

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 20th July, 1905.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED

By the MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: By-laws under the Railways Act.

QUESTION—MIDLAND RAILWAY LANDS.

MR. S. F. MOORE asked the Premier: In view of the proposed purchase by the Government of the Midland Railway and land concession, how does the Government propose to deal with those men who have purchased land from the Midland Company, partly paid for same, partly completed improvements, but have not yet received a title or the formal sanction of the Government?

THE PREMIER replied: Any person who has entered into a contract with the Midland Railway Co. for the purchase of any area of land should have recourse to that company for the fulfilment of the contract.

QUESTION—RAILWAY RATES, OIL FUEL.

MR. HORAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1. Has he had received any request from the Standard Oil Trust of America or their representatives asking for a concession in railway rates for the conveyance of oil fuel to the goldfields? 2. If so, what action does he propose to take?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1 and 2, No.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by MR. GORDON, leave of absence for one fortnight granted to the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson), on the ground of ill health.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SIXTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous day.

STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER.

THE PREMIER (Hon. H. Daglish): Before the debate on this subject proceeds, I wish to state that the Government accept the second amendment moved to the Address-in-Reply as a motion of no confidence. I wish, therefore, only to point out that in the opinion of the Government it is very desirable that the question at issue, that is the life or death of the Government, in the interests of the country be brought to a final issue as soon as possible. With that object in view, it is our intention to avoid prolonging the debate in any way, except to this extent, that when an attack is made on the Ministry that seems to demand a reply, the giving of that reply shall be purely and simply in defence of ourselves and our administration. We are quite prepared to do all we can to hasten the conclusion of the debate, so that this Government or some other Government can get to the solid business of the country as soon as possible. There is a large amount of work to be done this session. If the Government proposals are to be adopted there is necessarily a large amount of work to be done; and also, if these proposals are replaced by some other proposals to be submitted by the leader of the Opposition or by the member for West Perth. We find that hon. members in most instances are fully aware how they intend to vote on the question. We are prepared to sit to any hour the House may agree to sit to; and I propose, if the debate be continued during next week to any length, to move next Tuesday that the days of sitting be increased, so that the work of the country may be grappled with. I make this statement so that members may help the Government in bringing the debate to a conclusion.

MR. SPEAKER: I wish to direct members' attention to the fact that under the rules of debate the debate must be confined to the question raised in the amendment, which is the only question before the House; but on considering the matter, I have come to the conclusion that probably it will facilitate discussion and shorten debate if I allow some latitude in

discussing the amendment. It may save some debate after the amendment has been disposed of. I hope members will clearly understand that is not to be taken as a precedent, because the rules of debate strictly lay down that the only subjects that can be discussed are the subjects outlined in the amendment. So I hope this will not be taken as a precedent.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS AND EDUCATION (Hon. T. H. Bath) :

As one of the two members who has joined the ship of State as one of its officers, I did expect when taking our seats that we should have to repel a privateering cruise from one side of the House; but I did not think we should have to repel boarders on one side, and, before the debate had gone very far we should have to repel boarders on the other side. I should say the speech delivered last night has made the political situation very interesting, and it has certainly made it appear that with the two attacks from different corners of the House, the Government have little hope in succeeding. As far as I am concerned I wish to say that I attach the greatest importance to the attack that has been delivered by the constitutional Opposition in this House; and before I deal with any remarks made by the member for West Perth—remarks which the Premier has declared he regards as a vote of want of confidence—I wish first to address myself to some of those criticisms and some of those charges levelled against us by those on the Opposition benches. In the first place I suppose I should, with all courtesy, acknowledge the congratulations of the member for Boulder. At the same time, I recognise that the honey merely hid the gall, and that the hon. member expressed astonishment at myself and my colleague on my right being re-elected by our electors. I do not wish to be outdone in courtesy, and I am prepared to reciprocate the surprise should the hon. member for Boulder be re-elected for that constituency. I am prepared to go farther and say, I shall be much more surprised and astonished if, should this expedition against the Treasury bench be successful and the member be called on to participate in the spoils, he enjoys the honour a day longer than the day on which the elec-

tion is to be held. For my part, other than a desire to work off his elephantine facetiousness, I cannot understand what reason the member had to speak. I do say the statements which the member made in regard to the one matter to which I am desirous to direct attention were to a considerable extent made up of inaccuracies.

MR. HOPKINS : Your officers supplied the information.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : It seems to me that the hon. gentleman, when he is not erratic—and he is erratic very often—is melodramatic. He is a sort of political Deadwood Dick, hurling defiance in those high sounding platitudes which, after all, are all sound and fury, signifying nothing. It has been stated in connection with the application for a permit to run a firewood tramway to the south-west and west of Lakeside, that I have done something which I ought not to have done, and that I have been unnecessarily hurried in connection with the application. In order that members may be fully seized of the whole details in connection with this matter, I hope they will bear with me for a time if I have to deal, to some extent, with what is ancient history. Some time in 1901 a private Bill was submitted to Parliament on behalf of the Hampton Plains Company for the purpose of constructing a railway—not a tramway—to their territory. It was to be a railway in every sense of the term, to carry freight and passengers as well as timber; and it was put forward by the attorney for that company, and introduced in Parliament by the late Mr. Justice Moorhead, then member for North Murchison. A great deal of opposition was shown to that Bill, the member for Boulder being one to oppose it, and when the matter was discussed in Parliament, the Bill was defeated. On 26th August, 1902, Mr. Graham Price, as attorney for the company, who before had been interested in the private Bill, applied under the amending Land Act of 1902 and the regulations thereunder for a permit to construct a timber tramway 10 miles long, slightly to the east of south of Lakeside. That application was accompanied by the usual deposit representing one half-year's rent at £2 a mile, the same as paid by other com-

panies operating in a similar manner. The proposal went along and it actually reached this stage, that Dr. Jameson, who was then Minister for Lands, put forward a Cabinet minute recommending that the permit be granted at a rental of £2 per mile per annum. The permit had been signed by His Excellency the Administrator, when the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory), then Minister for Mines, stated in a minute that while he could see no objection to the proposed tramway, he did object that the promise made that before these permits were granted they should be referred to the Mines and Railways Departments had not been carried out, and consequently the matter was held over. Then the matter was referred back by the Premier to the Lands Department. The Under Secretary for Lands explained the way in which the permit had gone forward, and it was then decided to submit it to the Mines Department, the Railway Department, and the Firewood Tramways Advisory Board. The Firewood Tramways Advisory Board told the Minister that they could see no objection to the application being approved, and the board included in the report these remarks :—

To the knowledge of the board, the timber is cut out for a distance of about seven miles from Lakeside, and beyond that there is no danger of the permission clashing with the rights granted to Mr. Teesdale Smith.

Those rights mentioned there, granted to Mr. Teesdale Smith, were the rights to construct a similar firewood tramway to the south-west of Lakeside, which had been passed through, and which it was found afterwards Mr. Teesdale Smith had not proceeded with. The application proceeded so far in regard to the consent to the permit being given to Mr. Graham Price, that he actually called on the Commissioner of Railways (Mr. George) to buy rails, and Mr. George at once jumped to the conclusion, or he said in a minute, that this was a similar proposal to one which had been defeated in Parliament, and he called the attention of his Minister to the fact. He said that, for reasons which they knew, it should not be granted. Those reasons are not set forth, but I am under the impression that at that time they thought it was the first instalment of a Norseman or

Esperance railway, and therefore they did not view the project with approval. When this matter was brought before the Minister for Railways, he passed it on to the Premier. The Premier communicated with the Under Secretary for Lands, and he minuted that the permit was going forward for Cabinet approval. Then the Premier sent a minute to Dr. Jameson, Minister for Lands, telling him to do nothing in the matter until it was talked over. There is no report of the conversation which ensued, but I presume, however, that from that talking over it was decided that the proposal should not go forward, and, as a result, the Minister for Lands instructed the Under Secretary to write refusing the application. Then on 6th March Mr. Graham Price wrote to the Premier protesting against the refusal, and pointing out the difference between this application and the Hampton Plains Railway, a difference which should have been evident to those who were dealing with the matter, but a difference which the Commissioner of Railways would not or could not see. Mr. Graham Price in that letter also referred to the fact that a similar application had been granted to Mr. Teesdale Smith, member of Parliament, and in the course of his letter he used the following significant language :—

Indeed, if one had not every confidence in your Government individually and collectively, such refusals would tend to give the impression that the regulations governing these applications had been drafted and approved for the exclusive use of a certain section of the community, and that one of the privileges of an M.P. is to be able to obtain permission for an undertaking which is denied a private citizen.

Then the Premier (Mr. James) wrote asking for information *re* this permit to Mr. Teesdale Smith. He said he had never heard of it before. On 10th March the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) first appears in the file as Minister for Lands, and he wrote the following minute :—

The Hon. the Premier.—You will remember the late Mr. Moorhead introducing a private Bill to authorise the construction of a railway from Lakeside into the Hampton Plains territory. I was one of those chiefly responsible for its being defeated. The reasons which actuated me, and I think other members, was because it is in opposition to the settled railway policy of the State. 2, Mr. H.

T. Smith, M.L.A., has been granted the right to construct a tramline from Lakeside south as shown in folio 26 (tramline). No objection was raised to Smith's application, and I take it that those persons who objected to the railway concession would offer no objections to the application of Price. 3, There is a distinct difference between a wood tramway of which Parliament has approved, and a railway concession of which no person has approved. 4, The Commissioner for Railways states that the line is practically the same as the one proposed in Parliament, and it was thrown out. I think I have explained the difference. Continuing, Mr. George states that the effect of this tramline would be to take away freight from the other portions of the system. Whilst that may be true, is it reasonable to ask the mining companies to carry timber 40 or 50 miles when a good supply is in close proximity? [MR. HOPKINS: Hear, hear, that was my argument the other night.] 5, The Tramways Board recommended this application, and I indorsed their finding.

The Tramways Board recommended that application at £2 per mile, and the hon. gentleman indorsed their finding.

MR. HOPKINS: I say nothing about the rental there. The rental is not mentioned.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You say you indorsed their finding, and if so you indorsed it with regard to the rental.

MR. HOPKINS: The rental is not referred to in that minute.

MR. N. J. MOORE: Is the £2 per mile part of the regulation?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes. The rate charged on all tramways.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The minimum. I admit it was the rate that was charged.

MR. N. J. MOORE: Laid down in the regulations?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Laid down in the regulations, and the rate fixed for every timber concession elsewhere; but I wish to point out to the member for Boulder that he agreed to the finding of the board to grant that tramway at £2 per mile.

MR. HOPKINS: Pardon me; I never mentioned £2 a mile.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member agreed to grant it under regulation.

MR. HOPKINS: The hon. gentleman knows the file discloses something different.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have the file, and will place it on the table.

MR. HOPKINS: Your chief promised to place it on the table on Tuesday last.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Premier wrote to the Minister for Lands:—

The concession granted to Mr. Smith appears to have been granted before we decided that applications should come before Cabinet. The fact of that concession being made strengthens the position of Mr. Price. 2, Now that Mr. Price's application is being reconsidered, the matter should be referred again to (1) the Mines and (2) the Commissioner of Railways, for report. 3, When these reports are to hand, Cabinet must reconsider the question as to the rent to be charged. These valuable concessions should not be granted for mere nominal sums. In any case, when permission is granted, the full length of the line allowed should be specified; extensions should be controlled.

