing still would not straighten the finances. It is not possible to do all the work in a moment. We have lived within our means and done a large amount of work, and every economy has been exercised in every department, which has proved beneficial to the country. The member for Guildford said something about the loan expenditure. I do not intend to draw comparisons between what was done in 1904-5 and what is done now. There is no reason to do that. We are here to do the best we can for the country, and it is just as well to make a comparison between this year and the year just passed as to make a comparison with the

year 1904-5. Still there is no need to make comparisons. We must face the position as it is, and we can afford to face it as it is without losing any of our cheerfulness; and that is what I want members to do, and that is what we are here tonight for. I want to talk to the people of the country in order that they may take the tale more cheerfully. But the fates are against me. There is a missing link and I cannot reach the people. [Reference here is to absence of Press reporters.] However, it is sufficient for me to be able to express my views in this House. What do we find in connection with the trading concerns, which after all are responsible for nearly the whole of the money borrowed. Our loan indebtedness is something over twenty million pounds, the actual total being £20,493,000. In trading concerns the sum of sixteen million pounds is invested, while there is a sinking fund of two million pounds, and we have in hand to expend the sum of one and a quarter millions. In all we have £19,183,000 well invested, leaving only £1,310,000 spent on works of a more or less nonproductive character. Is there anything to be alarmed at in that? In 1904-5 we made a loss on our trading concerns of £5,600; in 1906-7 the loss was £3,500; but by the time we reached 1907-8 we had learned to do things better, and managed to finish that year with a profit on the trading concerns of something like £90,000. That profit, in addition to all the indirect benefits which the building of these works must give, is a result, to be proud of. We have spent more money than was spent three years ago, and we have not asked the taxpayer to bear any additional cost. The position is very much better now than it was three years ago. Can anything be said against using the State's credit for the purpose of developing the interests of the State? I should imagine no member, when he knows the true financial position, will have anything to say against the borrowing policy of the Government. My experience as a bank manager proved to me that most of my customers who were worth having were the men who did not mind using their credit to develop their holdings and businesses. [Mr. Bath:

And for improving the business of the bank.] Nearly altogether for the good of the man, and those who became the richest and the largest holders of property were those who were not afraid to borrow. If those men had not borrowed they would never have saved enough to have placed them in the position which they reached. It is a recognised fact in the world that any fool can make money if he has it; but it takes a wise man to make it with other people's money. I think this country is governed wisely, and that we can well afford to borrow more money. That is the position I take up as to the progressive policy of the Government, a policy of using our credit so that the country may be developed. Members will surely agree with me that if one can do so much by pledging his credit it is a good policy to follow. It also seems to me that in all matters of expenditure on public works it is reasonable to ask the users to pay. The people who use railways, and other works, are quite willing to pay. The building of railways enhances the value of the land; not only the land adjacent to the railways but also the land in towns and throughout the State generally. I desire to refer now to the work of my Department. When I was returned to Parliament I said that economy should be practised. Everyone does say so. Of course when I had the opportunity of endeavouring to practise what I preached, I did so, with the result that the Department over which I preside, which cost the country in 1905-6 £39,546, in the following year cost £31,893, and last year £32,545. In my first year I therefore saved about £7,600, and last year, with all the additional work undertaken by the Department—and I think members will agree with me that we have endeavoured to do some work there—the cost to the country is £7,000 less than in 1905-6. We have taken on a great many extra branches of work. We now do the stock buying for the whole of the Government. We buy all the horses for the department, and subsidise the agricultural societies to a much greater extent than formerly. In connection with the Agricultural Bank there is an increased expenditure there, this being due to the

increased business. The result, however, is an increased profit, and it does not cost the State one penny to run that establishment. The Bank itself provides for the total expenditure. Additional inspectors had to be appointed, and additional work was rendered necessary in consequence of the increased business, but all that extra cost is provided for from the revenue of the institution. We need not therefore take the increased expenditure on the Bank into consideration. Every department includes some trading concerns. I have a few of these in my department. We hear criticisms about the freezing works for instance, and the member for Perth has something to say about the balance sheet of that concern. He can take it from me that whenever he likes he will find out all about the balance sheet, and we will see that there is a balance of over £1,100 on this year's transactions. Then, too, in connection with the markets, we show a very handsome profit for the year of £1,250. I have endeavoured to push on the work of this department to the greatest possible extent. I have controlled it as Honorary Minister, and I have done the work in the same way as if I were controlling my own affairs. I have endeavoured to make all these trading concerns pay as well as possible, and have tried to do the work just as economically and well as if the concerns belong to myself. Then, too, you know that we run a number of farms. These in the past have been called experimental farms, and were an expensive luxury, but now they are being turned into farms of the ordinary kind, but at which experiments are undertaken. They have now got beyond the experimental stage, although at Hamel this work is still going on to a considerable extent, but it is work done in the interests of the country. It is being carried on as an encouragement to the agricultural farmers, and to provide them with an object lesson: but in order to provide a useful and proper object lesson we have to show, and are now showing, that the work can be done without any charge against the country. At farms other than that at Hamel a very handsome profit is being shown this year. I mention this be-

cause some people think that these farms should be purely experimental. I do not agree with that, for I think an experiment that pays is the one which will appeal most strongly to the people. There is nothing so good as for an object lesson to result in the production of a cheque. Personally I like to see a cheque at the end of my day's work, and the same applies to experiments in agricultural work. We practise commercialism in our farms, and I consider that this practice, resulting well financially, will provide the most valuable lesson we could possibly give. It would be wrong for the Government to run these experimental farms if we did not endeavour to do the best possible to make them payable concerns. We have the satisfaction of knowing that wherever we find one of these farms we see that it is doing a little better than the next best farm in the district. That is brought about by applying the simple and proper methods of agriculture. [Mr. Taylor: Those on the experimental farms have all the experience, and the Government money behind them.] Up to comparatively recently these farms did not pay, and they could not be considered to be the best in the districts. No more money is spent on those farms than I would spend on a farm of my own, and the member would spend exactly the same if he owned a farm. Every head of stock on the farms is expected to do the maximum amount of work. Doubtless if my friend had a farm with a fine team of horses he would treat the animals more leniently than that. At each farm we have endeavoured to carry on experimental work suitable for the district, and we are now experimenting with the sand plains. We are endeavouring, by the growing of crops, to bring those sand plains into use. Surely that is an experimental work worth following up, as it will mean so much to the State if we can have these poor lands made possible for settlement. [Mr. Taylor: Are you irrigating them?] No. Perhaps I should refer to the work of the experimental farm at Brunswick. The farm there is doing good educational work, and we are supplying some people in this State with milk and butter now. Twelve months ago

