

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

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

*House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 29th July, 1913.*

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

### ELECTORAL—FORREST CON- STITUENCY.

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

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

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

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

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

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

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

—Bathing. Phillips River—Valuation on annual value. Port Hedland—Trespass and poundage fees. Sussex—Valuation on annual value. Upper Blackwood—Valuation on annual value. Warren—Valuation on annual value. Wiluna—Fees for camps. Wyndham—Valuation on annual value. Yilgarn—Fees for camps.

By the Minister for Railways: By-laws of Government Tramways. Reports and returns under Sections 54 and 83 of "The Government Railways Act, 1904."

By the Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): 1, Return showing membership of registered unions. 2, Amendment of by-law of Leederville local authority. 3, Report of Perth Public Hospital Board for year ended 30th June, 1912. 4, Regulations under "The Inebriates Act, 1912." 5, Amendment of No. 70 of Food and Drug Regulations. 6, By-law of Tambellup local health authority. 7, Regulations under "The Pearling Act, 1912." 8, Regulations under "The Game Act, 1912."

#### ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £1,324,130.

#### QUESTION—MINES WATER SUPPLY WORKSHOPS, REMOVAL.

Mr. McDOWALL asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it true that the Mines Water Supply workshops and stores are to be removed from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie? 2, How many men are employed at Coolgardie in connection with the said workshops and stores? 3, What expenditure (capital and revenue) will be necessary to remove and re-erect the said workshops and stores at Kalgoorlie? 4, What area of land has the department at Kalgoorlie on which to re-erect them? 5, Will it be necessary to purchase land and, if so, at what cost? 6, What economy is to be effected by the said removal, and how?

[4]

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Nine, but number varies according to amount of work. 3, £1,000 (estimated). 4, Fifty-seven acres being reserve on which new storage reservoir is being constructed. 5, No. 6, The responsible engineer has estimated that a 20 per cent. saving in wages will be made and that a marked improvement in efficiency will result.

#### QUESTION—POWELLISED SLEEPERS FOR TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: 1, Has the contract for the supply of sleepers between the Commonwealth and State Governments been signed? 2, If so, will he lay same upon the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied: 1, I am advised by the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth that the contract referred to is not yet signed, and that it is at present under consideration by the law authorities. 2, Answered by No. 1.

#### QUESTION—PERTH TRAMWAYS LATE STRIKE.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been called to a statement made by the Minister for Works at his reception by the Union Secretaries' Association in Auckland in January last in connection with the Perth tramways, namely: "During the recent tramway strike at Perth some 40 men went back to work in opposition to the action of the union—the 40 loyalists have now been reduced to twelve, and as soon as the State takes over the control in April the whole services will be remodelled, and in the remodelling the faithful twelve will have to go"? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to carry out Mr. Johnson's threat and dismiss the twelve men referred to?

The PREMIER replied: The Hon. Minister for Works did not make such a statement.

# QUESTION — STATE STEAMSHIP SERVICE, MANAGER'S AGREEMENT.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government any agreement with Mr. Sudholz to act as manager of the State Steamship Service? 2, What is the term thereof? 3, What salary is to be paid during such term?

The PREMIER replied: 1, On his appointment, Mr. Sudholz was written to and informed that if his services proved satisfactory his appointment would, at any time during the term of probation (six months), be made for a period of not less than five years at an increased salary. Mr. Sudholz's salary was raised to £600 per annum on 1st January, 1913. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

## SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

On motion by the PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) ordered: That the House unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, at 4.30 p.m. and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary; and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m., onwards.

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

On motion by the PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) ordered: That on Tuesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day.

## COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

On motions by the PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) Sessional Committees were appointed as follow:—

House Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Underwood, Mr. Male, and Mr. Monger, with leave to sit during any adjournment and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the House Committee of the Legislative Council.

Library Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Turvey, and Mr. Wisdom, with leave to

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

Printing Committee.—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Price, and Mr. Allen, to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members, and all papers laid upon the Table, whether in answer to addresses or otherwise.

Standing Orders Committee.—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Nanson, and Mr. Lefroy, with leave to sit during any adjournment, and with authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

### Second Day.

Debate resumed from the 26th June.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): Before dealing with the question before the House, may I congratulate the Premier upon his return, and say that I am very pleased to see him back and looking so well. I would add that the loan was satisfactory, so far as he had any concern in it, and was well worth the visit he made to the Old Country. I am also glad to see the Minister for Works and other Ministers safely returned from the conference which has been sitting during the last few weeks. There are two occasions in the year which the public look to with considerable interest, one being the delivery of the Budget Speech and the other the opportunity Ministers have through the Speech of His Excellency to let the people know just what their intentions are in regard to the work for the future. But we can look in vain for any shadow of hope in the Speech that is before us. Never was there a speech delivered so barren of anything that might result in good as is this Speech which Ministers have placed before Parliament.

Of course, we realise that Ministers were suffering under some disadvantage because we know that McCallum's parliament had not met and instructions to the Government were not forthcoming. We hope, however, that during the course of the debate Ministers will add to the Speech and say a word of comfort to the people in the country who are struggling to make ends meet. No Government ever had a greater opportunity of doing things than the present Government have had. Why, this country presents opportunities untold. There are magnificent chances for people who are ready to seize them.

The Minister for Works : They would have been better if you had had anything to do with them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : They might have been much better. At any rate I should not have made promises before the election that so soon afterwards I found impossible to carry out. Before the election the public were promised by Ministers that there would be no stagnation. Yet we have stagnation on all hands and men out of work. The Premier knows that the unemployed trouble is a real one. Those seeking for work even threatened to burn the Premier in effigy, but he would not have that, and I believe the police took the effigy in charge. Nevertheless the unemployed trouble was a real one, and was not confined to Perth. Throughout the country work is scarce and difficult to get. But not only was there to be no stagnation; there was also to be successful control of the finances. I will deal with this question later on, but I would like to say right here that there has been an absolute lack of financial control, and it would be impossible to imagine anything more disastrous to the country than the handling of the finances by the present Ministers. There was also to be the right to work, and that meant active development of the natural resources. But have we had that development? Has there been the development in the agricultural districts that there was in former years, or has there been the development on the goldfields that was taking place at the time when Mr. Gregory was in charge of the Mines Depart-

ment? We have only to turn to the financial statement to see that the development is not taking place on the goldfields to the extent of what was happening a few years back. Then there was to be a reduction of ministerial salaries, and the people believed that Ministers were honest in their intention to reduce their salaries, and they were asked from time to time if they had any intention of carrying out that promise. The state of the finances would warrant the Ministers in doing this; indeed the finances are in such a condition that a return to the Treasury of the extra £300 per annum which each of the six Ministers draws would be a welcome addition to the revenue. I do not say that Ministers are not worth the money they are drawing, but they certainly made promises to the people before the elections which they have not fulfilled. There was to be clean administration, nothing was to be hidden, the people were to know just what Ministers were doing and what their intentions were, their actions were to be obvious to everybody; but what do we find? We have unearthed one agreement that we know of, the powellising agreement—

The Minister for Works : The Opposition have unearthed it, do you say?

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I realise fully that it would have been impossible for us to have unearthed it. Ministers had concealed it so splendidly that if the thing had not got outside the control of Ministers it would never have been heard of.

The Minister for Works : I think you know all about it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I know what has been published, and that was a copy of the agreement. One would like to ask why this Speech is so barren. Ministers had an opportunity to tell the people what their policy was.

The Premier : Remember who read it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I apologise to the Governor.