MR. HOPKINS: The whole of which was the outcome of a Cabinet discussion.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The whole of which was the outcome of the intervention of the Premier.

MR. HOPKINS: That is your assertion.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is my impression of the matter. I say that the hon. member was prepared to grant it for £2 per mile.

MR. HOPKINS: Not so.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This matter was brought forward, and the question of the increased rental was considered.

MR. HOPKINS: Not so.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This the Minister for Lands amended as follows:—

Re tramway from Lakeside and the application of Mr. Graham Price. Will you please peruse pages 13, 14, and 15, making your observations and pass on to Minister for Railways.

Mr. Gregory, then Minister for Mines, stated:—

I agree with you that this application is not at all similar to the Bill introduced into Parliament for the construction of the Hampton Plains Railway. This is for a timber tramway only, and the fact that it is in the interests of the Hampton Plains Company should make no difference to us. My desire is to see timber supplied at the cheapest rate to the mines. I cannot see how an injustice can be done to anyone by granting the right, and therefore indorse my previous recommendation.

That was the Minister for Mines at the time. Then the Commissioner of Railways raised the same objections on the score of interference with the railway.

which he had raised on previous occasions. Eventually he submitted it to his Minister, who approved of the proposal, subject to the railway departmental interests being protected. Then the Minister for Lands (Hon. J. M. Hopkins) sent this minute to Cabinet:—

I think this file has run the gauntlet of numerous departments, and must now face Cabinet. 2, I submit that this tramway cannot be deemed a competitor with the State railway, inasmuch as it does not cater for all time with the timber trade from other parts. 3, The railways have had the first say, and have cut out for a radius almost beyond payable firewood limits. 4, If the Government will not construct the line, then the applicant should be permitted to do so. 5, The mining industry is not capable of bearing too many burdens. In the refusal of this permit we may insure to the railways the wood traffic, but we incur additional expense to the mines, which as a matter of policy may be more hurtful to our industrial progress than the profit on our firewood traffic of to-day is worth. 6, The estimated loss of revenue should have been disclosed. To me it is an unknown quantity. If small in the aggregate, it is unworthy to mention. If, on the contrary, it is large, then so much the better for the mines. 7, This we can regulate by an increased rental.

The Premier (Hon. Walter James) minuted thereon:—

I think that these concessions should be discouraged; and, if granted, should be competed for.

Then the Premier minuted certain terms on which he considered the license might be granted:—

1, License may be granted on terms that no extension over private or Crown lands without consent of Government. 2, License fee per mile to be settled so as to apply to all such concessions. 3, Minister for Lands to look into this matter. 4, Wood to be cut and forest cleared within five miles on either side. 5, Length of line to be settled by Minister so as to end two miles within forest. 6, All timber to be carried over Government Railways from Lakeside to destination. 7, License fee to be payable on whole mileage whether Crown lands or private.

These terms were submitted to the Minister for Lands (Hon. J. M. Hopkins), who sent them to his Under Secretary with this minute:—

Please note, and order that the conditions enumerated by Cabinet are added to the deed empowering the construction of this tramway. 2, We must go into the question of fees for this tramway, which is to be at per mile, whether over Crown lands or private estates. I am disposed to think that the rates charged

have been in some instances very light, that is compared with the value of the concession. Then there were some returns in regard to the quantity of timber and the revenue per mile likely to be derived by the State. These are estimated by the Minister as follows:—

Wood-cutters' licenses, £4 7s. 9d.; wood-carters' ditto, 5s. 2d.; rent of tramway, £2. Total, £6 12s. 11d.

So even in that minute the Minister seemed to regard £2 as the rental.

MR. HOPKINS: That was the fixed rent charged up to that period, and the hon. member knows it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have already said that I know it.

MR. HOPKINS: Then why misrepresent me?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I say that the Minister was ready to grant the concession at £2 per mile. After some communications between the Minister, Under Secretary, and Forest Ranger Kelso, the Under Secretary was instructed to proceed with the application at a rental fee of £20 per mile, and payment of an application fee for inspection or survey. If terms not accepted, concession to be submitted to competition.

MR. HOPKINS: Who wrote that minute which you are reading?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is not a minute: it is the result of the communications of the forest ranger, the Under Secretary, and the Minister.

MR. GREGORY: It must be signed by somebody.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; this is my abstract. I could read all the minutes; but do not wish to tire the House and to take up too much time by reading from the file a lot of minutes not applicable to the issue. Then Mr. Graham Price wrote—

MR. HOPKINS: Is that a *précis*, or is it a file you are reading from?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am reading from my notes—Mr. Graham Price wrote asking if a mistake had not been made in fixing the rent at £20 per mile instead of £2. And when informed that it was £20 per mile he refused to proceed, and the permit was cancelled. Meanwhile, during these negotiations the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company also applied for a permit to construct a firewood tramway in the same

direction as that for which permission had been granted to Mr. Teesdale Smith, and which had not been proceeded with by him. The length of the proposed tramway was 20 miles in a south-westerly and westerly direction along the lines of the tramway the permit for which had previously been granted to Teesdale Smith. Mr. Graham Price lodged an objection on the basis that Mr. Smith's line covered the same ground as his application. The Lands officers said no portion of Teesdale Smith's proposed route covered the same ground as that of Mr. Price. The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), then Minister for Lands, ordered that this application should proceed in the usual course, that is it was to be referred, as decided in Cabinet, to the Tramways Advisory Board, to the Mines Department, and to the Commissioner of Railways. It was referred to the Advisory Board, who approved of it, and stated that the application did not clash with Mr. Graham Price's. The Commissioner of Railways again objected. At this stage, the applicants, who had met with some difficulty in regard to their tramway in the Broad Arrow district, had fixed that matter up; and they decided not to proceed with the proposal, and the application fee was returned to them. [MR. GREGORY: Was the application withdrawn?] There was no notice of withdrawal. I shall come to that later on. Anyhow, it was practically withdrawn, because the department returned the fee. Then on 24th May of this year the same applicants, the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company, applied to have their application of November, 1903, reinstated, and relogged their deposit. The Hon. J. M. Drew, the present Minister for Lands, minuted the application for attention by the Under Secretary, who asked whether it was necessary to again send it to the Tramways Board who had previously approved, and to the Commissioner of Railways who had previously disapproved of it. In the interval I took over the portfolio of Lands, and the matter came before me. I decided that the application could not be reinstated; and I wrote this minute to the Under Secretary for Lands:—

I can see no provision in the regulations for reinstating an application, and therefore the

Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company should be written to stating that a fresh application in terms of the Act of 1902 should be lodged. It would be as well also to ask for the more definite description of the route to be taken, as requested by Tramways Board, vide page 18. It would save unnecessary delay to intimate to the Tramways Board, Mines, and Railways, that application in terms of that withdrawn has been made. I would like to see file re application mentioned by Mr. Graham Price on page 4. I understand that it was not only for a line in a different direction, but also for different objects, and that the two applications are not on similar lines. I presume that it will be as well to submit application to Commissioner for Railways again, although it is difficult to understand how the additional traffic is going to make the Boulder line more of a white elephant than it is stated to be.

There was a slight error there, where I stated I understood this proposal was for objects different from those of Mr. Graham Price. I was confounding Mr. Price's application for a firewood tramway permit with the private Bill for a Hampton Plains railway. Up to that time I did not know of Mr. Price's application for a permit for a firewood tramway.

MR. GREGORY: Mr. Price made no application for a railway.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: He was attorney for the Hampton Plains Company. He was concerned in the private Bill. That was where the mistake was made, because Price's name did not actually occur in connection with the Hampton Plains Railway proposal. The proposal had to be introduced by a private Bill; and the Bill was introduced by Mr. Moorhead.

MR. GREGORY: I do not think Price was the company's attorney at that time.

MR. RASON: The attorney was Daniels.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Price came to Perth, and gave evidence on its behalf. As a result of my minute, the applicants for the permit had to advertise it in the usual way—by advertisements in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and by notice at the warden's court—in order that objections might be lodged. The matter was then submitted to the Timber Tramways Application Board, who dealt with it as follows, in a minute to the Under Secretary for Lands:—

1. Application No. 25/802, by the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Co. for permission to construct a timber tramway, commencing

at Lakeside and running slightly west of south eight miles, thence south-westerly four miles, thence west eight miles; total, 20 miles.

2. This application is identical with a previous one, No. 16/802, made by the same company in November, 1903, a more definite description of the route being now furnished.

3. Members of the board, Messrs. Maughan, Kelso, and Ellis, met to consider this application on the 30th ult., as soon as possible after the prescribed time under Regulation 6 allowed for objections.

4. An objection was lodged by Mr. E. Graham Price, who states that the route covered by this proposal is almost identical with that of his application No. 8/802 of the 26th August, 1902, and granted conditionally on an annual rental of £20 per mile being paid for the whole length of line, instead of the usual charge of £2 per mile.

5. It will be seen by plan on page 13 that the routes of these applications are far from being identical, the starting point only being the same; but other conditions are similar, and justified in the board's opinion Mr. Price's contention that the rental fixed in each case should stand in this; or that if more lenient conditions may now be imposed, he, as first applicant in that locality, should be allowed to renew his application on an equal footing with this one.

6. With regard to an impression of the Hon. the Minister for Lands, as expressed on page 34, the board can find nothing to indicate that Mr. Price's application, 8,802, was made with any different object to this one, 25,802; and in letters pages 15, 18, 23 of the file 10104/02, it is clearly recognised as purely a firewood proposition.

I have already stated that I confounded this with the Hampton Plains railway application.

7. As in the previous application, 16/802, and recorded on page 18 of this file, the board would recommend that this application, No. 25/802, by the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company be granted. At the same time in the event of more liberal terms being decided upon than were granted to Mr. Price, it is considered that he should be afforded opportunities which will leave him at no disadvantage as regards rights to construct a tramline, and to junction with the Government line at Lakeside, should he be prepared to renew his application.

8. The board recognises that a timber tramway licensee in this locality would have some advantage over the older-established companies who are farther afield in the matter of length of haulage over their own lines; and on this account it may be considered that some benefit should accrue to the State revenues by charging a higher rental than the customary £2 per mile.

9. The haulage cost over the 46 miles of Kurrawang Company line is authoritatively stated to vary between 4d. and 6d. per ton, equivalent to one-eighth of a penny per mile.

This might mean an advantage in favour of this proposition (20 miles) of, say, 20 per cent. or 1d. per ton, which on the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company's present operations, 350 tons per day, amounts to about £450 per annum.

10. On these figures, £20 per mile may not seem an extortionate rental. However, taking into consideration the heavy initial expenses of sidings, weighbridge, etcetera, and constructing line through rough lake country, the first eight or 10 miles of which are timberless, also the probability of the cost of haulage being higher on a newly-established line, it is submitted that the rate of rental per mile should not be unduly raised.

11. The board would call attention to the discrepancy of the cost of haulage over the Kurrawang line as quoted above and the Government rate of 1d. per mile.