it was only just thought of, while to-day we are providing an experiment in irrigation which will work wonders in the South-Western portion of the State. [Mr. Bolton : Who is the irrigation engineer ?] Ask that question in the ordinary way and you will get an answer. The work is in good hands and we are providing an object lesson that will be followed with great advantage to the people of the State. We have heard some criticism about Mr. Compere, the entomologist. I do not know what members think of it, but what I think is that that criticism was entirely undeserved and should never have been printed. There is no doubt about the work he is doing, and he was most successful last year in introducing to the State the fruit-fly parasite. He is doing a very great deal of good work, and notwithstanding Mr. Froggatt's criticism, we intend to continue the work. We have heard so much about the Agricultural Bank that it is probably unnecessary for me to say much more about it. However, I should like to say a word or two as to the management. As you know, the manager is now on leave for a well deserved rest. The deputy-manager, with the trustees, is looking after the business. During the year, we have had the experiment of management under trustees, and that experiment has proved most satisfactory. When we introduced the system it was thought it would not work well. However, the system has resulted in good to the customers and I think the House will agree with me that we are indebted to the gentlemen who constitute the board, for their interest in the work. Five years ago we dealt with 250 applications; this year we dealt with 2,294; so that you will see there has been an immense increase in connection with the working of the bank. We have authorised in this one year the clearing of 120,000 acres, the ringbarking of 22,000 acres, and the fencing of 3,500 miles. In addition we have advanced £31,000 for the purpose of buying breeding stock. The result of the year's trading has been a profit of £4,000, making a total reserve of £18,000. It has been said that the limit of £500 advanced by the bank is not suffi-

cient. From inquiries made I find that the people want more money; but the question of increasing this amount will have to come up for consideration in the near future, and the House will have to be asked to amend the law if it is thought necessary to do so. There is one black spot we have to deal with, and that is the rabbit question. There is no doubt that the fences erected at a cost of £350,000 have done excellent work, and I think the member for Guildford is entitled to take some credit for the way in which the construction of the fences was hurried on by his Government. The result to-day is that there are practically no rabbits inside the inner fence. But the question of keeping down the rabbits is a most serious one, and will entail immense expenditure. I can assure hon. members that the best that can be done is being done. The Leader of the Opposition objected to the visits that were being paid by Ministers to the country. [Mr. Bath : Not the visits. I said the promises.] I understood he objected to the visits. At any rate, I would like to say a word or two in regard to this vast area that I have travelled over during the past three months. I have endeavoured to see as much of the State as possible. We have been doing without a Director of Agriculture, and it has been necessary that I should undertake a good deal of the work that would have fallen on him. The work of the Department of Agriculture is largely work of encouragement. I have visited a great portion of this State during the past three months, as hon. members know. I was as far south as Tambellup, and as far north as Wongan Hills, and throughout my journey, covering nearly 2,000 miles, I was in good wheat country. When we remember that a few years ago it was said that the State could not feed its people, it will be realised what a mistake was made. We should realise we have an enormous acreage of first-class wheat lands, extending from above Geraldton in the north, almost to Albany in the south, a distance of something like 500 miles. I want to say that I feel it is necessary I should plant my heels on the soil and talk there. If hon. members or anyone else desire informa-

tion in regard to this country, I would say to them to go and do likewise. These visits to the country justify me in saying that in the 60,000,000 acres which form the South-West Division, we have a magnificent heritage; something that is going to produce for the State much greater wealth than we are producing from the various other industries to-day. I do not want to say a word against gold production, but I say there is enough land in this one corner of the State to produce more wealth than will ever be produced by the goldfields. I am calling the attention of people in the State to the value of this country; in fact, I have been endeavouring to do this for the past two years. I have been astonished to meet many new selectors; so many men who have come from almost every part of the world, many even from the goldfields who have taken up land and are quite contented with their lot. They realise that the country needs settlers. It is an astonishing thing to get into the backblocks, 30 miles away from any existing railway, and to have a meeting of 60 settlers who have come in from their holdings where they have been doing work of development. If I made promises to any of these settlers during the course of those meetings, the promises I assure hon. members were fully justified. I know that this country will have to provide a great deal of money for the development of the land. We are not going to put people there without giving them facilities such as railways, roads, or without schools, or the other things that go to make life worth living. It has been a pleasure to me and an instruction to visit many of these places and see the rich areas. As I have said, when you realise that the wheat lands extend from Geraldton in the north to Albany in the south, you realise the enormous future agriculturally before the State. Apart from the encouragement we are giving to the wheat-grower, we are encouraging the fruit-grower; we are encouraging the man who rears sheep, and we are encouraging the people to endeavour to do all the work that a farmer ought to do. It is a question that will involve a great deal of expenditure in the future. There is no possibility of working the

Agricultural Bank more economically than it is being run to-day. There is also the question of dairying which we have to face. It is being faced by the Government at their dairy farm in the South, and it is also being faced by many settlers in the State. We realise, as we must, that to send thousands of pounds out of the State for butter is absolutely wrong, and I think hon. members will agree that the Government were quite justified in bringing in an expert to assist in the establishment of the dairying industry in this State. It goes without saying that railways play an important part in the development of the country; and one of the good things that the Commission did was to establish the 15 miles limit. That is good, of course, and right; and when the people of this country have to face the question of providing railway facilities, they will be bringing all the wheat land of the State within the 15 miles radius of the railway service. It is true also that you would never settle the country if you waited for the rich man to come along. It would be impossible to wait for such people. [Mr. Brown: You won't have the big man at all.] There is a place for the big man, but there is a particular place for the man who will take hold of the right end of the axe and get to work, realising what he has to do. We have set about the work of encouraging the people to go on our lands, and we have endeavoured to make it possible for all to go out into the country and do something towards production. We think too, it is advisable to give our own men a chance, and I would certainly give the men who are on the spot the first chance in connection with any settlement scheme we may have on hand. We have formulated a special settlement scheme, and we are settling 50 people on our land at Tammin in my own district, which really means this, that they are provided with the necessary money to start; sufficient materials to build a house; food for the first month, and are taken out to the holdings, and then they work under the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act. Every man there is given a sufficient area of land to make a start for himself, a sufficient area to enable him to show that he can

make a success of it; and success for him, as we all know well, means success for the State. This is an ordinary settlement scheme, and it has been placed in charge of Mr. John Robertson, and I hope it will be the forerunner of many such schemes. It is different from the settlement at Nan-geenan, the difference being that at Nan-geenan the settlers were given small areas, not enough for a man to live on, whereas here we have given each man a complete farm. There are many people who desire to get on the land, and at once. Some hon. member last night mentioned something about the delay in connection with land settlement. We have already realised that. We have realised that it is impossible under our system of free selection to avoid delays. When you come to think of it, you will agree that to allow a man to wander about this great area in the South-West corner to select wherever he likes, there must be delays. We cannot have a surveyor following on the heels of the selector: that would be impossible in these days of so much selection. We propose to obviate the delay; we propose to cut up these areas near the railway line into suitable farms, and we propose to set an Agricultural Bank authorisation against each block, so that the selector will know exactly what he is to get. The bank authorisation will be for the purpose of ringbarking, fencing, procuring stock, and making provision for water. This will be set out clearly against each block before a man is asked to select. [A Member: When will that come into force?] In the near future: the land is being surveyed now. Some land is being surveyed for treatment under the special system right away, and I suppose in a month or two we shall be ready to offer these blocks to the public. [Mr. Angwin: There are 500 men waiting.] I wish there were 5,000 men waiting; we would be able to accommodate them. At any rate I have explained the scheme to the House, because we are right into it now, and I want members to realise that the Government are doing their best by means of these settlements and with the aid of the Agricultural Bank to place our people on the land. We believe in getting the best men here on the land, and we are en-