Mr. Taylor : You ought not to be making puns like that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I remember that on the occasion of the farewell to one of

our former Governors, Sir Frederick Bedford, he related that when a young man he was walking up to Parliament House with a colonial Governor who said to him, "This paper which I have in my hand is my Speech, and I do not believe a word of it." Sir Frederick Bedford, then a young naval officer, asked him why he read it if he did not believe it, and the Governor answered, "Because I am a constitutional Governor." I wonder if our Governor believed a word of the Speech he read, or if the Ministers who prepared it believed much of the words they put into the Governor's mouth. We know very well that the Premier was a very different man in London to what he is out here. There, when he was meeting the capitalist, he said that the country was willing to take any number of people; that there was room for all, and work for all. Western Australia was a glorious place to come to, and there was no question of the abundance of work or opportunity. He made encouraging remarks to the people of England to bring them out to Western Australia. He was on that mission and he was carrying on and preaching the policy that his predecessors had preached before him. He wanted money and he found that the only way of getting it was to encourage the people of England to come to Western Australia. And when the people saw the Premier and heard him they believed in him. They believed that the Premier was willing that the country should progress. He wanted money to develop the natural resources of Western Australia and he had to preach progress or he would not have got the money. The Premier did not show the slightest funk when he was in London; at that long distance he was very brave. He was away from the controlling influence of the Trades Hall and there, away at that long distance, he made a very good impression. But what did we find? The Premier had hardly touched Australia when he changed his tune.

The Premier: Quote the change of tune. Do not make a bald statement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Let the Premier turn up his Sydney sneech and he will see what he said. He was not quite

definite there, but having got back to Perth he was not at all sure if the Government could go on actively with that policy of progression and he has since been instructed by Congress not to spend money in the direction of bringing out immigrants. If the Premier in London had been the Premier we know he would not have got the money that he did obtain. Ministers have never tired of telling us that their troubles have been due to assisting the agriculturists. They have told the people time after time that their troubles were entirely due to having to help the agricultural community. Even in the Governor's Speech they harp on the troubles which have been brought upon them by the agriculturists. But if we examine the facts of the case we do not find that such is the true position of affairs. We find that the Government last year had one of the best years the country has ever known. We had one of the best years in the wheat yield, for there were 9,168,594 bushels of wheat against the previous year's crop of 4,358,904 bushels.

The Premier: Bear in mind that you said something just now about stagnation.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Of course, Ministers do not feel the pinch at all; they are away from those troubles. But I wish to point out that whilst they were croaking about the troubles of the farmers, the country was reaping a very rich harvest because of the season we had had. I do not say it is the best we ever will have but an average of 11½ bushels is a very fair average indeed and it was not due to the magnificent season in the hinterland at all, but the wheat belts turned out very good crops indeed. The Premier should realise this and find some other excuse for his deficit. Let him fix it on the State steamers, on his expenditure in trading concerns, butcher shops, his cattle trading, or something else, and not continually refer to the troubles which the farmers have caused him. The Premier's words go forth to the world and the public believe that the Premier is right when he attributes all these troubles to the farmers because the farmers had a very bad time. Not only did we do well with regard to wheat growing last

year, but our oat crop was nearly twice the quantity of the previous year. The crop last year was really a record one; the Premier ought to have mentioned these facts.

The Premier: The previous harvest, remember, was immediately after you went out of office.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And the past harvest was due to the work of the past Liberal Government and not to the members of the Government opposite. Apart from cereal growing, the orchards have done wonderfully well and the fruit export is increasing. Many thousands of pounds have been saved to this State by reason of the fact that we have not been compelled to import potatoes largely. For the first time we exported last year £7,000 worth of potatoes. Therefore, there is no reason for the Premier to be pessimistic, except that he wishes to make political capital out of what is not well understood by the public at large. I admit that the necessities of 1911 made it necessary for the farmers to come to the Government for assistance. The farmers, like other people, suffer temporary disadvantages, and I admit the Government, as any other Government would have done, provided some assistance. They gave the farmer seed wheat; the Minister for Works carted water to them, and fertilisers, and assisted the farmers in several other directions. But the aggregate amount spent in this direction is really infinitesimal when we compare it with the total amount of the crop. The total cost of the cropping would be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions and what the Government did for the farmers would not come to more than £100,000. The Government have nothing to boast about in this direction and it does no good for the Government to be ever reminding the people of this.

The Premier: You are the only one who is doing it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Why, it is in the Governor's Speech.

The Premier: You have been going half an hour on it now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hope the Premier will desist in the future from attacking the farmers on every possible occasion.

I hope when the Minister for Works goes to Beverley again he will not tell the people we are in trouble because we had a bad season and that the Government had to find seed wheat and water and fertilisers for the farmers.

Mr. Munsie: Is it not true, if he did say it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, it is not true. I believe the Government are going to construct abattoirs at Fremantle and at Midland Junction, and I hope at Kimberley also. I hope that the Minister for Works now looks more favourably on the Kimberley project than he did in the past. Until we get abattoirs going there will be no development of that magnificent country in the Kimberleys. There is an opportunity there for growing beef; the grass is going to waste year by year because there are no facilities for getting the cattle out.

Mr. Lander: Why did you not clean the cattle when you were in office?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I leave that to the hon. member. I hope the abattoirs will be speedily erected and that we shall not have again to congratulate the Government on their intention to erect abattoirs. It is years since the construction of abattoirs has been promised. This work has been before the country too long but my friend the Minister for Works is now pledged to the project which I initiated and it is left for him to carry the work out.

Mr. Dwyer: You had the money voted; he could not stop you from carrying it out.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes he could.

The Premier: You were not game to go on with it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I notice that agricultural implement works at last have become an established fact. A year ago the Premier delayed the buying of the machinery, but now machinery has been bought by the Minister for Lands, and I hope he has not made a mistake, or, rather, I hope the person who has recommended the purchase has not made a mistake, and that the works when started will be successful and will be made to pay their way. So far the State enterprises have not been a success, but if the Government do lose

on other State enterprises I hope the agricultural implement works will be made to pay and that they will make up the loss on the steamers and other things, and then the people of the country will have no right to complain. I notice, too, that State saw mills have been started in the karri forests.

Mr. Dwyer: Are you not glad?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am glad the karri forests are going to be used, but I am not glad that the Government are erecting State saw mills there.

Mr. Dwyer: All socialistic experiments.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, and they are expensive experiments, as the Premier will find out. The Premier is erecting these mills to supply sleepers to the Federal Government, and while he is attempting to erect these mills I do not think it was necessary to give a private contract for a million sleepers to the Powellising Company. Still, the Premier may be able to explain this matter later in the evening. We are to get cheap bricks, hard bricks and better bricks than we have been getting in the past, and these are to be made at Beenup, at the State brickworks. I hope the Ministry will remember the experience of South Australia, where they had a State brickworks and brought special clay from a distance which made the bricks very costly. I hope the Ministry's venture will be more successful than I have reason to expect. The butcher's shops we know now have not been a success, still another branch is to be opened. I remember sometime ago the Premier refused to open a shop at Midland Junction, but since then the Government have decided to open a branch at that place, and I hope they will still go on opening branches, one at Bunbury, another at Northam, and at other important centres, so that everybody may benefit by the Government's cheap meat. I do not think it is right that the meat should be made cheaper to some taxpayers and that the bulk of the taxpayers should be called upon to make up the deficiency. The Government bought several hundred head of cattle from Mr. Farquharson of the North, and 2,000 head of cattle from the Bovril Company, and no doubt Mr. Farquhar-

son's cattle have been charged up to the butcher's shops. We know this venture could not have been other than an expensive one; still, we know the Government bought 2,000 head of cattle from the Northern territory.

The Premier: You bought some cattle once.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, and very good they were, too.