12. The Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company state (page 30) that they are unable to compete against other timber companies, on account of having to use an extra 10 miles of Government line—a matter of 1½d. to the Kurrawang Company on their lines.

Then the Under Secretary for Lands informs his Minister that the Mines Department, the Commissioner of Railways, and the Timber Tramways Board had the matter referred to them; that the Under Secretary for Mines raises no objection, and that the Commissioner of Railways withdraws the objection he had previously raised.

MR. HOPKINS: Was that statement correctly telephoned by your clerk, that the Mines Department had approved of it?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will deal with that afterwards.

MR. GREGORY: Did it go before the Minister for Mines?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

MR. HOPKINS: You said "the Under Secretary for Mines." The other night the Minister for Mines denied the statement.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member (Mr. Hopkins) was speaking of the ex-Minister for Mines (Hon. R. Hastie).

MR. HOPKINS: I did not specify which Minister for Mines, except by saying that your clerk telephoned to me that the application was approved by the Minister for Mines: I did not know his name.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I may say that the course adopted is to minute these applications to the Ministers of the various departments. I do

not know whether it reached the Minister personally, or the Under Secretary. [MR. GREGORY: The jacket will tell you.] I do know that the matter was submitted, and that it came back from the Mines Department, stating that the department had no objection.

MR. HOPKINS: That is right. Practically, it was approved by the Mines Department.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was. The minute of the Under Secretary for Lands continues:—

The Timber Tramways Board approves generally of the proposal; but is apparently of the opinion that the rent should be increased beyond the minimum of £2 per mile which is usually charged in these cases. See chairman's report, pages 44 to 47.

2. I never could understand why such a high rental was decided upon in the case of Mr. Graham Price's application; but as £20 per mile was fixed for the rent in his particular case, see pages 56 and 57 of 10104/02, and he states it was only on that account he did not proceed with his application, I think either the same rental should be charged in this case or he should be given an opportunity of renewing his application, *vide par.* 5 of the chairman's report.

3. I understand that Mr. Hopkins made a request by telephone yesterday that you would give him an opportunity of seeing you before deciding this matter.

The Commissioner of Railways then minuted:—

The company in question have undertaken to give me a bond which will deal with the objections this department had; and this being so, I shall no longer object to this application being granted, subject to such bond being executed. The Crown Law Department have this in hand, and I suggest that Mr. Sayer should draft conditions of the permit for the tramway in order that that railway bond and the permit referred to may be on all fours. [MR. HOPKINS: That is correct. The telephone message was correct.] The question affecting the railways is serious and its interests must be safeguarded, or our revenue may be materially affected.

Then I minuted as follows:—

In view of the fact that no objection has been raised to the proposal by the Mines and Railway Departments, and that the Tramways Advisory Board has approved, I am prepared to recommend the granting of permit at a rental of £20 per mile, subject of course to the stipulation set forth and to the bond agreed upon with the Railway Commissioner. No objection on the part of any party has been lodged by Mr. Hopkins in the specified manner and time, so that I do not see that we have anything to deal with in the nature of a valid

objection. Put forward a Cabinet minute in the above terms.

MR. HOPKINS: Quite so; it was absolutely a matter of policy.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Boulder was the one who, in the discussion on the Land Act Amendment Bill 1902, was instrumental in getting this provision in the regulation for having a proper time for the application to be advertised so that those who objected could have an opportunity of doing so. [MR. HOPKINS: Quite so.] The hon. member had an opportunity as Minister for Lands to carry that into effect; and in this case, if he had any objection to the tramway he should have taken advantage of the provision which he was instrumental in having inserted in the regulations.

MR. HOPKINS: So I would have done had we proposed to build the Norseman Railway.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I shall deal with the hon. gentleman's remarks about the Norseman Railway in a moment or two. This question of the Norseman Railway cropped up, and I received an undertaking which the applicants were willing to have inserted in the permit. It was as follows:—

We undertake, if permission be granted to us to lay our tramline south and south-west of and connect with the Government Railways at Lakeside, should the proposed railway to Norseman start from Lakeside or Boulder instead of Coolgardie, to apply to the Commissioner for permission to lift our tramline from Lakeside and connect with the railway at a point on that line to be agreed upon.

MR. HOPKINS: Of course, in the meantime they had taken away the timber that the Norseman Railway would carry.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: In connection with the permit which the member for Boulder was willing to grant, that line would take the exact direction which the proposed railway from Lakeside to Norseman would follow; but in regard to the timber country tapped by this tramway, even supposing the Norseman Railway were built from Lakeside, they would need to tap the country by a tramway. Where the Railway Department for the three or four miles of railway line from Lakeside to the mines will get a minimum rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per mile, they would get only the same amount for 16 miles of railway, I cannot

see the advantage to the Government in carrying the wood over 16 miles on the Norseman line, if it existed, when they would have an increased haulage and increased cost, and would only get the same amount per ton of traffic for 16 miles as they would for the three or four miles of railway from Lakeside. The proposed tramway is altogether off the direction of the Norseman Railway, but even if it were in that direction they would have to build a tramway to tap the wood country. The hon. member referred to the insincerity of the Government in regard to the Norseman Railway. He asks, "Would the Government think of granting this tramway permit to compete with the railway if they were sincere?" The hon. member was returned to Parliament pledged to the Esperance Railway. We know that on the discussion with regard to that railway the hon. member strongly supported it. I have also here the debate in connection with the motion made by the hon. member for Dundas in regard to building the Norseman Railway. It was moved on the 23rd September, 1903, before this application came forward or was finally decided.

MR. HOPKINS: The hon. member did not frame the works policy of the James Government. That Government was not dictated to by the cross-benches.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Dundas moved the following motion:—

That in the opinion of this House the development of the Norseman Goldfields warrants railway communication, and that a Bill with this end in view should be introduced during the present session.

An amendment was moved to that by Mr. Higham, the then member for Fremantle and Government Whip:—

That all the words after "communication and" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"That such a work should be taken into early consideration."

The motion then read:—

That in the opinion of this House the development of the Norseman Goldfields warrants railway communication, and that such a work should be taken into early consideration.

That motion as amended was carried in this House absolutely without dissent, that the building of the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman should have early consideration. The member for Boulder supported the motion. If he

was sincere in his support or in his advocacy of the Esperance Railway, it was his clear duty, when the question of granting a permit to a railway which would run in opposition to that line such as he proposed to grant was under discussion, to oppose it.

MR. HOPKINS: So he would have done had we proposed to build the Norseman Railway. Unfortunately the Government did not propose to do it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member before he joined the James Government supported the building of the Norseman Railway.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes; and he still does.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That motion, carried without dissent, practically committed the Government of the day to the Norseman Railway.

MR. HOPKINS: Quite so.

MR. THOMAS: And the pledge was given that the Bill would come in straight away during the next session.

MR. HOPKINS: By whom?

MR. THOMAS: By the Premier (Mr. James).

MR. HOPKINS: Where is that reported?

MR. THOMAS: The promise was given to me.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: After the members on all sides of the House gave absolutely their approval without dissent that the building of the railway should be taken into early consideration, if the hon. gentleman was true to his advocacy of the railway he should have opposed the granting of that permit and not allowed it to go any farther.

MR. HOPKINS: What have you done? Have you granted it or refused it? Kindly answer that.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Since then the hon. gentleman has come forward and based a case on telephone messages. I think it was an unworthy sneer on the part of the hon. member when he inferred that I was unapproachable and that he could not interview me on the question. The hon. member referred to a facetious manner to a conference we had at the Lands Office at the time concerning the hon. member's Land Bill. The hon. member talks about "his Bill." It is absolutely a consolidation of existing measures.

MR. HOPKINS: It is nothing of the kind. There are numerous additions.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot see it.

MR. HOPKINS: No one expected the hon. member would see it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot see now, so far as the Bill is concerned, where the hon. gentleman made any material alterations.

MR. HOPKINS: When it comes before the House I shall have pleasure in explaining them.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. gentleman states that I was busy at this conference, and had no time to attend to him.

MR. HOPKINS: I did not mean it to your disadvantage. I only offered it in explanation.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Whatever messages were sent by telephone to the member for Boulder I do not know; but so far as that proposal is concerned, I gave it every consideration, and I gave ample time to allow the fullest opportunity for objections, and I safeguarded the interests of the State in every way possible.

MR. HOPKINS: And you granted the permit.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Since then we have had the hon. member making the assertion that, as a result of his letter to the Premier, the matter was deferred. The matter was deferred simply because, when I brought it forward, objections were lodged by the town clerk of Boulder and by wood-carters in the district; and Cabinet considered that matters should not be decided until we had the whole of the objections before us. Thus the matter was deferred. Since then I have fairly been inundated with telegrams from both sides. [**MR. HOPKINS:** So have I.] One wire was to the following effect:—

On behalf of the unemployed wood-carters, strongly urge construction of Lakeside wood line be immediately proceeded with. Two hundred men idle. Hopkins's remarks absolutely without foundation.

MR. HOPKINS: From whom?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. J. M. Smith.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes; one of the shareholders. That is easily explained.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is very easily said, but it is hard to prove.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Mr. Powell, town clerk of Boulder, sent the following telegram:—

Please see Premier re firewood concession. Likely if granted unconditionally to have injurious effect on the interests of district.

In all the wires we have received objecting to this, we have never had their objections set forth, or any reason advanced as to why people objected, or as to how the permit would injure the interests of the district. I should like to know even from the hon. member, who has had the time and opportunity and to whom I gave the opportunity by asking him to come to my office, what his objections really are. If he has any valid objections he should state them.

MR. HOPKINS: Inundated with wires, and only quoting two! Very interesting.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have been told that the granting of this permit would deprive wood-carters of the opportunity of carting wood, and that we would cut out the timber which is practically the only resource they have. So far as this proposed tramway is concerned, for the first eight miles it would go through country absolutely cut out.

MR. HOPKINS: What is the length of the tramway?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Twenty miles. Then for another four miles the timber is very sparse. It is only at the end of the tramway that they would get into a belt of country that really contains any large amount of timber.

MR. HOPKINS: It is usual to extend the mileage as they go.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is infinitely preferable for those who want to have wood taken into Boulder independently, or who want to cut wood on the area, to take advantage of the right they undoubtedly have under the regulations under the Act of 1902 to have their firewood carted on the tramway at rates to be approved of by the Government rather than to cart it that distance. When the hon. member's proposal was before the House, and when it was known that it was likely to be granted, we did not hear these objections as to the firewood tramway preventing the wood-cutters from earning a living or cutting timber on the area. Yet when much of this area nearer the Boulder is

cut out, and when it is proposed to extend the tramway farther out, we hear objections raised that it would deprive wood-cutters of their livelihood. So far as this tramway is concerned it will in no way conflict with the Norseman Railway. Even if it did, I have made provision to protect that railway.

MR. HOPKINS: That is always the story in regard to concessions.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would enable firewood to be supplied to the mines from within reasonable distance, and we would secure a revenue from the tramway of £400 per annum for the 20 miles. It will enable us so far as that district is concerned to employ additional forest rangers to protect the forest interest in that locality. The hon. member cannot in any one particular point out where the matter has been unduly hurried.