deavouring to cater for them by means of these special settlements. The question of opening up the Far North has yet to be faced. That work has yet to come; but I am sure that when tropical culture is tried there will it will revolutionise that part of the country. Also in the South-West there are millions of acres of first-class land awaiting selection, but with these lands we will have to face a question in connection with drainage and irrigation. Again, all who have given any attention to the question of the metropolitan milk supply will realise that the question of drainage near to the city is an important one, and one that should have been faced years ago. The Government have realised that this question of drainage and irrigation has to be faced, and we are attempting to face it; and in the near future the result ought to be a decided improvement in intense culture for dairy-ing purposes and in fruit growing. Another work undertaken that has been of great interest to me has been the search for phosphates. We have had a geologist out and have made some discoveries which seem to point to something big in the way of phosphatic deposits. The member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) has referred to stock importations, and I think he has said all that need be said in regard to that matter. The Government have imported 521 cows and 21,562 sheep, which have been distributed to the farmers of the State; and only yesterday I made arrangements to buy 4,500 sheep which will come to hand during next month for distribution among the farmers. This is my idea in connection with this matter. I think we should form a pool of £100,000 for the purchase of stock; and I think that pool should be kept alive by repayments from time to time until we have stocked up all this land in the South-West corner of the State. Members will realise that with the purchase money being returned each year, in ten years time £100,000 should do a great deal towards stocking up the country as I have indicated. [Mr. Bath: You are a bit of a socialist.] The Opposition have no monopoly of ideas, even if they have expressed them. We have a right

to know something about them. Members opposite may express ideas, but I am afraid it is often left to us to carry them out. We never resent any suggestion which means a good idea from our friends opposite. There is a subject which is exercising the minds of the people in the metropolitan area just now, that is the question of tuberculosis. No doubt it is disturbing the minds of people in the State. [Mr. H. Brown: Why do you not discharge the inspector?] I am afraid if we discharged all the officers who should be discharged in the opinion of the member for Perth, we should not have many left in the service. I do not know whether this question is exercising the minds of some members of this House, but it is one that is exercising the public mind, and it is right the public should interest themselves and that they should be protected to the fullest possible extent and should know exactly what this outbreak means. Dairy cattle are prone to the disease, particularly the heavy milkers. The disease is infectious and is spread and encouraged by environment. It is communicated to other animals and the germs are fed by people who do not know much about the disease. The germs of tuberculosis are given every facility to be fed to the animals, and they sometimes develop within 40 days. But the tuberculin test as applied is not infallible. It does not necessarily follow that every milk cow that responds to the test is injurious to public health. In fact, I believe that unless a cow is obviously diseased, unless she shows by her condition or by the enlargement of some gland that she is diseased, it seldom happens that the milk is infected. I say this, realising the responsibility of what I am saying; and I say, too, that the public should be protected in this matter. Tuberculosis exists everywhere, and a similar system of inspection exists everywhere. In the East and all the world over where dairy herds supply milk for the people they are subject to continuous and rigid inspection. So there can be no harm in the system being carried out here. It should have been done before this. However, it is being done now, and of course there is a scare straight away. But there

is no need for people to feel that there is any great danger, because the chances are that the inspection which has been made has weeded out the cows that may be a menace to public health. From time to time there may be other cows that may respond to the test, and they will have to be removed from the herds; but it does not follow that the milk supplied from the dairy herds is liable to be diseased. It must be realised that in this State we are doing only just as much to protect the people in the matter of the milk supply as is done elsewhere, and we want it to be realised that the inspections have not resulted in the discovery of so many cows being affected. In some of the herds there has been a big percentage, but in other herds all the cows have been found to be clean. Naturally when these things crop up some one gets up and makes a scare; but the department controlled by the Colonial Secretary were fully alive to their responsibilities before Mr. Lander started to criticise them. At any rate, the Central Board of Health have faced the position, they are facing the position to-day, and whatever is right will be done; the public may be satisfied that they will be protected; and I think the dairymen will become satisfied that these inspections tend to make for good in the end. Any cow that has to be weeded out will be weeded out, and the inspection, which will be continuous in the future, will keep the herds in a good condition, so there is no need for dairymen to fear that they cannot continue in the business, any more than dairymen in the East where the inspection is exactly the same. There is another question which has been already dealt with, the question of the Wyndham freezing works. I am not going to deal with this question at any great length. As I have said in the House before, the agreement provides sufficient protection for every stock-owner in the North. It provides for *pro rata* killing and that stock shall be handled on the *pro rata* basis. Everything is to be done on the *pro rata* basis, according to the number of stock the stock-owner has.

Mr. Angwin: How long is this to last?

The HONORARY MINISTER : As long as we like, up to 20 years.

Mr. Scaddan : When are these works going to start ?

The HONORARY MINISTER : I thought the hon. member wanted to stop them ; now he wants them to start. I do not know what members opposite do want. They accuse us of assisting these people one day, and the next day they want us to start these works at once. Certainly we should get the works going as soon as we can. The provisions of the agreement are such as to protect the small grower or every grower in fact. Among other things in the agreement is a provision for the appointment of a committee to see that the conditions of the agreement are carried out.

Mr. Ingwin : Is the agreement signed ?

The HONORARY MINISTER : Yes ; it is signed. The committee will consist of a nominee of the company, a nominee of the cattle raisers as a whole, whether shareholders or not, and a nominee of the Minister in charge of the department ; and farther than that, the method of selecting the representative of the cattle owners is to be on lines indicated by the Minister in control. So we have taken every possible precaution to safeguard interests. The North-West is just as much a part of this State as any other part of Western Australia, and it is just as much our duty to develop it as to develop the goldfields or the agricultural areas down here ; and if a loan of £35,000 against a security of works to cost £70,000 is going to establish a big industry, either in the North-West or in any other part of the State, it would be criminal on the part of the Government to hesitate a moment to make that loan. This expenditure will enable the people to develop that area in the North to the fullest possible extent. Now it is only possible to send down about 20,000 beasts. True a few thousands go to Queensland ; it is true that this year 16,000 went to Queensland, where they sold at 16s. per 100lbs. But practically there is no market for the

cattle except through a freezer. In future there will be 200,000 beasts to send away, with these freezing works in operation. The works will make it possible for the North-West and for people settled there and others who will settle there to go ahead. I wish to say to members opposite that there are millions of acres there awaiting selection. [Interjection by Mr. Taylor.] If the hon. member would go there, he would be doing great good to the State. If this £35,000 loan is to bring about this great benefit to this large area in the North, members should hesitate to condemn the Government because of the assistance they are giving in connection with the erection of these works.