The Premier: And you bought some goats, too.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, and live goats are better than dead bullocks at Thomson's Lake; and when it comes to having 600 dead bullocks sold at a quarter of what they cost, it is a serious matter indeed. It does not affect the Premier at all. The people of this State have to pay, and the Premier goes on his way rejoicing. We know these boats were bought to help the small producers of this State. The Government purchased these boats to give them an opportunity to reach this market, but what has been done? Instead of bringing down the cattle of the small producers of the North, they have approached an English Company—the Bovril Company, and bought 2,000 cattle. The people of this State were for some time obliged to pay a much higher price for meat because these steamers were purchased. The "Kwinana" was away in the East when it should have been in the North. Cattle never brought a higher price than they have brought since these Government boats were bought. These boats are costing the country a considerable amount of money day by day, and when they are wanted we find they are carrying over to South Australia fertilisers that the farmers of Western Australia should have. It may amuse the Premier, but he cannot deny that these cattle were sold at very high profits because these Government boats were purchased.

The Premier: Sheep were sold at a high price in New South Wales. Are we responsible for that?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What has that got to do with the question? You were bringing sheep from there a few months ago. The boat has been used, not to bene-

fit our own trade so much, but that of other States. I confess having had a look at one of the Premier's butcher's shops. The meat was nearly as cheap as that sold in other shops.

The Premier: The customers think highly of our meat.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We are told that the construction of railways is being carried on with activity. That is news, of course, to the people who are waiting for railways; it is particularly news to the people north of Wangan Hills. I notice that the Minister for Works gave notice to-day of his intention to introduce the Drainage and Irrigation Bill. I hope the provisions will be reasonable, as we want that Bill to become law. Other measures that have been introduced are the Electoral Reform Bill and one for more taxation. The fact that the Premier intends to ask this House to give him more revenue requires us to turn to the question of finance and deal with the figures as they were for last year. The revenue was the magnificent sum of £746,289, more for the year just closed than it was for the last year during which my friend Mr. Wilson was Premier. Notwithstanding that we had a credit balance on the year of £115,991, the Premier spent last year £1,525,000 more than was spent by Mr. Wilson in his last year. Of course I know that some of these items were inflated by the alteration of the system of book-keeping in relation to water supply and some other matters. The Premier has taken this money out of the pockets of the people. It is because of reckless extravagance on the part of the Government that there is stagnation and want of employment. The people cannot spend money if the Government take it from them. If the Government collect £700,000 more from the producers, the people are that much more out of pocket and have so much less to provide work for other reproductive enterprises; very little of this expenditure has been for reproductive work; the very fact that the Government are spending money extravagantly produces stagnation.

Mr. Heitmann: It has been stated that all geniuses die young.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I suppose it seems to my friend a great thing for the Government to spend money. There is no doubt that the Government can pay the civil servants, if they will, a little more, and pay the workmen more. They can benefit the few that they employ at any rate, but how about the great bulk of the people who can never be employed by the Government? We had the Labour Congress affirming admiration of the Premier and his policy—I should think that probably they enjoyed some of the expenditure.

Mr. Munsie: Where did you read that report?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member will be pleased to know that I read it in a paper called the *Worker*. The reports were not made available to the other papers, and so naturally I had to turn to the *Worker* for information. I have quoted figures which show surely that there has been gross extravagance.

Mr. Heitmann: You are the only person with brains.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I can only explain—I cannot give my friends brains. A postponed land tax has been made because of a complaint against the farmers. We find the Government received only £1,300 less from land than was received in the previous year.

The Premier: What does that prove?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: You have to remember that the sale of town blocks made a considerable addition to our revenue in past years. Town blocks are not sold now and so the revenue from the farmers must be greater than it was in my time.

Mr. Dwyer: That ought to be a good thing from your point of view.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I agree with you, certainly, but I am just pointing out that the Premier says the money is outstanding and that the farmer does not pay his rent. With regard to the railways, I notice that the earnings are £151,244 more than in the previous year, while the estimated expenses have gone up by £280,000. Why should those costs go up to this extent? Is it because the control of the Minister—



The Minister for Mines: It is because we have spent more in rolling stock in one year than you did in six years, and have to pay interest accordingly.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister says the interest on this money spent upon rolling stock accounts for the difference of £280,000. I know the control is not what it should be. We find that the Railway Officers' Association meet at the Trades Hall. You cannot have satisfactory control under those conditions. Notwithstanding a desperate effort to square the accounts for the year, the Premier ended up with an accumulated deficit of £315,000. We all thought it would be more and had reason to suppose it would be more. When we look into the question, we find that the Premier collected revenue at the rate of 7½ million pounds a year for the last month, but it was not revenue that reduced the deficit. The money was from loan funds or some funds that were not collected during the year. The Fremantle Harbour for instance, gave the Premier £40,000, and that £40,000 came in very handy. I do not say it was not right to transfer that money to revenue, but it does not improve the Premier's finances for the year at all. It looks as though the railway revenue had benefited by a transfer from loan at the last minute. The railway revenue for the month was the tremendous item £250,000. It suggests to me that the Premier found it convenient at the last moment to transfer an amount from loan to the credit of railways.

The Premier: Do you say I did?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It looks as if you did. From reimbursements-in-aid, too, I notice the Premier got £74,000. What is the £60,000 for, can the Premier tell us?

The Premier: Do you assert that?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No. I merely ask for information, although I am not likely to get it. I ask the Premier why he expected £14,000 and got in this case £74,000. The State steamers are in much the same position. They have returned £18,000 for the month where only £6,000 was expected. Where did the other £12,000 come from? They earned £66,000

for the whole year, and £18,000 of that last month. I think my friend Mr. Male got fairly behind the position when he asked the Premier how much repairs had been charged to loan. It is not the Premier's money, and consequently the Premier ought to give us this information.

The Premier: Hear, hear.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This is another item which I forgot in connection with the glorious butcher's shops. The Premier had no right to hold the cattle purchased from the Bovril Company at Yandanooka. It may be interesting to know, too, whether the interest on Yandanooka will be paid by the butchers' shops. The Government are acting illegally in withholding this estate from sale, but while they use it they should not charge the State with the interest on it.

Mr. Heitmann: What was going to pay the interest on the Avondale estate?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Avondale estate pays interest because it has been always worked.

Mr. Heitmann: You tried to sell it, but could not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister for Lands will tell his friend that he refused to receive applications for the Avondale estate. Had he done so the lot would have been sold long ago. The Avondale estate was used by the hon. member and his friends prior to last election. The Minister for Lands has refused to sell Avondale. Why? Because he boldly stated before the elections that it could not be sold, and therefore he has since refused applications from good substantial people. I am obliged to the Government Whip for his interjection. Again, we are promised a fish supply, and we still hope that cheap fish will come along. A good deal of money has been wasted over the tramways. The purchase price was £475,000, and the Premier agreed to allow the company to say whether they would take cash or debentures. Of course they took the cash. In no other agreement any Government have ever made has there been a clause giving the company the right to say whether they will take cash or debentures.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): But you approved of the purchase.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No. I never did, not at that price.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Silence gives consent; you said nothing against it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, we all believed in the purchase of the trams, at a reasonable price, either by the municipality or the Government. The Government made a very foolish bargain indeed. They allowed the company to state their own terms, and the agreement said that they were to have either cash or debentures.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Why did not you say that when the agreement was here?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did say so. Did you not know it was in the agreement?

The Premier: I knew it, but you did not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier does not like the country to know that through his bungling we had to pay £19,000 for the raising of £475,000. The Minister for Lands said, down in the Bridgetown district, that they would have to raise the cash to pay for these tramways. Now we see that on top of the £475,000 we have had £19,000 absolutely flung away. The Premier could have made any terms he liked, for when the negotiations began the shares were worth 14s.; but the shareholders received 27s. 6d., and after that was paid there seems to have been £16,000 left for the directors. I do hope that the Premier has benefited by his trip to London. He has rubbed shoulders with capable men there, and I hope he understands now what finance means, and that in future he will see that he gets a fair deal in his transactions. It is not fair by any means for the Government to be saddled with the enormous cost of the tramways—a cost very much in excess of their value—and an extra £19,000 on top of that. In respect of the powellising agreement, of course, the Premier's mouth has been

sealed ever since this agreement was dug up by the Press.