MR. HOPKINS: Have you granted the permit, and if so, when?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I told the hon. member the question was deferred in Cabinet. If members have any valid objection to that, if they can raise objections which will stand the light of day, the Cabinet will welcome them and we are prepared to consider them. The hon. gentleman has also something to say about the Government creating new departments, and we heard what he had to say in regard to the question of the correspondence of the Agricultural Department. I will admit right away that the Premier made a mistake when he stated the correspondence from the Agricultural Department had to go through the Lands Department. The very fact that the correspondence came direct from the Agricultural branch to the Minister for Mines showed that he himself constituted it an independent department, and why in the light of this fact accuse us of having done what he himself did?

MR. HOPKINS: I did it for economy; you have done it for lavish expenditure.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member criticised us on the appointment of a Director of Agriculture, yet the hon. gentleman minuted to his Under Secretary to advertise the position at £1,000 a year.

MR. HOPKINS: An independent board did not recommend three persons, one of whom was already engaged at £450.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. gentleman was prepared to pay £1,000 a year, and I say unhesitatingly I do not think the hon. member can deny that he was prepared to pay £1,000 to one of the three gentlemen recommended by the board.

MR. HOPKINS: I think it will be more fair if the hon. gentleman will quote from the file he takes that from.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If that file were here there would be some interesting disclosures made.

MR. HOPKINS: The hon. gentleman knows the file is not in existence.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have the hon. gentleman trying to prove what is absolutely unprovable, because it is untrue. He tried to explain away the election of the member for Leonora and myself in an attempt to show that the Government had lost the confidence of the country.

MR. HOPKINS: I should have amended that by saying the confidence of the caucus.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It appears he had a very lame argument to attempt to prove that the Government had lost the confidence of the country, when only recently two Ministers were returned, one by a majority of two to one in spite of the support granted to his opponent by the member for Menzies.

MR. GREGORY: Yes; 600 votes out of 1,260.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then we have the member for Boulder lecturing us about responsible government. He tried to explain away my unopposed return for Brown Hill because I was branded "Labour." Does the hon. member say that the electors on the goldfields are less intelligent and have less knowledge of politics than the electors in other parts of the State? As far as the goldfields are concerned the electors have as much intelligence to discriminate in political issues as the hon. member has. The member says that because I was branded "Labour" I was returned unopposed for Brown Hill. If the hon. member understands anything about the subject, he must know there must be some deeper significance than the mere fact that I

was branded "Labour," for the electors to return me. If a man is branded "Labour," and his constituents are prepared to return him, there must be something which makes the Labour party acceptable to the electors before they will return him unopposed. As far as the Labour party is concerned, I say that with all the talk of the hon. member about responsible government, he has to go to the Labour Government to learn what responsible and representative government means. We hear the hon. gentleman dilating on responsible government, we have heard it from other members of the Opposition benches, and in their mouths it is an empty shibboleth. In the past we have had responsible government only in name and not in deed. We have had politicians dictating the policy for the electors, instead of the electors defining the policy for the politicians. We have had members returned to represent their electors, and when returned their responsibility has ceased, since their proposals were used merely to get into Parliament and not to be carried into practical effect. I wish to say so far as the Labour party is concerned, the motives which induce it to use the weapons of education and organisation for the purpose of getting the people to decide on great political issues and on what issues they will be united, what minor details shall be cast aside in order to be able to agree on great principles, is the only principle that leads to genuine and true responsible government. When the hon. gentleman talks about responsible government, he does not understand what the term means. I will quote some remarks which Lord Salisbury made on the Reform Bill of 1867. He stated:—

Our theory of government is that on each side of the House there should be men supporting definite opinions, and that what they have supported in Opposition they should adhere to in office; and that every one should know, from the fact of their being in office, that those particular opinions will be supported. If you reverse that, and declare that, no matter what a man has supported in Opposition, the moment he gets into office it shall be open to him to reverse and repudiate it all, you practically destroy the whole basis on which our form of government rests, and you make the House of Commons a mere scrambling-place for office.

MR. HOPKINS: I recited those words in the House the other night.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Does the hon. gentleman mean to say he recited that in the House the other night?

MR. HOPKINS: I did.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then it was a very foolish thing for him to do. The hon. member complimented his leader on his skill at pigeon shooting, but when the hon. member goes out shooting he generally ends in shooting himself and his colleagues. I come to the alleged indictment of the leader of the Opposition. During the recess when the hon. gentleman has been securing a little of the reflected limelight from the overpowering personality of Sir John Forrest, we have heard him wax courageous and say what he was going to do when Parliament met. He made threats of what was going to be done when he met the Government in the House, which made us fear that some terrible indictment was going to be launched. We thought that the hon. gentleman was going to launch a thunderbolt; but instead of Jove with his lightning threatening to destroy us, we have a little urchin with a penny squirt. The attack was altogether abortive; but while the charges the hon. member made against the Government were actually turned against himself, we had some very interesting admissions from the other side. We had the member for Sussex stating that they were united to put us out, and we also heard that member, when the Premier asked what was the policy being put forward or advocated by the leader of the Opposition, and whether there had been any modification of the policy; the member for Sussex stated that there had been a modification of the policy all right. I want to know where the modification of the policy has come in. I want to know how the member for Sussex got from the back cross-bench to cheek-by-jowl with the leader of the Opposition, especially in view of an interview that the member for Sussex had with a representative of the *South-Western News* on April 1st, 1904? I understand the *South-Western News* was a very staunch journalistic supporter of the member for Sussex, and they had an interview with the hon. mem-

ber in which occurred the following remarks:—

Do you intend to contest the seat as a Ministerial or Opposition supporter?—Neither. I shall stand as an independent for this reason: the James Government are in a languishing condition in addition to being none too sincere; the Opposition on the other hand are not a strong body.

I want to know how it is that the member for Sussex, who in April, 1904, was contesting the election, could not support the James Government because they were none too sincere and in a languishing condition, to-day sits alongside the party which contains three or four of those gentlemen who, if the attack is successful, are likely to occupy the Treasury bench. How can the hon. member reconcile his statement then with his position to-day? It has been a very interesting query. When I saw the hon. gentleman come down there, the picture presented to me was that of the leader of the Opposition being the coy maiden and the member for Sussex the persuasive lover. When I read the remarks of the member for Sussex when he was returned to the House, speaking on the Address-in-Reply, and read his remarks to the electors of Sussex when seeking election in 1904, I find out whatever modification there has been in his policy has been a modification in the direction of infinitely greater conservatism than the hon. member was credited with before. In order to bring about this rapprochement the member for Guildford has modified his policy, then I say his modification has been more than a modification, an eradication of his policy root and stump. It seems to me the hon. member for Guildford instead of being the coy maiden is rather the unfortunate lady who has been deprived of all opportunities in life, now is intent on securing a husband and has chased the member for Sussex until she has captured him. Now I want to refer to the opinions of the member for Sussex (Mr. Frank Wilson) at the time of the election of 1901, and his opinions at the present time. The Address-in-Reply was moved by the then member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner), and seconded by the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), and in the speeches of those two gentlemen we heard what the Government was going to do, amongst other matters, in

regard to the classification of the civil service. I know how eloquent the member for Boulder waxed when he spoke about finding the public service of this State the inheritance or rather the patrimony of the rich, and leaving it the inheritance of the poor. We know he was a member of the Government of the time which protested it was going to have civil service reform, but which went out of office without accomplishing that, and which left it to the Labour Government to carry that into practical effect.

MR. GREGORY: But you do not carry it into effect.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We find in regard to the Governor's Speech, which included amongst other proposals a Conciliation and Arbitration Act, civil service reform, workers' compensation, and other measures, the member for Sussex at that time stating:—

I for one admit at once that I am not disappointed with the terms of this Speech. I go farther. I should like to know how any Ministry could produce a Speech on different lines from that recently delivered by His Excellency.

He went on to say:—

I was particularly pleased with several items in the Speech, because they are practically what I myself advocated on the hustings and in the manifesto which I published to my electors at the general election.

Then the member for Sussex was soliciting the suffrages of the community of Perth, which was somewhat of a democratic community, and therefore he had to advocate democratic opinions. We find him, therefore, agreeing to support the Address-in-Reply which was moved at the time Mr. Leake was Premier; but when we find him at Sussex wooing the electors, in what we may term a conservative constituency, we find him altogether departing from the principles which he had advocated at that time.

[MR. FRANK WILSON: A democratic constituency, not conservative at all.] If it is a democratic constituency, I would like to know how it ever returned the member for Sussex. We find the hon. gentleman in this speech was against State enterprise from beginning to end. We find him railing against the Arbitration Act; railing against Labour legislation; railing against the workers; although he did at the time claim that he was a greater defender of the workers than

some of us in this House. [MR. FRANK WILSON: Have I not been so?] We find him referred to in the *South-Western News* of June 17th as having stated in a speech on June 12th—

It had been said that he was no friend of the worker. He asked who was their friend?—the agitator of the A. J. Wilson type who lived on the men, or the man who, like himself, had paid hundreds of thousands of pounds in wages.

It appears to me that if the hon. gentleman has not lived on the other side he has had a pretty considerable addition to his income from the other side as advocate in the Arbitration Court. So when it comes to accusing members on this side of living on the workers, we can accuse him to a certain extent at least of living on the other side. But while the modifications of the member for Sussex are of an interesting nature, the modifications of the leader of the Opposition are of a much more interesting nature still, because we find that the hon. gentleman when returned in 1901 was pledged to the Labour platform; absolutely pledged.

MR. RASON: That statement has once before been made in this House. I said it was incorrect, and I asked that it be withdrawn. I ask that this statement, being equally incorrect, shall be withdrawn.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Would the hon. gentleman like me to give members proof of the statements before I withdraw them?

MR. RASON: Being pledged to the Labour platform means, as I understand English, that I signed the Labour platform. If my friend wishes to quote the speeches I made to my electors, I trust he will quote them, not parts of them, and will give the sense of every paragraph that he reads, the whole sense, and by that I shall be quite content to be judged.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member has asked me to read the speeches in full. I have no desire to go to the speeches of the hon. member. I will go to the questions upon which he pledged himself to the Labour party. [MR. RASON: Hear, hear.] This is the pledge which the hon. member gave to the Labour party on the Labour platform. A letter was sent by the Coastal Trades and Labour Council, asking him to express his opinions on the platform

submitted to him. It was as follows:—

A, Redistribution of seats on a population basis. B, Reform of the Legislative Council. C, One adult one vote. D, Compulsory arbitration (amendment of present Act). E, Tax on unimproved land values. F, The mining laws of 1895 to be reverted to. G, Stoppage of the farther alienation of Crown lands. H, Old age pensions. I, Factories Act.

In reply the hon. member wrote as follows:—

SIR,—

April 24, 1901.

Your letter of the 9th inst. only reached me this morning, it having been placed in Mr. Illingworth's pigeonhole instead of mine. I hasten at once to reply, and hope you will kindly take steps to remedy any action which may have been taken through an apparent neglect for which I am in no way to blame.