Mr. Scaddan : What rental do these people pay for the land ?

The HONORARY MINISTER : I know there are millions of acres of land there for members opposite or anyone else to take up, if they need it ; and it would be a great benefit to the State if those areas now lying idle were occupied at a nominal rental. I also know that one can get land over the border in South Australia at a much less rate than we charge our people in the North. What I want to say is that if we make it possible to produce 200,000 beasts annually and send them into the market, instead of 20,000 beasts, a great deal of good will have been done to the State. It does not matter to me whether it is for the people in the North or in any other part of the State : it is my duty to bring about the development of every acre in the State, and therefore I am found supporting this idea. The suggestion originated with myself, and I am rather proud of it. These cattle kings have not done much harm to Perth. They have brought their money here and spent it. In regard to the question of abattoirs, as members know, we have erected abattoirs at Kalgoorlie, and not before they were wanted. They will be opened there in six months. Abattoirs are wanted in the metropolitan area and in various other centres of the State. There should be a proper meat inspection, for the unfortunate people, shall I say, of Northam have to take meat which is not subject to inspection. There

is no doubt the only way to give the people wholesome meat is by the erection of public abattoirs. It follows that these abattoirs ought to be municipal works. They are municipal works in Melbourne, where they are successfully managed. In Adelaide the question is being faced, and I believe the Government there intend to spend £80,000 in public abattoirs. In Sydney the Government have spent something like £300,000. This is necessary work. The food of the people ought to be subjected to the most rigid inspection. We are facing this question as members would have us face it; and if it is a good idea that has come from us, then I hope we shall get the support of members from all sides of the House. Then there is the question of manufacturing agricultural machinery. I object to the bringing of agricultural machinery from the Eastern States, from where it comes at the present time. Seventy per cent. of the cost of machinery is wages; and that being so, when we import £84,000 worth, which we did last year, and it is to be an increasing amount considering the area which is being opened up in the country, members will realise what that means to the State. Why should not the men who pay the taxes have portion of this money returned to their pockets? Why should not our own children become our artisans if they want to and have opportunity of learning trades? At the present time if we want a tradesman, we have to send to the Eastern States for one. We should alter that state of affairs. I do not know by what means, but some steps should be taken to bring about the manufacture of agricultural machinery within the State. This question ought to have been faced long ago, as should also the question of industries generally. There is no doubt the man who supplies our wants should eat our bread, and the men who manufacture these articles when they are produced in this State must be customers of the producers. That is my idea, and I shall endeavour to bring it about. We are a Government determined to encourage all industries, whether mining, agricultural, or pastoral—all industries including the manufacture of agricultural ma-

chinery. I hope there will be no objection to this matter when it is brought under way. I do not know that there is much more to be said regarding the work I have taken in hand. I should like to say we are honestly endeavouring to make it possible for every man in the State to become a producer, and we do it because we realise that the spending power of the man on the land is greater than the spending power of a man employed in any other industry. When we realise that in America there are 36 farmers to a village, while here in Western Australia, where there is room for many hundreds of times 36 farmers, there must be room for great development; and it is our duty, if we can give our people something better, for us to give it to them. We hope to get a very large settlement from the ranks of the workers very shortly. I have told members what I thought this scheme of ours should be. Men know exactly what they have to pay to get on the land, and they know exactly what it will be when they get there. We would be wanting in our duty to the State if we did not offer the people of the State the advantages we have the privilege of offering now. It is a privilege to say to the people of the State, "We offer you this land and this money to become settlers"; and I will endeavour to carry the message far and wide, and enable people to realise what the position is.

Mr. Angwin: In what manner will the instalments be paid under your scheme, monthly or weekly?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: Instalments under the Agricultural Bank system can be paid weekly if you like, but certainly monthly. We are doing everything we possibly can to complete the scheme to get the people on the land, and make them comfortable when they get there. We are endeavouring to exchange some of the sovereigns by way of loan from the Agricultural Bank for honest work by honest men; and if honest men treat us honestly, we shall do all we can to make them successful settlers. As far as I am concerned and as far as the Government are concerned, and I hope as far as Parliament are concerned, we are going

to the country feeling that we have done our duty. I have endeavoured to do my duty; I have given up my time to the country, and it has cost me a great deal to do it. [*Mr. Scaddan*: You have had a good time.] I have had a good time, and I am glad to have had an opportunity of doing the work. It is right that we in Western Australia should realise the possibilities of the State, and it is right that we should endeavour to realise them. I have endeavoured to realise them, and to bring about development in connection with the work I have had the honour to control. I feel I have done my duty, as I believe most members of Parliament have done their duty; and in going to the country, I think all ought to feel that. Three years ago people were not quite so hopeful as they are to-day. As a community, of course you have only to be cheerful to be prosperous. I feel there is more hope abroad. People are more satisfied with their lot, and they are satisfied there is a great future before them. They are chokefull of hopefulness and cheerfulness, which will mean success not only to them but to this State; and I believe this is largely the work of this Government. Previous Governments may have had something to do with paving the way, but we did the trick. We feel that we have done our duty to the people, who we found were despondent, but who to-day are most hopeful and cheerful.

Mr. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle): In offering just a few remarks on the only opportunity that appears to be given to members, unless they desire to speak on the York Reserve Bill, I should like to preface my observations by saying that I can understand the feeling of depression that exists amongst Ministers and other leaders among the Conservative party on the other side. I recognise that all efforts seem to be in vain to do away with the feeling of deadness and depression, and I know now that there is some reason for it. I do not know if it was thought of before, but there seems to be something pervading this Chamber—a lockout or a strike—that has had an effect on everybody. What appears to be the worst calamity is that we are not able to ask the

Premier without notice, what action he intends to take to settle the strike [alluding to absence of Press reporters]. As has been pointed out here, not only now but several times previously, there is a heaven-sent gentleman who is able to settle strikes, and he alone. It will be interesting to know how he intends to settle this strike, so that those willing to offer a few remarks on the Address-in-Reply will get a few lines in the Press. The Honorary Minister, who has earned his salary during the past year, opened by saying that he wanted to speak to the people, and he regretted the fact that he was not able to get to the people through the public Press. I think with that gentleman it is a calamity that the Press are not present. I would also remind the member that this side of the House has the right to feel the absence of the Press as much as the other side of the Chamber, because it is part of the duty or supposed duty of members of the Opposition to criticise where they think criticism necessary, and any of the actions of the Government. I cannot help referring to the fact that it is not long since the Moore Government introduced a policy speech that was looked upon as something more democratic than anything that had been offered before except possibly that by the Labour Government in this State. Certain planks of this policy were catchpennies, and put forward to catch a few votes and catch a few supporters for his side of the House. I also remember a good many of their promises were not carried out, and when I remember also that we are on the eve of an election again I can realise the anxiety of Ministers to get as much Press notice as they possibly can. It did seem there was strength in the argument I heard, and several members must have heard it too, that in the Moore policy laid down for this Parliament which is now dying there were several democratic suggestions offered to which no exception could be taken, but peculiarly enough the public believe and are still believing now that the Government were not sincere in their promises, therefore it is quite right that they should doubt the sincerity of the Government to-day. One of the planks of the Government policy for this Parlia-