Mr. Foley: Some officer's mouth was not sealed too tightly.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How do you know it was an officer?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: One might regret disloyalty on the part of an officer, but it is even worse for the Government to keep the thing secret for 16 months. However, we do not know that it was an officer who gave the thing away.

Mr. Underwood: Have you any idea how much the officer got for it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not think it was an officer at all. Let us see what particular fees the company have to collect under this agreement. We have sold 1,400,000 sleepers to be powellised. We have agreed to pay 2s. a hundred super royalty, or £52,500 on that job.

The Premier: Who said so?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Powellising Company do no work; they simply write on a slip of paper "The ingredients can be used," and they take no trouble whatever. On this one contract for 2s., the amount the agreement specifies, we are to pay £52,000.

The Premier: Who says that?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Why, the signature to the agreement says it, of course. The Premier: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: On top of that we have one million sleepers to be used on our section of the trans-Australian railway.

The Premier: Take my denial. I have said that you are incorrect.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am referring to the contract with Bethell. The Premier will not deny that he has to pay 9d. This means £66,562 to be paid to this company for the right to use their patent. The whole work is to be done by the Government, and the whole expense borne by them, merely for the right to use the process. I mention this because I want the House to realise the seriousness of the position. A contract for a million sleepers; I do not know what the price is to be, but the contract will probably come to well over £200,000 for these one million sleepers. We should have known

long ago what the Premier was to pay, but he suppressed the information.

Mr. Underwood: It was no use showing you the agreement earlier. You would only have growled. You growled as soon as you saw it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As a matter of fact we have not seen the agreement, but we know it has been made. I want members to realise how serious a matter this agreement is for the country. The agreement was entered into four months after the Government got into office, when they were quite new to their seats. They conceived the idea of making this agreement, and at the same time determined that it should be concealed. For 16 months it was successfully concealed. Then the agreement was published, much to the consternation of Cabinet. I can imagine Ministers rushing together and, later, indulging in a heresy hunt. They would fine the man who disclosed the agreement to the public.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I would not fine him; I would chuck him out.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This agreement was not to be published so long as the Government remained in office. There is no doubt about that. The country would never have been informed of it. It is not reasonable to suppose that an agreement successfully hidden for 16 months would not have been hidden for as long as the Government remained in power. It would have been concealed for all time. Why was the agreement concealed? Can the Premier tell us that?

The Premier: You must give notice of the question.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is perfectly patent to me that the Government feared the disclosure. It is perfectly plain, and the public understand it very well. Why did the Premier allow this country to be exploited by the Powellising Company without first consulting Parliament? The agreement was made 16 months ago, and when the House met the other day the Premier could not give us any information about it. He wanted another month, and he was taken two, and does not yet know. In the Forrest electorate the other day he said to the electors—"I will

make the facts public later. In the meantime please support my friend, Mr. O'Loughlen, through this election." Just imagine the Premier going to the country with an agreement of this sort in his desk, 16 months old, and when he got there not being able to tell them why he had made it. We adjourned the House in order, among other things, that the Premier might frame his reply. (Will he tell us why the agreement provides for the payment of royalty five years after the agreement has expired? The patent rights expire in 1918, and the agreement provides that royalty to the amount of £17,750 shall be paid after that. If this is not giving a minimum of £17,750 away, what is it? If the patent rights expire, as the agreement states, in 1918, why should the Government pay for powellising at the rate of 2s. per hundred super feet of export timber and 9d. per hundred of their own timber when the public will have the right to use the patent for nothing.

The Premier: You want to get brushed up a bit on patent rights.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am brushing the Premier up.

The Premier: I will do a bit of grooming on you when the time arrives.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, I have some hair to groom. The matters I have mentioned are what the public want to know. The public view this agreement with considerable alarm. If the Premier could hear the discussions which I hear about this agreement from his friends and even from his own supporters, he would be staggered. I hear it from the man in the street—

The Premier: On St. George's-terrace.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hear it from the man in the street at Northam and Bunbury, in the train and in the South-West, and it would make the Premier blush if he could only hear it. The Premier ought to realise that the position is serious, and that the people want a full explanation. They want to know why £17,750 is being given away for nothing; why £66,000 is to be paid for the right to use the patent when an old agreement with the Commissioner of Railways provides that we shall pay 6d. per hundred super feet, and there

is no guarantee by the Commissioner and the company was content to take 6d. per hundred super feet.

The Premier: You do not know the contents of that agreement even now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will the Premier say that he did not know that the agreement was made at the moment when it was made? The timber for Port Hedland was to be powellised, and when an arrangement is made to pay 6d. per hundred super feet without a guarantee, there is nothing serious about it, because it becomes a matter of no powellising no pay. The Premier does not do that; he has to pay whether he has the timber powellised or not, and pay a rattling good sum, but the new agreement provides that we shall pay for sleepers for our own use at the rate of 9d. per hundred super feet and at the rate of 2s. per hundred super feet on any stuff we sell. If it is sold to a private person, the royalty will be 2s.

The Premier: No, only for export. I will put you right on that one point.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think that what I stated is right. If the Federal Government buy sleepers they will have to pay a railage of 2s.

The Premier: No, they will not. They will pay 9d. You want to go back now and correct your figures a bit.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, the figures are still enormous. Even so, paying 9d. for the right—

The Premier: You said 2s. just now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Ninepence for sleepers for our own railways and 2s. for timber sold to any private person or to the Commonwealth for use even inside of Western Australia.

The Premier: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is what the agreement says.

The Premier: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is how I read it. If the Premier can read some other meaning into the clause relating to the 2s. royalty the country will be saved a considerable sum and I shall be delighted, but the company will be paid too much for the work even then.

Mr. George: Yes, a thousand times too much. I would like to know what they do with the money too.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then there is this contract for a million sleepers.

Mr. Underwood: That is right; now you are on a fact.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This contract is a remarkable one and no price is mentioned. The system of government demands that tenders should be called when work is to be let unless it is to be done by day labour. It is not the custom to make a secret arrangement for the supply of a big order like this. This secret arrangement is for a million sleepers which must cost over £200,000 and the Government find the timber, so that there was never a time when the Government could have called for tenders more successfully. They have 15,000 acres necessary to get the million sleepers from; they had the timber and have given it to the Powellising Company. One would suppose there was never an occasion when tenders could be more keenly competed for than when the Government were in the position to say, as they are in this instance, "There is the timber, cut the sleepers." The Timber Workers might easily have competed, and Millars and others could have competed.

Mr. Underwood: Hedges too.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, or the hon. member, because there was no bar in the way; there was no question about getting the timber because the Government were finding it. We want to know why the secret arrangement was entered into and concealed for 16 months. Why was this 15,000 acres allotted to the company when other people were refused?

Mr. O'Loughlen: What do you value the 15,000 acres at—worthless in your opinion?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If submitted to auction, I believe you would get £15,000.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why did you sell it and kill the timber.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did not kill any timber that ought to have been kept alive.

The Premier: A good deal.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: A good deal of timber should have been ringbarked years ago, but I do not know of any karri having been ringbarked.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I have seen a lot.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I will pay your expenses and show you a thousand acres that you ringbarked.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the hon. member makes it a wager I will say that I have never ringbarked it. But this is beside the question. The question is why was this 15,000 acres of timber given to Bethell and Company? Why were tenders not called? We want to know the price the Government are paying and the conditions. I understand Bethell and Company have 10,000 acres of timber adjoining this 15,000 acres. I do not know if they are working it, but if the mill is being erected I would like to know which area the timber is to be got from. The Minister for Lands must have known all about this agreement.

The Premier: Tell us something you know about it. You want to know everything.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know the Government made a secret agreement for cutting a million sleepers. I know it is a light matter in the eyes of the Premier, but it is not a light matter with the public.