My answers, to which I pledge myself:—

(a.) Yes—on an equitable but not purely population basis, although mainly on that principle. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] (b.) Yes—with a view to rendering it more liberal and more amenable to public wishes. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] (c.) Unreservedly yes. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] (d.) Yes—so as to liberalise and include all Government employees. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] (e.) Shall support as strongly as I can. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] (f.) Not in favour of the mining law of 1895 being wholly reverted to, but would assist the alluvial miner and prospector. Am in favour of the appointment of mining boards. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] (g.) Favour the stoppage of farther alienation of Crown lands. (h.) In favour of old age pensions. (i.) In favour of the early introduction of a Factories Act. I do sincerely trust that I shall not be allowed to suffer through what has been no fault of mine in lateness of my reply, and that I can count upon the assistance of your party—a party that will always have a friend and advocate in your obedient servant, C. H. RASON.

MR. RASON: By way of explanation I desire to say this, that every word that is contained in that reply I should repeat now under the same circumstances.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Non alienation of Crown lands?

MR. RASON: This is by way of explanation. My friend should turn also to the addresses I have made to my electors upon these very subjects, where the non-alienation of lands is dealt with. If he does that he will find that I dealt with new goldfields towns that might spring up in the future.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member says now that he did not swallow the platform because a few splinters stuck in his throat.

MR. RASON: You broke the whole platform.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: As far as the hon. member was concerned, that was his attitude in 1901.

MR. RASON: It is now.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We heard him say the other night to the Premier that he was not in favour of a State old age pensions scheme, and yet I say that involves an old age pension scheme.

MR. RASON: It does nothing of the sort.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was the platform at that time of the State Labour party. That was the platform referred to the member for Guildford and to which he subscribed himself.

MR. RASON: The hon. member will persist in misrepresentation. The question asked me was whether I was in favour of old age pensions. [THE MINISTER FOR MINES: By the State Labour party.] It does not say by the State Labour party. Let us have the absolute truth. A question was asked me whether I was in favor of old age pensions. To that I replied that I was, and I am. I have said repeatedly that the system should be a Commonwealth system and I repeat it now. [MR. SCADDAN: Did you say it then?] I was not asked.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: As far as the hon. gentleman is concerned, he may say that he meant the Commonwealth old age pension scheme; but I say that at that time the Commonwealth had only just been initiated.

MR. RASON: What have I always said?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The matter was referred to the hon. member by the secretary of the Trades and Labour Council. He was asked his opinion of the State Labour platform, not the Commonwealth Labour platform. This was said in connection with the platform of 1901. The hon. member must have known that he was speaking of the State Labour platform. We have the hon. member stating that he still adheres to these principles, and yet we find the hon. member in the *West Australian*, 24th May, 1905, making the following remark:—

In regard to the taxation proposals and the suggested new legislation, I can only briefly

summarise. My opinion is that what Western Australia requires—what is absolutely necessary for its advancement if not for its salvation—is a period of legislative rest. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] We want administration rather than legislation. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] We want to reinstate that confidence which has been rudely shaken by the fact that no one could tell what would happen next. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] With reference to taxation, I say but this: In my opinion we are already an over-taxed community—[Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.]—and the imposition of additional burdens should be deferred as long as possible. [Mr. Rason: Hear, hear.] I refuse to admit that a revenue approximating four millions a year is not sufficient, wisely administered, to meet all the requirements of a people vastly in excess of our present number—only a quarter of a million.

MR. RASON: Your chief said the same.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. gentleman tells us in one breath that he still favours a land tax, and then we have heard him in the next breath confirming the statement that he has made, that there should be no new taxation. Then we find him, in 1901, courting the sympathies and support, if not affection, of the Labour party at that time.

MR. RASON: He never got it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I want to know what has made the hon. member go back on his pals the way he has done? I want to know what has made him desert them in the way he has done? We find him at one time supporting organisations, moving for their inclusion in the Arbitration Act, and now he says this:—

As a thinking man, he did often wonder what was to be the end of the countless associations and organisations and counter-organisations that they saw growing not only in Western Australia but throughout the Commonwealth. They used to get along very well without associations either of employers or employees. He thought it was regrettable that that good state of affairs no longer existed. He believed it would be infinitely better if the employer was left to give, as he believed in 99 cases out of 100 he would give—the wages that a man was honestly worth—(cheers)—if it were left to the employee to earn as much as he honestly could.

It was the Builders and Contractors' Association meeting. Naturally they cheered the remarks of the hon. member.

MR. RASON: I think the hon. member is making a mistake. It was somewhere else.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member was speaking at the Builders and Contractors' meeting.

MR. RASON: Well, I repeated it elsewhere.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Now he states that these organisations he supported so enthusiastically before are absolutely useless, and that all the workman has to do is to go along and rely on the benevolent disposition of his employer to secure justice. I want to know if that is an honest change or modification or eradication of the hon. member's doctrine of 1901, or if these are his sentiments of the present day? [**MR. RASON:** Neither one nor the other.] Now we come to the question of preference to unionists. I remember when the Arbitration Bill was going through last Parliament there was no opposition raised by the hon. gentleman in regard to the question of preference to unionists. At that time it was part of the policy put forward by the James Government; and if anyone cares to look up the records of *Hansard* he will find that the provision for preference to union employers and preference to unionists was passed absolutely without dissent. There was not even an objection raised by the member for Sussex.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Was I here at that time?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I believe the hon. member had been removed temporarily from the political sphere at that time.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Then why do you make the charge?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I withdraw the charge; but I know that when the hon. member was discussing the question of the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill on the Address-in-Reply, he was then not so determined in his opposition to preference to unionists as he is at the present day.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Can you prove that?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It seems to me that the hon. member must have ocular demonstration from *Hansard*. He was not then so emphatic as he is at present. The hon. gentleman was to a large extent on a fence in regard to the question.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Never.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: He did not know whether he was going over this way or that way.

MR. RASON: That seems to be a common complaint.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; on that side of the House. As to the principle of arbitration, the member for Sussex gave his adhesion to it. He expressed the belief that if it were possible to bring about a system by which, instead of having disastrous strikes, we could have some court or judicial body to decide the issue between them, it would be an advantage not only to employers and employees but to the general community. [**MR. FRANK WILSON:** And I think that to-day.] I give the hon. gentleman credit for those worthy sentiments; but what is the good of his subscribing to those worthy sentiments if to-day he is prepared to oppose principles which are necessary to carry that system to the fullest extent?

MR. FRANK WILSON: I am prepared to abolish your court, because it cannot compel the men to work. It has utterly failed.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member seems to have departed from his principles on that point. He seems to have departed from the commendable view that it was desirable, if an industrial conflict should take place meaning so much loss to the community, and bringing disaster to the State, it should be settled by some more civilised method than the barbarous method of strikes. If the hon. gentleman has not modified his opinions in that respect, he has great cause to quarrel with the reports of his speeches when he was seeking the suffrages of the Sussex electors. We have also had from the leader of the Opposition certain statements or attacks on the Government in regard to the question of advances, when really they were attacks on the clerical work carried out in the Treasury department, or attacks on the ability and the qualifications of the officers employed in the Treasury. It was really not a reflection on the Treasurer, but upon the Under Treasurer.

MR. RASON: Not at all. I was dealing with the inaccuracy of returns, and I proved it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We find the hon. gentleman, when dealing

with the question of the Address-in-Reply last session, in reply to an attack made by the member for Coolgardie on the financial administration of the State, making this statement:—

Before the hon. member makes rash and bold statements to the contrary, he should reflect that there is such a person, such an individual in this State as an Auditor General, whose duty it is to see that the figures are absolutely correct. In regard to the Treasury he should remember that the gentleman who is permanently head of the Treasury (I refer to the Under Treasurer) has been in the service of Western Australia for 40 years, and has been permanent head of the Treasury since 1884, and is a gentleman deservedly respected, and one whose opinion is valued, and whose work is acknowledged throughout the whole of Western Australia to be good. Does the hon. member imagine that any Treasurer or any politician could, by any argument or inducement held out to such an Under Treasurer as that, have figures manipulated? I do not know who is to succeed me in the office of Treasurer; but whoever does, I hope that he will never venture to suggest to the Under Treasurer that he has to manipulate figures. If he does he will be considerably surprised at the result.

The hon. member, in making the statements he did in reference to these advances, returns, or manipulations of figures, makes an attack on the very officer he defended on the Address-in-Reply last year.

MR. RASON: If that impression has got abroad, I take the earliest opportunity of correcting it. What I said in regard to the Under Treasurer last year, if I had the opportunity I would repeat now. My charge was not against the Under Treasurer, but against the Treasurer; and let there be no mistake on that point.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have had an attack by the member for Perth on the pledge of the Labour party. The Labour party do not hold the idea, nor did they ever hold it, that the mere fact of any member coming into Parliament signing a pledge will keep that man straight. We say, as far as the sincere man is concerned, that he does not require to sign anything to keep him straight; and that so far as the insincere man is concerned, all the pledges in the world would not keep him straight; but we say that the signing of the pledge is merely black and white evidence of the fact that the hon. member has subscribed

to certain principles. We have found the necessity of it in the past. We have had members of Parliament who have departed from principles they advocated on the hustings, and yet when the time comes, because there has been no authentic record or reliable statement of the fact that they were pledged, they have always been able to explain away the issue and to say, "We did not do this, or we did not do other things." I have only to refer to the leader of the Opposition in regard to this matter. Supposing that we did not have these documents which I have read to-day, it would have meant that the withdrawal of the Premier, the withdrawal of the member for North Perth, and the withdrawal of the member for Collie would have had to stand, because the mere denial of the hon. member would have to be accepted, and those gentlemen would have had to withdraw statements which they absolutely knew to be true.

MR. RASON: I wish the hon. member would try to adhere to the truth.

MR. SPEAKER: You must not say that.

MR. RASON: I withdraw; but any man who is being continually misrepresented must feel some little warmth of feeling. I should not have made use of that expression, and I withdraw unreservedly. The hon. member must remember that the charge made against me was that "I was down on my knees begging of the Labour party, and that I had pledged myself to that platform." That statement was incorrect. It is as incorrect to-day as on the day it was made, and the so-called proof my friend has brought forward to-day is no proof of that charge at all. If the same letter were written to me again, I should answer it in the same manner; but I should trust it would be treated in a more honourable way than that letter has been.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I can only say that I am ready at any time to submit to the arbitrament of any person as to what that letter is intended to convey. I wish to say no more in that regard.

MR. RASON: So am I.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Perth also was pleased to say that it was the policy of the political Labour party to prevent aged men, who

perhaps were not so capable of earning their livelihood as younger men and men of more strength and stability, from earning a livelihood. No charge ever made by any member in this House against that party was more unjust. Even in the awards, not only of this State but also those of New South Wales and New Zealand where Arbitration Acts exist, there is always provision made by which any person who feels himself incapable of earning the minimum wage provided in the award is able to obtain work or to work for a lesser rate. [Mr. FRANK WILSON: Not unless the secretaries of the unions will permit him.] There is a great deal of false sympathy and pathetic appeal from members of this House when they bring forward the poor old man requiring consideration. So far as I know, without the protection of the measures embodied on the statute-book for the protection of labour and those employed in our industries, the poor old man, so ably advocated by the member for Perth, would be made not the minimum but the maximum standard for the wages of able-bodied men who are able to do a day's work.