ment was curiously the first plank of the Labour party's platform, the reduction of the franchise of the Legislative Council. So important was that promise to the electors of the State that they thought if the Moore Government were sincere in that they were showing a democratic tendency and that there would be some small representation in another place. The Moore Government thought or were told by other people not to introduce that measure until the elections which occur every two years for the Council were over. It was a peculiar thing that the Chamber that dictated a good deal of the policy to the Moore Government, after the Moore Government decided not to press on with the reduction of the franchise for another place, agreed to certain taxation proposals. The Moore Government claimed that it was simply through want of time, but what is to be the position in the next Parliament? Is there to be more sincerity in that Parliament than there was when the Government were returned on the last occasion? Perhaps it may be necessary to delay Legislative Council reform a little time and it may appear that when we are approaching another Legislative Council election the Government may find it convenient to drop the measure again for some time. While the Government are prepared to be dominated by another place in their policy there will never be a broadening of the franchise for that House. By their actions the Government are doing more to bring about unification than any action possible for any Government to take. Because of the unpopular feeling towards another place, intensified by the action of the Government in withholding the broadening of the franchise, this feeling of unification is arising in the minds of the electors. Is it not reasonable to suppose that if a certain proportion of representation in the Upper Chamber belonged to this party, if it were possible to elect democrats to that Chamber, the feeling against it would not be so strong as it is. Whether intentionally or unintentionally the Moore Government have done much towards engendering this feeling of unification. I have not too much faith in the Government's promises for

the incoming Parliament. What they have promised by the Speech as delivered to us on the opening of this dying session amounts to nothing, although they mention several electioneering proposals. Even these promises would be acceptable if we could feel the Government were sincere, but, judging from the results of the past, we have every reason to doubt their sincerity. If the public and the electors generally will remember all the promises made since the Moore Government first came into power, they will say, "Yes ; the promises sound very nice ; they look very pretty ; but there is nothing in them." In that case the Government will not be returned with the same numbers behind them as they have to-day. My reason the price has been raised so highly one or two remarks made by previous speakers. It would be as well to deal with the question of the meat ring first. We have heard from different members various explanations as to why this trouble has eventuated. I desire to say I have heard from a reputable source that the reason the price has been raised so highly within the last few weeks is the scarcity of stock. It appeared to me to be a strange proceeding that those governing the meat trade, while contending there is a shortness in stock, yet continue to request the Government to lend them £35,000 for three years, free of interest, for the purpose of erecting freezing works to get rid of the surplus stock. I made inquiries and found that the stock in a certain portion of the State is very numerous, but that it is said it does not pay to bring it down here. In other portions of the State however where the cattle have been obtained from, there is a scarcity of stock.

Mr. Bath : They have travelled stock from the Kimberleys to Queensland.

Mr. BOLTON : Yes ; and the same gentleman to whom I have referred also told me that there were two herds of 6,000 and 4,000 head of cattle, respectively, travelled across the border. Could not those cattle have been brought down here ?

The Honorary Minister : There is no market here for 10,000 more beasts.

Mr. BOLTON : There is evidently a market for beasts here, for it is found there is now a scarcity of animals. Would it not have been better if, instead of meat being increased by 2d. a lb., those 10,000 head of cattle which were despatched to Queensland had been sent here ? It is absurd to say there is a shortage of stock, and then ask the Government for freezing works for dealing with the surplus stock. It has been said by more than one speaker that if freezing were established, it follows that the first-class meat would be exported, while the second-class meat would be put on our markets here. I believe this was mentioned by the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor). If that is to be the case, a solution would be, if the Government are prepared to assist the large cattle kings with the loan of this money, to have an export duty on frozen beef. The Minister has told us that this trade is a matter of some £200,000 a year; so that it would well pay the Government to have this export duty. I cannot see what objections could be raised against it. Are we to send the prime beef and mutton away, and receive only the second-class meat ourselves ? I exclude reference to lambs in this, for there should be no export duty on that trade for some time. If the industry is so thriving, surely an export tax would be a good thing.

The Honorary Minister : You would have to ask the Commonwealth Government about that.

Mr. BOLTON : When we have a chance to get a little money, let us do so. The Commonwealth Government would surely allow the tax to be levied. I feel certain it would be found that the Commonwealth Government would not be the stumbling-block, but the friend of this Government towards those in a large way in cattle dealing. Some little time ago the Premier gave voice to the sentiment, a sentiment which was received with joy at Fremantle and at other places along the coast, that if the rates and freights then existing on the coast were maintained, he would consider the advisability of going in for a State steamer. Within a fortnight another Minister said he considered that a subsidised steamer would be the thing. Read-

ing between the lines, it seemed to me then that the Ministry had thought better of the original proposal, and would eventually adopt a scheme for subsidising one of the coasting steamers. Talk about looking after the fat man ! If the present companies are subsidised by the State for purposes of carrying certain products or cargo or passengers along the coast, it will be of no use whatever. If there were a State steamer running, then great advantage would accrue to the small grower. Knowing as I do the disabilities under which the small meat grower in the North is suffering, I am sure there would be a considerable trade from those people, who would then be released from the necessity of asking the big cattle kings for space on their steamers. Surely it would pay the State to send a steamer up to the North for cattle and to bring the beasts down here. The result of the adoption of such course would be that the increase of 2d. per lb. on meat would very soon cease to exist and the consumer would be relieved from the present high price of meat. I was rather hurt, although not altogether surprised, when I heard that the Government seemed to have dropped all action in connection with reducing the rates and freights along the North-West coast. I would like to see them go thoroughly into the question. It is one that has been pooh-poohed and has been considerably weakened by the appointment of a Royal Commission. The Commission consisted of only one gentleman, who was appointed originally to collect evidence. A mistake, a blunder, was made by the Government in allowing that gentleman to start taking evidence without having sufficient power to demand evidence. While the gentleman himself may have been qualified enough to collect the evidence and to understand it, it was a terrible blunder when the Government found out their mistake, and that he could not demand evidence, to make him a Royal Commissioner to get the evidence which he had already collected. The result was he was unable to get any additional information, and I am bound to say the work of that gentleman was entirely unsatisfactory. It would have been better, if the Gov-

ernment desired really to get knowledge, to have appointed a Commissioner who could have gone to the shipping companies' combine and obtained the information first-hand. I do not altogether care to refer to the report of that gentleman which was lost but which was subsequently picked up by someone and published.

The Minister for Mines: It was not the report that was picked up.

Mr. BOLTON: I am bound to accept that statement, as both the Commissioner and the Minister have made it. Anyhow, it was extracts from the report.

The Minister: It was simply some of the evidence.