The Premier: Because we made a good deal.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No one will believe for a moment that the deal is even a moderately fair one. How can the deal be good when it raises the royalty by 50 per cent. on the timber used in the State and by 300 per cent. on timber for export in comparison with the royalty paid by the previous Government.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What was the value of the process five years ago?

Mr. George: It has no value now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We have a right to object to this method of doing business and I wish to do it in the most moderate language possible. Though our 16 votes in this House are no good against the numbers on the Government side, still the people of the country ought to be put into possession of the whole of the facts concerning this transaction.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We will tell the country.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier offered to subject the Minister for Works to an enquiry the other day when the leader of the Opposition was discussing this agreement, but the Minister for Works cannot be alone in this matter. The Premier confirmed the agreement and the Minister for Lands allotted the land. The Premier and the Minister for Lands must have been fully aware of every provision in the agreement. We want to know whether it is wise to use powellised karri, and whether the country is justified by the experiment made in expending an enormous amount of money on the erection of plants to provide the million sleepers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will you take a definite stand?

The Premier: Yes, we want you to do that and you are not game to.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: To do what?

The Premier: To say that powellised karri is no good.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We are entitled to know all that the Government know.

The Premier: Take up a definite stand.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections, discussions and arguments across the floor of the House.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The public want a full explanation of all these matters from the Premier. If the Premier can prove that powellised karri is safe to use, I shall be the most delighted man in this House, because I want to see the karri removed from the magnificent land in the South-West which ought to be used for cultivation. But it is not a question of the result of the powellising test; it is not a question whether the powellising process is good or bad; this agreement is bad, and it is with the agreement I am dealing. I do not question the work of the powellising process at all; I am objecting to the terms of the agreement and to this concealment which has lasted all these months. There is no need to powellise timber for sleepers in this country, because when the late Government were in office we reserved 700,000 acres of jarrah for railway purposes and if it were desired all the sleepers necessary to build the railway could be obtained from this land.

Mr. Underwood: How about white ants eating the jarrah at Port Hedland?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not know anything about it.

Mr. Underwood: But I do.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They are powdered sleepers.

Mr. Underwood: Not all of them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier will have an opportunity of explaining this agreement to the public and the public will be delighted if he can put up a good case.

The Premier: You have done more harm to the timber industry of Western Australia than has been done in the last two years and it is done for party purposes. You want the truth and you are going to get it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We have been entitled to it for the last 16 months. We have had a right to it for these 16 months and we had a right to it a month ago when the Premier had an opportunity to tell the House and when the Premier said he would take his own time.

The Premier: Tell us where you are.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The question is where is the Premier.

The Premier: We are standing behind that agreement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, the people of this country are standing behind that agreement.

The Premier: Where are you standing?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Behind the agreement with the rest of the people of this country, the taxpayers of Western Australia. I object to the methods of the Premier in making the agreement; I object to the attitude the Premier takes up with regard to it. I will leave the public to judge, because I know hon. members opposite, even if they do agree with me, will not vote with me.

The Premier: Do you know the facts?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We have the agreement.

The Premier: You do not understand it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Premier is quite finished I will proceed and will leave the Powellising agreement to him and turn my attention to the administra-

tion of the Lands Department. It is because of the present administration that there is so much depression in the State. In 1910 we sold 1,727,728 acres of first-class land and in the following year, owing to a change in our methods of approval, the selection of first-class land dropped to 1,349,000 acres. When we left office a good deal of land was applied for, but not approved, and notwithstanding that, the drop in the selection of first-class land in 1912 went down to 891,513 acres. For the first six months of this year the selection of first-class land totalled only 271,000 acres. This is a matter which calls for a very close and searching inquiry on the part of the Premier. If there is trouble in the country, it is because of this big fall in land selection.

The Premier: The trouble is on your side.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know that nothing troubles the Premier. Will the Premier tell us why there has been this falling off in land selection? I will tell him. It is because of want of confidence in the present Government. There is not now the desire for land which existed two or three years ago. Three years ago every man in the State wanted land and I remember the time when the Premier attacked our Administration because I did not provide a block of land for everyone.

The Premier: Some of them now wish they had never seen you.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier at that time said that I ought to provide a block for everyone. There was activity everywhere in the administration of affairs of the country, and people invested their money in land. It had a value then which it has not had since, and this is because the Premier has destroyed that value by his methods. If there are people who are sorry they have settled on the land, it is because I am not in charge of the Lands Department to-day. Their sorrow can only be due to the work of the present Administration. If they had left well alone, there would not have been any people squeezed off.

The Premier: There are not so many publicans applying for land now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier himself is one of the biggest landholders in Perth. Why cannot he be fair.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He got in first.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Every man in this country has the right to select land under non-residential conditions.

The Premier: He has no right to sell it within three months.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, so long as he fulfills the conditions of improvement.

The Premier: Not in three months.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If he does not carry out the improvements he cannot sell.

The Premier: But you know it was done.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know it was done, and the Premier knows well that it was done, but there is no harm in selling land so long as you do not take from the man who buys money that he can ill afford to pay.

The Premier: What about Chinese Neilson?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What about the Premier?

The Premier: I am talking about Neilson selling his land and leaving the State.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He had the right to sell land which he held under non-residential conditions, but I forfeited the land he held under residential conditions.

The Premier: But you had to give it back.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did not.

The Premier: It was quite an ordinary occurrence at that time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, because our land was wanted and it had a value which it has not got to-day. The working man for some reason, might not have been able to hold his block and he sold it and was thus able to go off with some of the hard earned money he was entitled to receive. A totally different condition of affairs prevails to-day because of the mismanagement of the Government in connection with their regulations, etc. I plead guilty to having created a value on the land in this State but the Premier ought to be ashamed of the position which his Government has created. The land revenue has kept up magnificently. In 1911 we had

£362,000 and this year we have had £361,000 and that too, is without the aid of money which might have come from the sale of town blocks. Why have the Government withdrawn town blocks from sale? If they want to institute the policy of leasehold why do they not consult Parliament?

The Premier: Parliament has authorised it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Parliament has not.

The Premier: We are doing it under the Land Act.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But the Land Act was never intended to be used generally. The provision was merely inserted so that special cases might be met. The Premier's Ministers object to the leasehold principle. At Congress the other day the Honorary Minister, Mr. Dodd, and the most sensible of them all, opposed non-alienation, and it was only beaten by 38 votes to 36.

Mr. Turvey: You seem to be well up on Congress matters.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Government have no right to deprive the country of the revenue it is entitled to get.

The Premier: We are not doing so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Government are not selling these town blocks and are not getting cash for them.

The Premier: We are getting interest on £20,000 by leasing.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And if the Premier had sold these blocks he would have had £100,000.

The Premier: And the land would have gone.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, perhaps it is better that the Premier should lease this land, because later on we will be able to sell it. Down at Manjimup a block of land was offered for sale by the present Government and some other blocks were offered under leasehold. The freehold block brought £45 and the leasehold blocks £80.

The Premier: Who sold the freehold block?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That block brought £45 and it does not matter whether the Government or someone else

sold it, while the leasehold block, which was equally as good, brought £80. This system encourages speculation. I notice the hon. member for Subiaco declared that he was delighted with the leasehold system because blocks are selling at a premium. Men are not limited to one block in a township either.