MR. H. BROWN: I said that before those old men could work at less than the minimum rate of wage, they had to apply to the secretary of a union to be allowed to do it; and I defy contradiction on that point.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The reason why such a provision is necessary is because what I said just now is true. Without the protection these Acts afford to these men, especially to the older men, we would have the older man made the standard for the maximum rate of wage to able-bodied men. It would mean that able-bodied men would have to come down to that standard or they would not be able to secure employment, and that through recurring reductions the standard of the older men would constantly be reduced, and this would have precisely the same effect on the wages of able-bodied men able to do a day's work and earn a good day's pay. So that really in the past what we have had to avoid by that provision is the fact that older men who perhaps have passed the prime of life have been made the means, by unscrupulous employers, of reducing the wages of men who are in

the prime of life. The hon. member also referred to the question of the employment of boys. So far as members on these benches are concerned, there is one thing they have always tried to secure, and that is that when a boy is taken into any industry he shall be thoroughly taught his trade. It is a shame and a disgrace to-day that the object aimed at by employers is not to teach a trade thoroughly and satisfactorily to the boys they employ, but rather to introduce boys into their workshops as a cheap supply of labour, until those boys reach such an age that they demand the pay of a man, and then the employer will turn them adrift and employ other boys to take their places. Before a satisfactory condition can be arrived at, we must have an Apprentice Act to insure that when a boy is taken into an industry he shall obtain a thorough knowledge of the trade which he is being taught. It has always been the policy of the members on these benches, and it is a policy they will pursue in the future. So far as the member for Bunbury (Mr. N. J. Moore) is concerned, we have had a statement that owing to the Government not completing the railway from Narrogin to Collie, some persons who took up selections of land along the railway route in the Williams district have abandoned their homes. I may say, as has been pointed out by the member for Collie, that the selectors in the Williams district have the railway, and I believe a number of those settlers went there to take up land not with the idea of settling on it and putting it to a practical use, but so that they might be able to sell the land at an enhanced value when the railway was constructed, and thus make a profit out of the land. The member for Bunbury referred to the Bunbury Harbour Works and to the necessity for drainage in the South-West. We have been carrying on a considerable amount of drainage work in that area, and we have a considerable amount yet to do before we can say we have a complete drainage system in that district. It would be unwise at present to part with land at our present rate, and then to expend a considerable sum of money on drains which would enhance the value of that land to a large extent, without getting any return to the State. I think

first we should carry out the drainage works, and then the cost should be fairly apportioned over the whole area and the price for the land fixed accordingly. I think that would be fair to the settlers and fair to the State. Before we go in for any subdivision there, we should have a complete drainage scheme in order that the settlers might proceed without hindrance and without delay. The member for Bunbury also wanted to know what the Government were going to do in regard to the Timber Combine. Since I came into the Lands Department I have been inquiring and finding out what areas they hold, what areas are being worked by mills or those areas which have mills on them and which comply with the regulations, also those which, not having mills on them, are worked by mills placed in some other portion for the convenience of working. Members may rely that I do not desire to see any corporation monopolising areas they are not prepared to use, but would extend every consideration to those who are desirous of securing timber country to carry on milling operations in the State. Members on either side can rest assured that the matter is receiving every attention. The member for York referred to an estate on which he desired to secure some land which had been purchased by the Government under the Lands Purchase Act. I have no knowledge of the transaction, but I do say that the object of the Lands Purchase Act is to secure land for closer settlement, and the hon. member should agree that it would be folly for us first to buy an area for the purpose of cutting it up for closer settlement, and then to allow a few persons to reacquire that land and practically build up a big estate again. [MR. BURGESS: What I wanted was that the creditors in a certain estate should be able to get some benefit out of the estate.] If any injustice has been done and the hon. member will give me particulars, I will give the matter the fullest immediate attention. Although I may not have the experience and the knowledge of agriculture which some members possess, yet they will find that so far as I am concerned I am ready and willing to do as much as I can to assist the agriculturists of this State, and I have done it since I have been in office. It is impos-

sible to find any man to fill the position of Minister for Lands who will have a knowledge of every channel, of everything which comes before the Lands Department. You would have to import an angel from heaven. Where one man may have practical knowledge in agriculture, he may be lacking knowledge in other directions. So far as attention and devotion to duty is concerned, whatever lack of knowledge I may have in regard to agricultural operations, my time and energy will be given to the service of the Lands Department. With regard to the lands purchase question, I believe the member for York will recollect some remarks which were made by the former member for Northam (Mr. Throssell) in this House. He referred to an estate which had been cut up, and from his seat in this House he stated that he was sorry to see that although an estate had been purchased by the Government and cut up for closer settlement, some persons were building up big slices of territory again.

MR. BURGESS: I let him have some of that land back, after I had purchased it, to enable the Minister to give it to another settler, and then I found it was in the hands of the Afghans.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am sorry if what the hon. member says is true. If it came to a question of the hon. member having the land, no matter how much land he holds already, or the Afghans having it, I would say let the hon. member have it every time. I come now to a very interesting question, and that is the amendment which was submitted to this House by the member for West Perth last evening. I suppose we must call it the "declaration of independence" by certain occupants of the Independent bench. It seems to me the member for West Perth wants to be king, and it does not matter how he gets there or who crowns him he wants to be king. I think he took a mean advantage of the leader of the Opposition in trying to anticipate the message of His Excellency the Governor; but so far as the hon. member's statements are concerned, we had a very long speech and he gave expression to some grandiloquent sentiments. But when we read the criticisms embodied in his speech, I do not know what all the conversation was about. It appears

that if the member for West Perth and the member for York had their way, and had every matter they brought up in their long speeches included in the Governor's Speech to Parliament, we would have been listening to the Governor's Speech to this day. So far as the member for West Perth is concerned, he had a great deal to say about the large amount of revenue we were receiving, and he quoted that in comparison with the figures of other States and said there was no need for farther taxation. But it seems to me that we can deal with our financial problems or questions here in a more practical fashion. When we were discussing the estimates of revenue and expenditure for last year, not only the members on the Opposition benches but also the member for West Perth were very keen on having the expenditure from taxation and the revenue derived from it separated and kept distinct from the revenue derived from services, and yet when the hon. member wanted to make a case last night it was very convenient to lump them together. Even accepting his statement and lumping taxation with the returns for services, the comparison with other States is altogether unreliable, because he did not take into consideration the conditions which apply here and do not apply in other States. For instance, we know that in Western Australia a considerable number of works not undertaken by the State in other colonies are undertaken by the State here, such as the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply, the water supply and improvements in agricultural areas, and the water supply in towns, all which are undertaken by the Government here; whereas in a great many towns in the Eastern States such works are undertaken and managed by separate authorities, and the indebtedness for those works is altogether apart from the total indebtedness of the population. Then again we have to bear in mind the fact that so far as our railway system is concerned, we have a greater mileage per head of the population than is the case in the Eastern States, and consequently the amount will represent a greater amount per head of the population. We have the public batteries, and as I said we have the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply. We have a great many channels of State expenditure which should be taken into

consideration in this comparison. We have a more lavish expenditure on education than the Eastern States. No one quarrels with that; but it should be remembered in this connection. Then in accordance with our land settlement policy we have free surveys, which are not found in the other States. [Mr. BURGESS: Not altogether free.] Free to a large extent. We have a large expenditure to encourage industries, an expenditure at which no member will cavil; but if we lump services with taxation, we shall find that our revenue is greater per head than is the revenue of the other States, simply because the Government of this State do more for our people than is done by other Governments for their people. The hon. member (Mr. Moran) said no additional revenue was needed, and that the power to impose an income tax should be kept in reserve. We have had, through the gradual annual reduction in the sliding scale, a considerable falling-off in our Customs revenue. We have also had to meet this year certain expenditure which had accumulated in previous years; so we have had additional calls on the revenue, and we have not had the same amount of revenue as in the previous year to meet them. If we are to carry out the spirited public works policy of which the hon. member speaks, and adopt the other proposals he made, we must either find money by additional taxation, or must greatly increase our borrowing. Which is preferable—to meet many of those expenses by increasing the revenue, or by largely increasing our indebtedness, when as a result the interest bill will represent an ever-increasing annual tax on the people? I consider that if we are to continue the policy of development, if we are as in the past to spend money on the encouragement of the mining, pastoral, and agricultural industries, we cannot reduce our revenue; we shall have either to borrow the money or to increase the taxation. But the hon. member was not consistent; because while he said there was no need for farther taxation, yet if we are to carry out the idealistic schemes he so grandiloquently propounded last night, we shall need not only a land and income tax but many other sorts of taxation. We shall either have to adopt the prosaic methods of financial authorities

with the ordinary limitations of human beings, or we must attribute to the hon. member the skill of a necromancer, and hail him as a genie gifted with Aladdin's lamp. So when necessity arises for spending £500,000 in clearing land, a similar sum on encouraging immigration, a similar sum in planting forests, we must have recourse to him. He spoke of millions as if they were pence. We should certainly need either Aladdin's lamp or the philosopher's stone, to transmute the baser metals into gold. It was absurd for him to criticise the Premier's statement that we needed additional taxation to carry on the development policy; and the absurdity is apparent when we reflect that we could not do one-tenth of the projected works the hon. member outlined unless we borrowed largely in excess of our previous borrowings. The hon. member referred to the Midland Railway. As far as I am concerned, I say it would have been infinitely better for this House to discuss that proposition on its merits, with all the facts before us, than to discuss it in a no-confidence debate. But if the Government had taken the responsibility of refusing to buy that property without asking Parliament to decide the issue, the member for West Perth would have been the first to denounce the Government's action. I say that no member is justified in criticising the Government because when that offer was made they determined that Parliament should have an opportunity of giving the decision. It was unworthy of the hon. member to say that because members may happen to represent constituencies which are touched by that line, those members would be prepared to vote for giving an exorbitant price for the property, simply because they were pledged to buy it. The same consideration that is extended to the member for West Perth should be given to every other member of this House. I will not accuse any member of being forced to advocate the purchase of this property at an excessive price, merely because he may have been pledged by his constituents to its purchase. I say we are more likely to get a just decision, and one to the advantage of the country, if the proposition be discussed entirely on its merits, with all the information which the Government is

able to lay before the House. One more point in regard to that, and I will leave the subject. We are asked, would it not be better to institute a system of forcing the company to observe the conditions under which they hold the land? But the first question is, shall we get value for the money we propose to pay for it? and the next is whether the State can do better with that railway and those lands than the Midland Company can do. I say, if we take the instance of the Great Southern Railway, we shall find that the progress and the prosperity of that district date from the time when the Forrest Government purchased that railway. Only to-day I looked up *Hansard* with regard to that purchase, and I found that the first reading of the enabling Bill was moved by Sir John Forrest; and that very shortly afterwards the second reading, the committee stage, and the third reading stage were passed—all in one session.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Without a dissenting voice.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for West Perth was in Parliament at that time, and he did not even speak on the question. The hon. member referred to the need for a great land settlement policy; and I will ask the House, if members have perused the figures, whether the present Government have done well or ill or have done worse than previous Governments in promoting the progress of land settlement during the past year. I have here figures showing the progress of land settlement during 1903-4 and 1904-5; and I find that there was a greater volume of settlement during this than in the previous year. And the most encouraging feature of that increasing settlement was the increase under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. In 1903-4 the land taken up under that Act was 59 selections, totalling 17,775 acres; whereas in 1904-5 there were 155 selections with a total of 53,726 acres. That indication seems to me very significant. It proves that in the country is a number of estates containing good land, close to markets. If we could only make these available under the closer settlement scheme, we should have plenty of room, without need for increased railway communication, for a much larger number of settlers. If