Mr. BOLTON: The Commissioner was so upset, that I do not think he knows where he is now. The position is an entirely unsatisfactory one to Mr. Sinclair, for he was asked to do more than one could dare against these companies. He had practically finished the work before he was appointed a Royal Commissioner. He was simply an inquiry agent. The companies objected to his getting perhaps the very information he wanted, although at the same time they offered certain information. If the Government want to get to the bottom of this matter they should have a State steamer running along the coast, even if they should limit the distance which it was to travel. It perhaps would not be necessary for them to go up as high as Derby, for there are a large number of small producers south of that port who would provide sufficient traffic for the steamer to at all events allow interest and sinking fund to be provided. The result would be that freights would undoubtedly come down and a very important development in the North-West would be brought about. By this means it would be possible so to reduce rates that people would be able to get to Hedland for £6 or £7 instead of having to pay £17, and then men would be able to go up there and look for and obtain the employment which is open to them but which they are prevented from applying for at present owing to the excessive passenger rates charged on the steamers. If this were done, the Government would be doing a

good work for the North-West, and I still hope they do not intend to drop the question. I trust sincerely they will not subsidise the present lines, notwithstanding all the arguments that are used that there is not sufficient cargo at present to enable the rates to be reduced. I am safe in saying that no steamer leaves this port for the North-West without a pretty full cargo and a full passenger list.

The Minister for Mines: The report of that officer is not to hand yet.

Mr. BOLTON: The public can judge pretty accurately from the evidence what the report will be. It was a great mistake that the summary was ever lost, found, and published. One can judge pretty well what the report will be from a careful study of the summary.

The Minister: It was only a summary of the evidence given by the Fremantle traders.

Mr. Angwin: By the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. BOLTON: Yes, and by the shipping ring. There is another solution of the difficulty as to the price in meat, which is perhaps even more important than the establishment of State steamers. The Honorary Minister mentioned the provision of abattoirs, grading sheds, and sale yards, and I believe their establishment would provide the best solution of all. If public abattoirs were erected and cooling chambers, grading and sale yards were provided for the metropolitan area, it would be possible for the small butcher to buy his meat there without being tied down to the meat ring and the big meat kings who control all the beef trade at present. The result would be that the price of meat would come down. I know the Minister for Agriculture has that in his mind, and I hope for the fruition of that proposal. At any rate there can be no harm in erecting public abattoirs. If the sale yards are open to all, it follows that to whatever extent a man may want to buy he cannot buy the lot, and the small butcher will be able to get his meat and retail it. Economics have been mentioned in the course of this debate *ad lib.*, by all speakers, especially from the opposite side of the House, and mostly with regard to the railways. I do

not want to deal at any great length with the railways. I do not think this is just the time. When I return after the elections, as I undoubtedly shall, and we have the report of the railways to deal with, then I shall have more to say on the subject. I only want to refer to this; economies have been effected, and economies that are a natural sequence to the expenditure of money in previous years. I do not say all that has been done by one Government. It follows that if you can bring one section of the Railway Department up to as near perfection as possible it will cost less to maintain. The permanent way was brought to so near perfection compared to any other running line in Australia, that the Government were able to do away with a proportion of the permanent way men. The same proportion of permanent way men is not required where this extra good work is put in; nor does it cost as much where permanent way work is done in that fashion. When you expend a very large sum of money you reduce your cost of maintenance; that naturally follows. It is only what you expect. In passing, there is another phase that I must refer to in connection with the railways. Notwithstanding that the member for Collie said he was not electioneering—and of course I believe him—when he said the minimum rate of wage should be 8s., he still contends and others contend also that so very few in the department receive less than 8s. a day that it is not worth bothering about. It seems to me peculiar that year after year we have a Railway Report, and at the end of that report we find a statement of the wages received, and the number of men who receive those wages and particulars of their duties. It would perhaps astonish the member for Collie to find that there are 619 men in the railway service receiving less than 8s. a day as a minimum, and these men are not junior porters. Every one of these 619 men at the end of last year were big, strong, able-bodied men, and above the age of 21 years; and a large proportion of them have had years of experience in the Railway Department, and are certainly qualified to receive more wages. It has been trotted out year after year that the privileges extended to Gov-

ernment employees are worth something per day, worth 6d. I think it is time we forgot that nonsense about the value of the privileges. It is the privilege of the Government to have good servants as well as the privilege of a man to have a good master. Surely it is time that a minimum wage was introduced by the Government, especially in connection with certain employment, which is well worth the money, and I can assure hon. members, if they look through that list and find labourers, engine cleaners, porters, and different classes of employees that are asked to work for from 6s. 6d. to 7s., and 7s. 6d. a day, they will be somewhat shocked. All these are able-bodied men; 95 men are being paid 6s. 6d. a day, and there is not one junior porter amongst them. There are 233 able-bodied men working at 7s. per day, and there are 291 working for 7s. 6d., and not a junior amongst them either. My opinion is that it is disgraceful to have 95 men working in the railway service for 6s. 6d. per day, all able-bodied men, and many of them entitled to an increase by reason of their length of service and ability. [Mr. Bath: And under the industrial agreement.] Yes, and under the industrial agreement. But under what is known as the annual retrenchment, men are forced to remain in the lower classes instead of being allowed to take their places in the higher classes, although doing the same duty, and although having to fill in the time that is given to them to put in. Since these are facts, as the return that I have quoted will show, there are over 600 men working for less than 8s. a day. The Government, I hope, will wisely consider it is about up to them to pay 8s., then private employers, those few who are paying less than that, will do likewise. There is another thing that has been mentioned by the hon. member for Guildford, that is the building of rolling stock, that I should like to have a word or two to say about. I am aware that a certain firm in the electorate I have the honour to represent in this House have been building a considerable quantity of rolling stock for the Government. I am also aware of the fact that that firm came here and started and carried out work which was a credit

to it. But I am beginning to think that there is not too much for that firm to do now. When the Government are talking of making agricultural implements, as the Minister for Agriculture has said, I think it will be a wise suggestion, and I would like to say I hold no brief for that company, but I think it would be a splendid idea if the Government could see their way to purchase those works and start the manufacture of agricultural implements there. The machinery is already at these works, and if the Government are in earnest, and if these implements can be made in the State, there is an excellent opportunity there. I repeat I am not after any commission, but I really think that as the argument has been advanced that Midland Junction is not large enough, that there is not room there—

The Minister for Railways: There is plenty of room.

Mr. Angwin: But there is machinery ready at Fremantle.