The Premier : Yes, they are.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I will show you that a man got two in one town. The Minister for Works has stated that there is £135,000 outstanding for rents. If he is reckoning on the current year this would represent rents on  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million acres under our present method of selling. One can hardly believe that this is an accurate statement. There seems to be a mistake, and I hope the Minister for Lands will be told this, so that it might be verified.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) : Rents on land sold prior to that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : At any rate, we ought to have an explanation. There is no reason why land rents should not be held over and these rents might be the rents on lands to which railways have not yet been built. The Minister for Lands says that he is holding up land until he is sure that the rainfall is safe, but is he going to hold it up for one, two or twenty years? What does he intend to do with the land? It is ridiculous to cut up land until the Minister is satisfied that the rainfall is safe. Notwithstanding this, the Minister has cut up land recently at Burracoppin, which is a point further east on the rabbit-proof fence than any place where land was previously sold. Why has he cut up this land if he doubts its suitability? As a matter of fact the Minister for Lands is never tired of telling the public that I sent them too far out. He, however, is sending them still further out. The Minister for Lands has stated that the price previously charged for land was too high, but the price he charges is just as high. The system has been that the land nearest a proposed railway line shall cost more than the land that is some little distance away. That is reasonable. Just lately some land near

Nangeenan or Merredin was sold for 16s. At Mulgar, North-East of Wongan Hills, the Minister has put 17s. against a block and it is 24 miles from a railway, while at Mannering 16s. is charged and that is still further away from a railway.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL : Before tea I was dealing with the prices charged for land by the present Minister compared with the prices charged previously, and I was pointing out that the system of valuing which obtains to-day is the system that obtained when I left office. Now, I would like to deal with the instructions given by the Minister in regard to transfers. I do think that the Minister should be told that these instructions have done incalculable harm, and no possible good can come of them. It may be urged that the Minister gave these instructions because he found that speculative selectors were selling their blocks, and he desired to stop that practice, but the regulations have gone much further; in fact, they have got out of hand altogether. They have had the effect of destroying all value in land, because the people who take up a block naturally believe that they will be able to transfer. I know that the Minister is most sympathetic; in fact, it is stated by country agents that the Minister never refuses to allow transfers to go through. If this is so, he should certainly withdraw the instructions. So long as a man who sells land is not making an undue profit to the hurt of the man who follows him on the land no great harm can result. Since these instructions were promulgated, many people have given up their holdings because they believed that if they spent money and then were landed in difficulties they would not be able to transfer. The Land Act does not provide for this uncertainty, and there should be no uncertainty. There should be no denying a man the right to sell his land so long as all is genuine and fair. It has been said that the price of land is too high. Two years ago people were struggling for blocks, and members opposite, particularly ministers, said that they were speculating. If the price was too high then there could



have been no speculation, because if a man gave too much for his land he could not expect to sell it at a profit. But while the price was not too high two years ago, I admit that the same price to-day does seem high, because it is impossible to sell the land. This is all due to the Minister's instructions, and no good has come to anybody. The Minister for Lands stated at Merredin that the high prices charged were a legacy left by his predecessor. He made that remark when he was asked to reduce the prices, and he further stated that he would not consider a request for reductions during a bad season. Some time ago, while I was in office, I appointed a Poison Commission to deal with the lands to the west of the Great Southern. This commission made certain recommendations, and may I ask the Minister if he intends to act on them? Most certainly in that poison country the people were charged too much, because in poison land values are very low indeed. Still, good homes can be made there if the people are encouraged, and I hope the Minister for Lands will reduce the prices put on those blocks and increase the size of the blocks. They were cut up some years ago, and a mistake was made in making them so small. I think it would be right to give those people ten years free of rent, and the assistance of the Agricultural Bank to eradicate the poison, so long as the work is well done. I never had a wish to penalise any selector, but I believe that when we are building railways, laying down roads, and providing water we are entitled to get a fair price for our land, and the system of valuation as now used in the Department, namely, that introduced by me, is the only fair system. If railways are to be put down, the people right alongside must pay more than the people seven miles back. The Advisory Board was appointed in order that we might deal comprehensively and reasonably with our lands. The Board's reports have not been adhered to, their recommendations have been ignored, and necessarily people who have bought high-priced land alongside the line recommended by the Advisory Board must have the price reduced where that line is removed from them, as in the case

of the Wickiepin-Merredin line. It is wrong to deprive people of a line in expectation of which they paid a high price for their land, and I hope Ministers will see that it is their duty to reduce the prices where people have been robbed of their railway. The Minister for Lands will see the reasonableness of the suggestion, and I hope he will act upon it at once. I think, too, that under the Act we arranged that for three years not more than sixpence per acre per annum should be charged against first-class land, but conditions are not what they were. Money is dearer and more difficult to get, and such a change has come over the scene that I believe the Minister would be acting wisely and fairly by the people on the land if he would alter the Act to make the sixpence per acre per annum payment extend over the first six years instead of over the first three. That would relieve the settlers until they were on their feet and had got their railway and were able to earn the money which the Government required, and it could be done without cost to the State, because the rent would come in later on. This request would never have been made if it had not been for the instructions issued by the present Government. May I ask, too, why surveyors have been put off? I pointed out that in 1910, the present Premier said that I should have surveyed more blocks and that everybody should have land who wanted it. To-day surveyors are leaving our shores; people certainly can get all the blocks they want, but they are not very keen on having them. This is a position which requires careful consideration by Cabinet. I am now going to show that the dry areas have done very well over the whole of our wheat lands where farming methods have been reasonable during the last year. I believe that the Government have damned the settlement in these dry areas for political purposes only, and not because they are justified in doing so. If we look at the last year's average for places where the crop was properly put in we find that at Kellerberrin, which is very far to the east, some 70 miles from Northam, one settler had an average of 20 bushels to

the acre, another 16 bushels, and a third 14 bushels; at Doodlakine one man had a 17 bushels average, and south of Merredin a settler averaged 12 bushels. There is no land in the world that would respond to the methods of cultivation employed by some of our settlers. Hon. members know that it has been the custom of some of them to simply scarify and sow the crop, and they have given up scarifying in many cases and are merely drilling the seed into the unmoved ground, yet last year we got an average of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  bushels under that system. I do not mean to say that there were not many people in difficulties on account of the poor average in the previous bad season, but I do say that over the whole State we did very well, indeed, last year, and that people who farm properly can get a very good return. This suggests to my mind that the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act ought to be extended to meet the question of cultivation. Even the Minister for Works at Beverley suggested that he had gone too far out, but I believe he has increased his holding, so he must have a certain amount of confidence in his land.

The Minister for Works: I would like to sell it to you.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No doubt the hon. member would if he could get a good price, but if he really wants to sell I cannot understand why he recently bought another block. Coming now to the repurchase of estates; do the Government not know that the Act demands that these estates shall be sold? Will the Minister for Lands say why he refused applications for Avondale and why Yandanooka is not carrying wheat instead of bullocks? The Agricultural Bank is an institution of which we are all justly proud. Before the last election Ministers accused the Liberal Government of carrying farmers to a certain extent and then dropping them. What they meant to say was that the limit to be loaned by the Bank to one individual was not sufficient. They, therefore, increased the limit from £750 to £2,000. I remember quite well that the Minister for Lands, when introducing the Bill, said that he did not know that the Bank

should inquire too closely into the expenditure of the money advanced by the Bank. But the Government have inquired very closely into the expenditure, and there has been discrimination. Discrimination was necessary because the money available has not been enough. Advances to redeem mortgages held by private banks have been refused by the Agricultural Bank, and that is not in accord with the law of the land. The trustees have discrimination, of course, but the law of the land is for the equal advantage of everybody, and the man who has an overdraft, so long as the security is good, and he as a borrower is acceptable, should have his money.

Mr. Heitmann: There must be discrimination if you have a limited capital.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If we cannot advance up to the £2,000 limit to everyone who needs the money we must make the limit less, so that everybody gets a fair share or we must make the capital greater.

Mr. Lander: You do not hear any complaint of the Agricultural Bank in the country.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There are many complaints, and the Premier will admit that there has never been enough money to make all the advances asked for.

Mr. Heitmann: What is the point you are making?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am trying to make the wisecrack of the Opposition smile, and that is a very easy matter. The point is that this limit is a fraud unless it can be given effect to. How many men have reached the £2,000? This limit was merely used for political purposes before the election, and the only thing done since was to increase the limit on paper.

Mr. Thomas: They have advanced much more than you did.