members have perused the reports under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act of estates which have been settled on that scheme, they know that very encouraging progress has been made. I wish also to say that though I have not been long in office, I have done several things which I think will promote land settlement. For instance, the department had estates opened at Cowcowing, and another place of which I have for the moment forgotten the name, where the question arose of providing a water supply in order to tide settlers over the first year or two till they could make their own arrangements for water. In that instance I approved of a water supply. In the areas east of the Great Southern Railway where settlement is going on, there is a considerable quantity of very fair land; and I have approved of the clearing of tracks and the provision of water, either by bores or by tanks, till the settlers can procure it for themselves. We have had in this debate the old-time comparison of Australia with Canada. I wish to say that it is useless in this House to speak in generalities about the great work being done in Canada, until we have the particulars and are in a position to compare the ruling conditions in Australia with those of that country. Much that is untrue is stated as to what is being done in Canada; and though many immigrants may go to Canada from Great Britain and Europe, according to the books which show the immigration returns, I say the best indication of a permanent increase of population in Canada is the difference in the decennial returns, as for instance the difference between the population in 1891 and in 1901, and so on. We find that between 1891 and 1901 New Zealand and Australia were ahead of Canada as regards the percentage of increase. It is said that private steamship companies in Canada do a great deal to induce population to go to Canada; but they do that to assist their steamship lines, and that fact does not indicate that these immigrants are settling on the land in Canada, but that it is the shortest and cheapest route going to Canada, and many of these people cross the border into the United States. We know that as far as the United States are concerned, although they have a con-

siderable number of emigrants every year, they are not immigrants settling on the land, but in the tenement areas of New York and the larger cities. These immigrants are taking the places of other men on the coal fields and coal-bearing areas of the United States, not the class of settlers that it is desirable to encourage if land settlement is to be considered. As far as Canada is concerned, I will tell members the real object Canadians have in trying to secure a large immigration of British subjects. It is that they fear the constant flow of immigration from the United States into Canada will in time to come destroy the British settlement in that country. Members are aware of the fact that some time ago a benefit insurance association called the Independent Order of Foresters came to Australia to establish themselves. They established themselves in Great Britain and South Africa, and their object in trying to develop business in these British colonies was to try and prevent the members of that society in the United States securing the control of the association. Their desire was to keep it a British institution; that is the reason why they tried to exploit the British colonies. The same thing is occurring in regard to settlement in Canada. Canada is trying to secure British immigrants so as to secure British sentiment in that country. It is not the people who are tallied in the big account of immigrants Canada shows to the world that are settling on the great western lands of Canada; those settling there are persons from the west and north-west parts of the United States. They are taking these areas, and Canadians are afraid of a republican sentiment, and that is the reason why they are trying to encourage a large British immigration. I want to say that if members will read the provincial newspapers of Great Britain, they will find that time after time constant complaints have been made from immigrants who have gone to Canada. They complain that they have been misled, and the stream of immigrants going there is only increasing the ranks of the unemployed in the large cities and, contrary to the statement put forward by the member for Bunbury, that instead of wages going up and work being more plentiful, there is an ever-increas-

ing army of unemployed in those cities and wages are going down. We also find that because the Dominion of Canada is desirous of forwarding the good feeling between Great Britain and Japan, they have vetoed the proposal for excluding Japanese immigrants from British Colombia, and now numbers of these persons are going there to engage in mining operations in British Colombia, are forcing out the British workers. As far as Australia is concerned, just as Americans from the United States accustomed to the conditions of living are the best settlers for the western lands of Canada, so I say the best class of men for our territory in Western Australia are the men coming from the Eastern States, or the sons of men who have lived in the Eastern States, and who are used to the conditions and know what is before them. Would we be likely to secure these immigrants, as stated by the member for West Perth, if there was room for a great many more in the other States? I believe there is room for many more millions if the lands were available, but the fact remains that many of the men coming here are sons of men who are not able to procure lands in the Eastern States or suitable territory, because they want land with a good rainfall and with good climatic conditions, to give them a decent return for work. We would not find Mr. Bent having to repurchase estates at a high figure if there was plenty of land for people to settle on in Victoria. There is no good in bringing people here and then not being able to supply them with land; and as far as the Eastern States are concerned, the difficulty experienced is to make available lands which enjoy a good rainfall and are near to a market. I want to point out that the assisted immigration policy which Queensland carried out was not an unmixed blessing. I have not been able to secure the book, but if members will turn up for themselves the last issue of Coghlan's *Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand* they will find some reference made there as to the assisted immigration policy of Queensland which shows that it has not been an unmixed blessing. We have had no reason to complain so far as to our increase in regard to land settlement. The member for West Perth may have a

desire to exercise that magical influence I spoke of, and convert the child into a man without the intermediary stages. He may be desirous to-day of passing his wand over Western Australia and in one act settle millions of people on the land. But I say the best countries in the world are those which have had natural and healthy development by reason of the stability of their industries. If we can increase population by that method we are more assured of our success in the future. There is one other point with which I wish to deal before concluding; it is the last paragraph of the amendment moved by the member for West Perth, which says:—

We regret that the Government have not given the House a clear financial statement of ways and means in connection with the large expenditure foreshadowed.

I say that if such a course were taken it would be absolutely contrary to the practice pursued in every Parliament in Australia. The financial policy is not given on the Address-in-Reply. The financial policy by the Treasurer is given in his Budget Speech when he brings down the Estimates of revenue and expenditure. If the member for West Perth expects that course, he expects something which has never been done in the Australian States before. If we did that there would be a repetition. We would first have a financial statement delivered on the Address-in-Reply, and a repetition of it when the Budget came forward and the financial proposals were dealt with. I say it would be essentially a waste of time. As far as the member is concerned the regret expressed in the last paragraph of the amendment is not a genuine one. The hon. member knows from his parliamentary experience that it is contrary to all practice and contrary to the custom as far as the Australian States are concerned. So far as the issue before the House is concerned, or the two issues, it seems to me it is a very difficult problem for members on the Independent bench and the Opposition benches to decide. So far as the Government bench is concerned, we are in a clear position. Our administration and our position as occupants of the Treasury bench has been assailed, but I say, in spite of the attack made by the leader of the Opposition and the flank attack made by the member for West

Perth, were the issues between us to be judged by some competent arbitrator above question of party prejudice and party politics, that the verdict would unhesitatingly be cast in favor of those who at the present time have the honour to administer the affairs of His Majesty in this State.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Katanning) : As the Speaker has ruled that under the circumstances discussion will be allowed on the amendment and also on the original motion, it is my intention to take an opposite course to that followed by the last speaker, the Minister for Lands, and deal with the amendment first. I may say in regard to the amendment that I feel that it has only been put forward with one object, and that is with a view of drawing a red-herring across the trail. Before I have completed my remarks I will make myself clear as to the course I intend to take on both the amendment and the original motion. In regard to the question of the Midland Railway, one that had been alluded to not only by the leader of the Opposition but by the leader of the Government, I may say that I regret that it has been brought into the arena of discussion at this stage. It seems that such an important subject, although embodied in the Speech of His Excellency, is one that could well have rested for consideration at the proper time. It is an important question, and at the risk of being charged, as some members have charged members in the House, with being already pledged to support the matter, my object in offering my support to the purchase of the line is from experience previously gained in the purchase of another railway in the State. I am not any more pledged than any other member on this question. The question of purchase was advocated during the régime of the Government with which I was connected but was not dealt with definitely; still it received the sympathy and support of that Government. Conditions have changed decidedly since 1897, when the Great Southern Railway was purchased, and although that railway was purchased at a figure which at that time was considered large, still we should not lose sight of the increase in the price of land which since that date has been considerable. Although Government lands

have not increased in price, lands held by private individuals cannot be bought to-day within a reasonable distance of a railway at the price they could be bought at in 1897. Hence we are considering this question under different conditions. I feel that those who are offering this land and railway for sale are offering it from a business standpoint, and it behoves this House to take very seriously into consideration the proposal that has been brought before it, and at the proper time deal with it on its merits. As to the valuations, although I have been intending to acquaint myself with them, I have not yet had the opportunity of seeing them, owing to other pressing engagements. However, as the question will ultimately have to be decided, I certainly consider the House should be advised in a full manner in regard to the investigations made, and have more definite information placed before it in regard to this proposal. This is a question which should not have been brought forward at the present stage. It has been brought forward, I take it, by the member for West Perth with an object, and in my opinion the question should be still farther deferred. It is one on which I am not prepared to express a definite opinion other than to say I disagree with its being included in this amendment. In regard to the other question raised, the question of the immigration proposals which were touched upon last session, with every desire to give credit to the Government I may say I feel disappointed that something has not been done of a more tangible character with a view to farther the request then made. However, I have had an opportunity of reading the extracts and also some of the replies which have been given by the Agent General, and I also know that a Commission was sitting to deal with this question, and the report of that Commission was only placed on the table of this House as late as yesterday. Therefore under the circumstances perhaps the Government are to be excused for not having taken up this with greater force. Being cautious, they have adopted a course which perhaps in some instances is open to objection, yet at the same time is a prudent course, for, after all, we all know what settlement on the land means. We recognise that to bring into this

country an undesirable class of people would be disastrous to Western Australia in regard to the very object we have in view. Therefore I feel that very much good can be gained by exercising caution and prudence, and by obtaining all information on this question which can be obtained. Our Agent General is in England for the very purpose of representing the Government, and he is taking a course which will perhaps commend itself to most men who know how much caution should be taken in appointing a lecturer, and he has also obtained other information in regard to immigrants who are likely to be secured for this State. I feel that the delay which has occurred is a delay of a character which, after all, is not sufficient to pass a vote of censure on the Government. I feel that the Government have acted in the best interests so far; and only a short period, something like six months, has expired since this question was brought up. We have not had time yet to peruse the evidence which has been produced, and also the report of the Commission with a view to acting upon it. I have only had time to scan it, and, although there has been much comment, and adverse comment, made on the work of the Commission, still I maintain that much good can be obtained from their investigations, and that much good could be obtained by giving information to the Agent General in England with regard to the class of settlers now going on the land, the land available, the means of settlement, and the methods of inducing people to take up the land with some prospect of being successful. I do not give place to the member for West Perth in my earnest desire to see settlement in this country. I think he has already recognised that and admitted it. And I think it is preferable to take a little time to consider so serious a matter as the inauguration of an active immigration policy. Get on the right track first, rather than start on a wrong one and then have to turn back. Therefore although I am so opposed—as I shall point out in some of my subsequent remarks—to much of the policy of the present Government, I do not see any reason for disagreeing with that. With regard to this direct question which has been placed forward in this no-confidence motion by the member for West