Mr. BOLTON: I am reminded by the member for East Fremantle that they have an establishment and machinery at Fremantle now. That would be better than going into the bush at Midland Junction to start the manufacture of this machinery. Let us use the machinery that is there. I want in passing also to refer to the dock. I want to compliment the Engineer-in-Chief. A compliment has indeed been paid to him in having his reported site supported by such an eminent engineer as the gentleman who visited this State from England quite recently. There is no doubt about it, the Engineer-in-Chief must feel proud that the site he recommended was the site chosen by that visiting gentleman. The time will also come, and shortly too, when the Admiralty will be appealed to, to assist in the maintenance of this dock, and the Admiralty will appeal to the gentleman who reported on it for this Government. Something will also be expected from the Commonwealth. Last session we passed a Harbour Trust Amendment Act, and in that Act we provided that the Trust should find interest and sinking fund for this dock. This is to come directly from ship-ping, and if we get assistance from the

Admiralty, and also from the Commonwealth, that dock will cost this State very little, if anything. The sooner the Government get on with it the better for the country. It has been recognised by the people and by the Parliament that it is necessary to have a dock. A certain amount of money has already been provided towards the construction of this work, and there is nothing that I know of to prevent a very early start being made. I should like to know if the Government propose to do any portion, or what portion by day labour. Necessarily they will have to do some, but as the Minister for Works is not present—and I regret to hear he is not well, I hope it was not the absence of the Press that frightened him, or the illness of the Premier—I cannot hope to get the information that I want to-night. But let me appeal to hon. members who are opposed to this dock. The cost will not be one hundredth part of the cost of the goldfields water scheme. The water scheme was not built for the goldfields alone, it was built so that every portion of the State should reap the benefit. So it will be with the dock. I have heard a great deal from the Minister for Agriculture; his figures were interesting and yet dry—figures usually are. Still it was interesting to know that the development of the State during the last 12 months has been so rapid. From that standpoint it would read and sound well. I notice there is a tremendous increase in the acreage of wheat lands and the area under fruit this year, over the figures of last year, and I am prepared to admit that this is so. But I have not yet noticed that any start has been made in the direction of providing facilities to handle wheat, for instance. The hon. member for Katanning told us the amount of wheat that was exported last year. We recognise that this is only a tithe of what must be exported this year and next year, and how are they going to handle it? The Minister proposes to erect grain sheds, but it is about time he got a move on or it will be too late. While we are providing for a largely enhanced output from the soil, no provision has been made to handle it. I hope the Minister in charge of the Agricultural Department,

when he talks about the amount to be allowed under the Agricultural Bank Act, will provide in the near future facilities for handling the great amount of wheat, lambs, and fruit we are going to export, and not have complaints about the handling charges being increased by the commodities having to be handled so many times. We should do it at once before the crops will be here on top of us. The Honorary Minister said we suggested the spur lines, but the Government carried them out. Well, I give him every credit for that, but there are members of the Opposition, including myself, who advocated loop lines instead of spur lines; and the longer we go the more we will advocate that loop lines should have been constructed. The loop lines could have been operated at half the cost of the working of the spur lines to-day, and the Government will have to recognise that loop lines are best notwithstanding all the recommendations of the "Goat Commission"—I beg pardon, I mean the Immigration Commission, but it was called the "Amgoorie or Angora Goat Commission." Notwithstanding the recommendation of that Commission about spur lines, I believe the Government will soon recognise that loop lines are far better and far easier to operate, and that there would be far less complaints about the cost of working.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: There will be no spur lines in this country eventually, because these lines will be 200 miles in length to reach the coast. It is only a question of crossing them whichever way they go, north and south, or east and west. At present they are going east and west.

Mr. BOLTON: If I only knew as much as the member for Katanning, I should know whether they are to be loops or spurs. But I am talking about the initial experiment, because experiment it was undoubtedly when it was suggested that we could build lines at £1,000 a mile, and it was stated that the Government intended to go in for 1,000 miles of these railways. My idea is that if we loop every 30 miles we will gather in the whole; and the member for Katanning will agree with me that from the point of view of manipulating these lines a loop

line is cheaper than a spur line, because necessarily the locomotive depot, which is a big factor in these things, starts and finishes a loop line, but does not start or finish anything in connection with a spur line. There is only one other thing I wish to mention. It will not be said that I have attempted to break records with long speeches, though there are members in this House who have a record for not speaking since this Parliament opened. I was astonished to hear that the Great Boulder management were being supplied with water at 1s. 6d. per thousand gallons. and I began to think that when we hear certain members complaining of coastal expenditure or what they call the Fremantle Dock, in face of the Goldfields Water Scheme supplying water at 1s. 6d. per thousand gallons, when it costs nearly four times that amount to carry it there, it is quite time they stopped their arguments.

The Minister for Mines: The price they pay for their water is 5s. per 1,000 gallons; but they said they would pump their residues away if they got water from the scheme at a cheaper price. It costs only 10d. to get the water there. For all their other mining water they pay 5s. per 1,000 gallons.

Mr. BOLTON: If you can sell water at 1s. 6d. is it being sold at a loss?

The Minister: Not in this case.

Mr. BOLTON: My difficulty is that I do not know the exact cost of getting the water there; but I know that if the scheme can sell water to the Great Boulder at 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, there are many low-grade shows that would take it at the same price, and jump at it. The peculiarity of it is that a mine like the Great Boulder, which I admit takes a great quantity, can obtain water at 1s. 6d. while low-grade propositions which cannot afford to pay the price the scheme now supply it at cannot get it for 1s. 6d. There are 20 or 30 low-grade propositions that would take the water at 1s. 6d., and I think it would be a good thing for the scheme. I am told there are many low-grade mines closed down at Southern Cross, and I am surprised to hear it. If it is because they cannot get water at a cheaper rate, it seems to me peculiar;

there must be some explanation given. I notice the Minister for Works made a note when the statement was made and I thought some explanation would be given. But when we consider that water is being sold to the Great Boulder at 1s. 6d. while the balance sheet of the water scheme shows a shortage of £91,000, I am inclined to think that the price to the Great Boulder will have to go up, or the scheme will have to sell a great deal more water. If it pays to supply this water to the Great Boulder at 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, as I understand from the Minister for Mines, I am with him. So long as the water is not given away I will support the Government every time; but if we give it to the Great Boulder, why not to the little Boulders?

The Minister for Mines: It was a fair business proposition. The water was for a special purpose. The mine pays 5s. for the greater proportion of its water.

Mr. BOLTON: I decided to raise this point because I wanted some explanation. There may be a good explanation. There is still need for explanation why the low-grade propositions cannot get the water at that price, because surely it would be as good a proposition.

The Treasurer: The low-grade mines can get it for the same purpose at that price.

Mr. BOLTON: It is due to every member of this House to know why the water is sold to one mine at a certain price at which it is refused to another. I am reminded that the Great Boulder has paid two or three millions in dividends, and that the dividends have been largely helped by the mine being able to obtain water at 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. If that be so, and I confess I am not a goldfields man, let us supply a few more mines at 1s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, and see if they can pay two or three millions in dividends. I am with them on that. I do not object to the Great Boulder getting water at 1s. 6d.; but I object to the other companies not having the same right to take it at the same price. That is all I ask. Give it to the low-grade propositions as well as to the bonanzas, and then, perhaps, the low-grade mines will pay good dividends, and no question will be raised. I

have finished the remarks I have to make on the Address-in-Reply in this Parliament. I did not congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, in these remarks, because I know I shall have the privilege of meeting you again and I reserve my congratulations until that time.