Mr. Heitmann: You say advance everybody £2,000 at once because it is the law.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am objecting because the limit has been fixed at £2,000 and it is impossible for everybody to get £2,000. If the bank is doing more than it did before it is because of the system that applied before the Government came

into office. We had marked the maps for the advances to settlers to the tune of a million pounds before we left office. I venture to say the present Minister for Lands marks his maps just in the same way, and he has probably committed the country to the expenditure of £500,000 more. To-day the other banks are asking the Agricultural Bank to take over advances. The Ministry before the elections said they would do all the other banks were doing. They did their best to prevent the other banks from financing, and still they come here and are perfectly satisfied that they have done all that they ought to have done.

The Premier: Are not the banks lending just as much as previously?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Agricultural Bank is not doing all it should do. The other banks are not advancing to farmers as they did owing to the Government's regulations.

Mr. Underwood: Owing to the dry season they will not lend money on a rock.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There is no denying the fact that advances have been refused where a good security was available. I think the capital of the Agricultural Bank should be increased by two millions to meet the requirements of the people. It would be better than putting the money into the powellising of sleepers and into State steamers and State butchers' shops. I know the Premier will not agree with me because it is not one of his socialistic enterprises.

The Premier: Is not the Agricultural Bank as much a State institution as the steamships?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is a much better institution. It is not an institution like the Premier's scrap-iron steamers. The Government can very well afford to look into the question of further advances to the farmers and drop this criticism of the farmers' position. They should look into this question of water too. The Minister for Works has made a point about the deferred water rates, but the payments for water rates were in advance and were not for water used.

The Minister for Works: You know very well that we write off the first half year rates.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know full well the Government collect these rates for the first half year. At any rate I consider the rates are excessive, and are too high for any farmer to pay. The question of terminal charges has been referred to in connection with the railways, but it was not a fact that the Minister had wiped off £30,000 in that connection. He had never contradicted a statement of Mr. Gregory. If the Minister wants to refresh his memory he can turn up the letter he wrote in reply to Mr. C. A. Piesse, of Wagin.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Does it make the statement correct because Mr. Gregory made it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister for Lands should correct the statement if he desired to do so.

The Minister for Lands: I made no statement whatever in regard to terminal charges; it did not affect the timber companies at all, it had nothing to do with them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Mr. Gregory says it did. Coming to the question of the bulk handling of wheat, I approve entirely of the commission that has been appointed and I hope it will be successful, as under the scheme the farmers expect some improvement.

The Premier: Tell me what they do not expect.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They do not expect courtesy from the Premier. It naturally follows that when the Labour Congress the other day disapproved of immigration it was because land settlement is practically killed. We cannot have the one without the other, and if the Premier is not going to sell land he must, of course, naturally shut down on immigration. May I give the House a few figures with regard to railway construction, in which the Minister boasts he has been doing so much. In 1911 231 miles were opened and the increase in loan expenditure was £642,000. In 1912 222 miles were opened and the loan expenditure was £1,213,000. This year I

do not know anything about because the figures are not available. There has been gross mismanagement on these lines, and it has been asserted that the dams on the Wickepin-Merredin line have cost five times as much as they should have. In regard to the construction of the Wongan Hills line, notwithstanding the Premier's assertion that they were going to employ proper methods of construction, the earthworks are 70 miles ahead of the rails. The cost of the dams on the Wickepin-Merredin line is too much. The Government are paying for carting stores these 70 miles. I can answer for it that the Government are losing on the carriage of stores from the head of the line.

The Minister for Works: The men are satisfied, and they are the best judges.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am told that these stores are sold to farmers and others. It is absolutely absurd that the earthworks should be 70 miles ahead of the rails. The money goes in this way, the expenditure is lavish and the costs necessarily high. I want to deal with the question of land selection at Eucla. I have no objection to the Premier, the Attorney General, or anyone else becoming squatters, but I think the Premier's reply to recent discussion was artistic. It is very strange that the powellising people and the Premier have got very near to each other in this squatting proposition they are engaged on.

The Premier: Explain that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We have pastoral lease 550/95 of about 118,000 acres near Eucla in the name of J. Scaddan, and pastoral lease 551/95 of 222,000 acres adjoining it in the name of Bethel and Gordon. Then we move on down the coast opposite to Eyre's Patch. and find again that J. Scaddan has selected pastoral lease 543/95 of 206,500 acres and adjoining his holding is the selection of Bethel and Gordon of 171,000 acres. Is it a mere coincidence that these gentlemen made their selections side by side?

The Attorney General: What is the inference?

Mr. Lander: Why do you not say it straight out?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I leave it to the member for East Perth to say.

Mr. Lander: I can tell you where your brother-in-law dummied land in your time, and you knew it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I ask that that be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is it you wish withdrawn?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member said someone dummied land in my time and I knew it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can deny the statement.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, I do deny it. At any rate we are entitled, I think, to deal with this question. The Premier has been emphatic on the point that selection should not be made by any member of the House, but now he changes his tune. He says he was not responsible for fixing the rent? I know that, but he could have increased the rent if he so wished.

The Premier: Why did your Government decrease it?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier said it was a pastoral lease under the provisions of the Act, and that they expected to show a profit on the transaction. Then he continues—

I was not responsible for fixing the rent; it was fixed years ago. In my capacity as a private citizen I was entitled to go into this enterprise if I thought fit. Every item of the transaction is in accord with the Labour Party's policy—leasehold tenure of land, and the land to be put to its proper use. The previous Government gazetted a reserve of 40 miles on each side of the line, and in that area land can only be taken up under a special lease. Our block is outside this 40-mile radius, so that, correctly speaking it is not alongside the railway.

Of course it is not; it is in a very much better position. If it was within the 40-mile radius it would be held on a yearly tenure.

The Attorney General: What are you trying to make out?

Hon. J. MITCHELL : The Premier went on to say—

I am of opinion that some of our friends who are making such a noise about my association with these blocks feel a bit sore because they did not take it up themselves. They were just too late, and they seem to think that I beat them.

That is just the point. They were a bit late, and the Premier did beat them, but he had no right to beat them. The secret of it all was that he came into certain information.

The Premier : Which was available to you also.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It is just because the Premier objects to other people taking up land that I call attention to what the Premier has done. In his policy speech before the last election he said that people possessing influence and having access to special information should not take up land. Yet he secures certain information from Chinn, on the strength of which he takes up this land and helps the Powellising Company to do the same. Did they not possess some influence?

The Premier : The conditions of selection are totally different. In the one case it was pastoral lease, which goes to the first applicant, and in the other case it was conditional purchase lease, for which all applications are received together.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : No, they are not.

The Premier : Of course, you do not know anything about land.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It does seem strange that people who attack others for taking up land, who say that those with influence should not have land, turn round when the time arrives and themselves indulge in that practice.

The Attorney General : Is it for you to accuse—one of the biggest landholders in the State?

Hon. J. MITCHELL : The Premier knows, too, that he has this lease until 1928, when, if the land is taken from him, he will get full compensation for all the work he may have done upon it.

The Premier : Only for work which will improve the carrying capacity of the

land. You do not know the Act, and I do not expect you to.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I think they should have reserved this land and consulted Parliament about increasing the rent. Of course, they knew full well that if they did that they would have no chance of getting the selection, because if they went before the board they would have to pay a higher rent and the Ministers would have to resign.

The Premier : I anticipate that if you come back to power you will repurchase this land and cut it up for yourself and family.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : No, I will not.

The Premier : You have done it before and will do it again.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : No. It is not fair to talk like that. If the Premier had a spark of manliness in him—

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member must not make these remarks.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : At any rate, the Premier is now a very large selector, the man who said no man of influence had a right to enter on any land enterprise and become a landholder. There is a good deal that is strange about this, which requires explanation. This plan contains the names of many gentlemen well known to the Premier, and it is very apparent that the Premier, as soon as he found out the quality of this land, got his friends together and they took it up. I do object, because he was a bit too quick with it, and because he had no right to utilise his information in the way he did; he should have made the facts public.

The Attorney General : It was public; why I have been advertising it all through the Esperance railway district.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : It is not near the Esperance railway district.

The Attorney General : Yes it is; it is all part of my electorate, and I want that place settled.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I dare say the hon. member has a selection on Grass Patch.

The Attorney General : It is very good country; I noticed that as I went through.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I am delighted to see these gentlemen becoming squatters,

but in future the public will expect them to treat their brother squatters with some consideration. At any rate, they will not expect them before an election to go to the people and say, 'Look at these land grabbers and these blackguards who have holdings all over the country; let us nationalise their land'; and then, as soon as they get the opportunity, become landholders themselves. It is a very strange thing that the Premier and his powellising friend, who have come together on more than one occasion, should be in this.

The Premier: Get your feet out of the mud.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Now, in connection with the civil service. It is the duty of the Government to see that the service are as contented as possible. I notice the Premier threatened them recently because they dared to vote against his party at the last Federal elections. He is going to make revelations to the public, and the public are going to be dissatisfied with him on the score that he has already done too much for the public service. The service have a perfect right to vote as they please, and a perfect right to expect the Premier to deliver the goods he promised before the last election.

The Premier: I have done so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know the Premier made promises to the service which have not been fulfilled.

The Premier: I deny that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know, for I read the *Civil Service Journal* regularly. After the passing of the last Arbitration Act the Premier told the temporary clerks to go to the Arbitration Court and get an award, in which case he would abide by that award. The temporary clerk did so, and most of them have since got the sack.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And the others have been put on the permanent staff. There is no doubt the Premier promised that if the Arbitration Court should make an award he would pay it. The court did make an award and the Premier has not paid it.

The Attorney General: He has, in every instance.

Mr. Lander: Name an instance in which he has not paid it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I could name hundreds. Will the Premier supply a list of the individuals to whom he is paying the 12s. 6d. set out in the award, and will he tell the House how many men have been made permanent since the award came out?

The Premier: More than half the service were on the temporary staff when you left.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier could give this information, and I think he should. I will be pleased if I find that Ministers have paid the Arbitration Court's award. Hoy can they expect others to respect the Act if they disregard it, and how can they expect the respect of the civil service if they treat them as they have done? I believe the service voted on the strength of the promises made, and in view of the fact that the goods had not been delivered.

The Attorney General: In other words, you are making the speech on hearsay.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There is no chance of getting information from Ministers. One can only get one's information from the man in the street, or from the officials or someone concerned. I am quite certain the Premier will not give it to the House.

The Premier: I will be giving you more information than you want, perhaps.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There is one thing which is pretty far-reaching in its effect, although the Minister thinks it is a small matter, and that is the health regulation, which was laid on the Table when we last met.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Of which you approved.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The effect of the Minister's regulation is to prevent stores in the country from selling patent medicines, babies' food, Cockle's pills, and so on.

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes; unless the regulations are conformed with by the people who put up these medicines and foods, and as they refuse to supply the information which the department requires, the food and medicines will not

be sold. The effect of this will be to hurt the man on the land. Members who represent country districts know that considerable inconvenience is being caused and that no good is being done. I am with the Honorary Minister in his desire to put down the quack and the over-priced patent medicine, and I am with him when he endeavours to protect the public to the fullest possible extent, but it is unnecessary to put up these regulations which prevent the people in the country from getting the drugs and in some cases the babies' food which they require.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Heitmann: You have not heard of one such case.

The Attorney General: You are wrong.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In order that we may be able to test the question will the Minister give the House an opportunity of dealing with the regulations?

The Premier: You are doing so now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, the regulation was laid on the Table at our last meeting and the House adjourned for more than the thirty days which it was necessary for the regulation to lie upon the Table to have the effect of law.

The Attorney General: You can table a motion to-morrow.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It would have no effect. These regulations have the force of law.

The Attorney General: Yes, it would.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Attorney General should advise his colleagues to give the House an opportunity to discuss these regulations.

The Attorney General: You are discussing them now.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I believe a vote of the House would be against this regulation.

The Attorney General: You can move a direct motion.

The Premier: If you get a motion carried we will withdraw them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is not a matter of Government policy and it would be easy for the Honorary Minister to have these regulations regazetted and again laid on the Table.

The Attorney General: You can move a motion to-morrow or at any time you like.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Attorney General will prepare the motion I will be very glad to move it.

The Attorney General: I will be pleased to draft one for you.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know full well that the regulation is in force and nothing that this House can do will bring about its rejection. I have nothing more to say on the Address-in-reply. I can quite understand that I have brought down the wrath of Ministers during my remarks. Of course it was wrong for me to mention the powellising agreement, and it was quite right for the Premier to mention my selection and apparently it was wrong for me to mention the Premier's selection. This might be considered right by Ministers, and it might be right for the Attorney General to have a large selection and it might be wrong for me to have one.

The Attorney General: Are you back on the selection again?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am afraid the public will hardly agree that Ministers are consistent in this respect. I say the Government have done more harm during the twenty months of their administration of the affairs of the country than can be undone in the next five years. They have increased the taxation and they have collected far more revenue than was ever collected before and they are getting less for the expenditure of loan money than was ever obtained before in the history of the State. If the Government would give up their day-labour ideas and get away from their socialistic schemes, the country would be very much better off. When I rose to speak this afternoon I was determined that the country should be made aware of one or two of the matters upon which I have touched. I hope the Premier will be frank when dealing with the matter of powellising sleepers.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. MITCHELL: And that he will realise that the powellising system has not been attacked by me in the course of this debate.

Mr. GEORGE: I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Hon. Frank Wilson: A fair thing. You cannot expect us to go on.

Mr. MALE: I second the motion.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes .. .. .	9
Noes .. .. .	23

Majority against ..	14
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**AYES.**

Mr. George	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Harper	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. F. Willson
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
Mr. Monger	(Teller).

**NOES.**

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Bolton	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Price
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Gardner	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Holman	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lander	Mr. Heltmann
Mr. McDonald	(Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

*As to adjournment of debate.*

Mr. Male: I think on this occasion the Premier might have extended some little courtesy or consideration to the leader of the Opposition and allowed an adjournment.

The Premier: Mr. Speaker, will you permit me to make an explanation?

Mr. Speaker: If the House will let you I will permit it.

The Premier: I do not want to be considered unfair, and I appreciate the fact that it is unfair that the member for Kimberley (Mr. Male) should be asked to speak to-night. It was expected by everybody that the leader of the Opposition would have spoken this afternoon and made his attack on the Government and I would have replied to him either this afternoon or to-morrow. The leader of the Opposition has not acquainted me with the fact that he is not prepared, nor did he request me after the member for

Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) had spoken that he should be granted an adjournment. If he had done so I should have agreed to grant it. I was placed in the position that I did not know whether the course adopted by the Opposition was one of tactics or whether the leader of the Opposition was unprepared. I am willing to give the Opposition a fair opportunity to debate these questions and to make their attacks upon the Government, and if I am in order I will move now for the adjournment of the debate in order that I may not be considered unfair.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I should like to say that I appreciate the Premier's remarks. I certainly did not acquaint him that I would not continue the debate this afternoon as I did not deem it altogether necessary. I know that on several occasions the leader of the Opposition has continued the debate, but as I only returned from the Eastern States yesterday I have not had time to prepare myself in order to make an attack personally on the Government. I interjected across the Chamber to the Premier that he might put up a speaker or grant an adjournment. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, now to accede to his request to allow the debate to be adjourned.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Kimberley has the floor.

Mr. Male: I would like to thank the Premier for the course he has taken. I shall be more than agreeable to move the adjournment of the debate.

I beg to move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Motion passed.

*House adjourned at 8.32 p.m.*