Pause ensued, rather long.

Mr. HUDSON moved that the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

[*Mr. Daglish took the Chair.*]

Mr. C. A. HUDSON (Dundas): It would be a pity to allow this debate to close at the present juncture—[*Mr. Holman:* Let it go.]—especially as such a great interest is being taken in it by members on the other side of the House. It is always pleasing to see members of the Government and the supporters of the Government taking an interest in the work of Parliament. It is pleasing indeed to members on the Opposition side to have such a large audience on the Government side. Of course members do not come into this Chamber particularly to hear what I have to say; and as I have been forced into the position of making a few remarks, and as the Minister for Mines no doubt wishes to hear what I have to say, I shall not detain members very long. Before I proceed I wish to say that one of the members of the Government has given us an excellent speech. He is one member of the Ministry I wish to congratulate. I refer to the Honorary Minister. He has done some excellent work in the State, I have seen some of the results myself, and I have great pleasure in congratulating him on the success of the Agricultural Department. With regard to the other members of the Government I have some remarks to make, particularly in respect of the Speech placed in the mouth of His Excellency the Governor, where it says:—

“There are many important matters awaiting legislative action at your hands, which the exigencies of the financial position of the State, and the lengthy consideration given to devising the best means for providing the revenue necessary for its wants, have hitherto prevented my advisers submitting to you.”

That was the position we were in some three years ago. We had a similar promise from the then Premier that the finances would be straightened, and that certain legislative reforms would be enacted during the first session of that Parliament; but now we have gone that three years without having had any result whatever, or any fulfilment of the promises then made. Wise and careful administration was promised by the then Premier, Mr. Rason. That is one of the promises not fulfilled. I think the finances have been dealt with pretty effectively by the member for Guildford. No one has attempted since he spoke to refute any of the arguments he put forward, and I think they may be accepted. I want to make a few remarks in regard to the railway recently constructed from Coolgardie to Widgemooltha, not on the construction but on the delays that have taken place in the construction. It reflects on the management of the Public Works Department that the contractors should have had eight or ten months in which to construct 50 miles of line, when the rails were in the State before the contract was let, and that at the end of the contract the contractors should be allowed to have an extension of time from the 17th February to nearly the end of June without any reason being given for it. I asked for the reason last night, and I was told there were certain alterations in the contract. That answer was not given when questions were asked during the period of the extension. A great deal of hardship was inflicted on the public in consequence of the delay. I think it is a very strong argument in favour of departmental construction when we find that contractors are able to so deal with the Public Works Department as to have a line completed to within a mile and a half or so of its destination and then get an extension of so many months. The contractor was running goods from the beginning of January to the head of the line, and was allowed all that time to carry goods without being called upon to fulfil his contract or to pay the penalties. He was allowed six weeks' extension because of a slight deviation which was overcome in the first

month of the construction of the line. The work of the Mines Department comes closely under the notice of members. I have already dealt with that from the public platform, therefore I do not wish to enlarge on it to-night. The conduct of the Minister for Mines in careering round the country at this stage of his term as Minister for Mines, making promises broadcast in particular directions, is not one that should commend itself either to this Parliament or to the public generally. There is no doubt the Minister had some idea other than the fulfilment of those promises in his mind when he made that tour. The Press of the State took no interest whatever in his tour, because they did not send representatives with him, and the reports sent in and published in the newspapers of his addresses and of his having travelled so far in such and such a time and skipped and hopped from one place to another in a motor car were sent by his own clerk, and the commendations were sent by his own clerk. Whether they were paid for by him I do not know; but the Press thought so little of his tour that they did not send representatives with him on such an important occasion. The Minister should have been out earlier than he was if he intended to do any good in the country. There are several matters that have arisen in the mining districts that I have the honour to represent that call for notice, but I do not propose to deal with them to-night, except one, and that is the question of the payment for slimes at Norseman. The Minister for Mines has always adopted the opinion that when he erected a slimes plant at Norseman he was not going to pay for the slimes which had accumulated up to a certain date. It is clear that those slimes belonged to the early prospectors of the field, the pioneers of the field who won the stone from which the slimes accumulated. The Government erected a slimes plant at Norseman at a certain cost; they treated the whole of the slimes that had accumulated subsequent to February and prior to February. For those that had accumulated subsequent to February they paid, but they refused to pay for those which had

accumulated prior to that date. In the last Mines Report published there is shown a profit on the slimes transactions of £2,000. That is exactly the amount—or roughly speaking in round figures the amount—actually due to the prospectors. When the Minister is asked to pay for the slimes the only answer he can give is that if he pays for those slimes he will have to pay for others. He cannot say it is an unjust claim, or inequitable; nor can he make any other answer except that if he pays for some he must pay for others. It seems unjust that a man is refused payment because someone else may make a claim. The Minister is neglectful of his duty when he refuses to pay the men, because he has the money in hand and the plant in hand, and the slimes belonged to the early prospectors who won the gold. The Minister still holds the profit, and I say that the department hold £2,000 that belongs to the earlier prospectors of the Dundas district and refuse to pay it over. There is another matter I wanted to mention to-night, but the Minister for Works is not here, nor is the Premier. It is in connection with the water supply for the Norseman district. Certainly, a good deal has been done in the direction of conserving water in that locality; but the advancement of the district and the increase in the development of mining and the general surroundings of the place warrant some attention in the future.

The Minister for Mines: We are having surveys made with a view to seeing if a site can be obtained for the purpose.

Mr. HUDSON: For conserving water by means of a dam? I want to suggest to the Government straight away the advisability of the goldfields water scheme being extended to Norseman. Such a request has been refused to some of the northern districts, but the northern districts are better able to obtain water than is the case with the districts to the south of the goldfields water scheme. The goldfields water scheme was devised to supply water to arid districts on the goldfields, and it has since been diverted. The water has been taken from the goldfields water supply to supply water around

York, Northam, and Newcastle at a cost of £65,000. That is taking water to where there was already water, and giving them more water; yet the Government refuse to give water where the people cannot get it. The Government are doing this at a cost of £65,000 when the people have plenty of water. That is the policy of the Government which does not receive my support, and I urgently impress on the Government the necessity for considering the possibility of extending the water scheme to the Norseman district. A good deal has been said about that water scheme, and a good deal has been said as to the rabbit-proof fence. The cost of the rabbit-proof fence was £300,000, and that does not benefit any of those persons outside the rabbit-proof fence; even squatters, selectors, and farmers in that neighbourhood have no protection from the rabbits. Therefore, some easier terms should be given to those who have land in the neighbourhood by supplying them with netting even at a cheaper rate and on easier terms than they are getting it it to-day. I do not propose to deal with the other matters that are forecast in the Speech because it is very likely that when the next Premier comes down with his policy speech it may be different from that which is promised in this particular Speech.

On motion by Mr. Eddy, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

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