Perth, whenever settlement does take place I would prefer to see it of a permanent character, and to see satisfied men come into this country—people not only satisfied when coming into this country, but satisfied when they get on the land. As an old agriculturist, as one who has had to see the many hardships of the pioneer settlers, and many of the failures which have occurred as well as the successes, I am sure there will be many heartburnings and many regrets from people who come from England to settle on the land here. The Minister for Lands touched upon this question just now, and said that the class of settler most desirable for the settlement of our lands would be the settler who had the previous experience of America. [THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I mean Canada.] Those from our sister States are the most desirable class, but it does not assist the Commonwealth of Australia for people to leave the Eastern States and come to Western Australia. To people Western Australia at the expense of the Eastern States is not desirable; therefore we must look abroad and induce people to come here and take up their residences and become settlers, as the old settlers who came here in the earlier days did. So it behoves the Government and those associated with them in the endeavour to exercise the caution necessary to see that we commence our work in a way which will not mean nonsuccess, which will not mean a detriment to us, therefore I feel, as I said just now, that the exercise of caution in carrying out this work is commendable rather than condemnatory. As I shall touch on the land question when dealing with the proposal of the Government in regard to the amendment of the Land Act, it is not my intention to farther deal now with the question of land settlement. Of course I shall refer to it in regard to the proposals which I take it are to be made in connection with that amendment. In regard to the last portion of the amendment, that is, that we regret that the Government have not given the House a clearer financial statement on ways and means in connection with the expenditure foreshadowed, I may say that in this I feel we agree with the hon. member. That is expressed already in general condemnation of the Government in regard to our want of

confidence; but to embody it in this amendment seems to be superfluous, because already we are dealing with that. A speech has been made by the leader of the Opposition condemnatory of it, and a reply has been given by the leader of the Government which, in my opinion, has not been satisfactory; and also a statement has been made by the member for West Perth in regard to this matter, condemning the action of the leader of the Government and upholding the statement put forward by the leader of the Opposition as to this question. Therefore, I feel that it is superfluous. But really, after all, my objection to this amendment is upon the two first proposals in it which have been embodied and which have been spoken to by the member for West Perth, and it seems to decide me upon the course I intend to take. In regard to this amendment, the member for West Perth has made a vigorous speech, which was listened to with much interest; a speech similar to that he has delivered on many occasions, full of force, full of power. He has turned his attention to the matter with an evident desire to do his best to give his knowledge to the country of the methods of development, and most of it I re-echo. I consider there is a great deal to do to build this country up, and he struck many good points as to methods which should be adopted. I feel that so much said last night could be agreed to; but there seemed to be a superabundance of confidence with regard to these proposals which were misdirected in a way which, if turned to better advantage, would have been of immense benefit to this country. I recognise the ability of the hon. member and his usefulness in this House in so many respects. He has sat in this House for many years, and has the experience of an old parliamentarian. He knows the procedure and methods of the House, and to him we look for much support in assisting us to carry on matters in this Chamber to a successful issue. But I feel that the hon. member is something like that element which is so useful to man, that is steam. If we could only control the hon. member in the way we would like to—[MR. MORAN: That is just the trouble]—If we could only control the hon. member in this way, that is when we require his ser-

vices, when we require his help, we could draw upon those vast supplies in moderation, then I say we would make good use of him. But we find that, owing to a superabundance of energy, to his great confidence, to his evident desire to ascend, in fact before it is time for him to do so, to greater heights, he rather gets beyond our control and the steam escapes, hissing and blowing off in different directions, not only to the detriment of his enemies but those we may call his political friends.

MR. MORAN: Do not burst your own boiler.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I feel that, in the desire of the hon. member to attain the ascendancy to which he aspires, he in a great measure defeats his object.

MR. MORAN: What are you referring to?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I am referring to that which is so evident throughout the action of the hon. member—the desire to obtain the highest position in this House.

MR. MORAN: I will be a long time getting it through your influence.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Many times he has given good reasons why men should not aspire too early to these positions. Last night he referred to it. I say there is a good deal to be gained by watching the course of events, and perhaps waiting patiently for the results which the hon. member hopes to attain. And that advice which he gave to others might well be followed in his own case.

MR. MORAN: Why not discuss the proposals of the Government? Never mind me.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: If the hon. member alluded to these matters, I take it I am well within my province in alluding to them to-night. He gave this House much advice in regard to the way in which to conduct its deliberations, and in which the younger men should await their opportunities and gain experience in this House. I say I am quite within my province in also passing my remarks in regard to what I consider the right course to take, and perhaps condemnatory of the hon. member.

MR. MORAN: Do not be so personal. That is where we differ, you and I. You cannot help being personal.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: No; it was admitted this is not one of my faults. Want of tact is a fault I sometimes try to conquer and perhaps it is against me; but I am not one of those tacticians uncertain in mind and in their course, such as perhaps the hon. member may be.

MR. MORAN: You are only uncertain in your voting, always.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: With regard to this matter, I do not wish to say any more on the question brought up by the hon. member except this, that I disagree with the hon. member's course. I consider that an amendment has been tabled in this House which conveys an expression of opinion in regard to the feelings of the generality of members on this side of House, and it is being discussed. The hon. member brings forward an amendment with a desire of his own, which perhaps may after all defeat the ends he has in view. [MR. MORAN: And defeat your ends, too.] If the hon. member alludes to any question of my attaining any sort of supremacy in regard to Parliament or power in this House, he is quite mistaken. I am quite content to work as I am now, with the best desire for the interests of the country. In regard to the question before the House, I shall say now what I intend doing. It is not my intention to vote with the hon. member for West Perth in regard to his amendment. In regard to the amendment moved by the leader of the Opposition, I should like to say at once that the principal battle ground appears to have been around the question of finance. It is not my intention to touch on this, as it has been dealt with very fully by members who have looked more deeply into the matter. I leave that issue, and simply say that I certainly consider a good case has been made out against the Government by the leader of the Opposition, and that it certainly needs a great deal of explanation on the part of the Premier to disabuse the minds of members of the idea, which seems to be general, that some mistake has been made regarding the flotation of the loan. In regard to the administration of the Government, I have frequently expressed my approval of the methods adopted in connection with the carrying out of the various duties of their offices. The members of the

Ministry have in every respect shown themselves eager to carry out their duties faithfully and well, quite as well, I take it, as any set of men who have filled that bench. They have done their best, according to their lights, to do what is possible; but one great drawback in my opinion has been their want of experience in regard to affairs of the State. They have done their best to gain experience; and although I have heard remarks condemnatory of Ministers travelling throughout the country with the object of obtaining information in regard to the country, I agree with that course. It is most necessary that those in control of affairs should make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the condition of things in the country, so as to enable them to deal with matters when they come forward. It is not sufficient to hear of the condition of the country through the ordinary channels, that is the official channels in most cases, because officials long in the service become imbued with ideas which sometimes are narrow and not correct; and much good can be done by visiting various parts of the State. Therefore I do not agree with those speakers who have alluded to Ministers travelling through the country. I think much usefulness will result from the personal investigations which Ministers have undertaken. Where I do disagree with the Government is in regard to their policy, that is in regard to various matters brought forward that I have always consistently disagreed with. I think the real point at issue is the consideration of questions of principle; and these are matters I shall chiefly deal with. The matters upon which I disagree with the Government are those of land taxation, income tax at this stage, the totalisator tax, and the referendum on the bicameral system. With regard to the land tax, I should like to make myself clear. On a previous occasion when the question of the Midland Railway was being dealt with, there was a proposal that taxation should be imposed on the company to make them do something with their lands or dispose of them; and I said that I was decidedly opposed to any method of that kind, and that if taxation were to be adopted it should be made general, and that when there was necessity for carrying out this principle of taxation for

revenue purposes, or for the purpose of opening up some special part of the country, I felt that it would be a good means of obtaining the revenue or necessary funds for the purpose. But it seems to me that the time has not arrived for land taxation in this State. We have only to look at the vast areas around the country of which we hold possession and which are being opened up by our railways system; and when we come to take into consideration the efforts made to induce people to come here, it seems to me a most dangerous method to adopt in this State, because it will have the effect of deterring people from coming here. I am sure it will be disastrous to the country. With one voice we hear the Government of the day stating that they have enormous areas to settle, and that they wish to obtain settlement on this country and to see progress made in this direction, while in another voice we hear the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) talking of advancing his great immigration scheme, in which I agreed with him last session. I may say it was on a speech I made in this House that the thing was started. [MR. MORAN: That is the reason you are now jibbing, I suppose.] I quite agree with the desire to settle the country, but by this land tax proposal we shall be acting in a deterrent manner and, instead of increasing settlement, we shall do harm and retard it. [MR. MORAN: No fear. We shall open the country up.] I have always advocated a tax on unimproved, undeveloped estates. Where estates are held purely for speculative purposes and no work is done on them, I am confident a land tax or some other method of dealing with them to force settlement is necessary to open up the country; and I feel sure we have good grounds either for taxation or for enforcing settlement. [MR. MORAN: The Midland lands, for instance.] If we are going to make it apply to one, make it general; but to single out any particular company, I am not with you. I believe in making it apply to everyone alike. We must be fair. After all, it is a question of equity; and people having the destinies of the country in their hands should certainly exercise fairness and equity in regard to these proposals. The question of opening up the country is one of great import-

ance to us to-day. We have heard it said so frequently that, though our gold mines are such a great help to the State, all permanent settlement must come from the lands, and that anything that may tend to prevent this should be avoided. Methods such as these proposed by the Government will, I am sure, have a most detrimental effect. It may be said that if the people in the country are enjoying advantages in regard to land settlement, they should be prepared to pay for them, and that we must certainly have money to help them. The course about to be proposed of adding farther charges to the cost of the land in regard to surveys and in other ways, will assist in the direction of providing some revenue; but looking at it from the point of view of the old settler, it would seem unfair to make the new settler bear burdens which have not been charged to the old settler. However, the country is progressing, and we find it difficult to carry out that which we carried out in the early days, and we must do something. We must have the land charged at a higher rate, and we must, perhaps, exact certain charges in regard to cost which were not exacted before. There is one matter which might be looked into and which is worthy of the consideration of the Minister of Lands, that is the question of reclassification. In some instances we have seen land sold at 3s. 6d. an acre under third-class conditions prior to classification, and we know that the same lands are to-day sold at 10s., and most eagerly sought for. I have always thought that much good could be done in this way, that when we take into consideration the advantage which owners of land possess who are near railway stations, I certainly think that there should be some sort of scale by which the higher rate should be imposed on those residing within the first 10 miles of a station, and that the rate should diminish as you get away from the station, because of the difficulties the people have in carting produce to the railway. If that were done there would be equity in it, and a little more revenue would accrue, and it would not be looked upon as an imposition. Though it would not apply in any full force in regard to the existing railways, it would in regard to railways that are to be constructed, and that must

be constructed in this State. The suggestion is well worthy of consideration. Then, again, if we take up the question of classification, we find that lands which were at one time looked upon as practically worthless and which were sold at 3s. 6d., are to-day sold at 10s. Therefore lands classed as worth 10s. an acre as now should bear a much higher rate than they do. For instance, land should be brought up to £1 per acre instead of 10s., the uniform charge in the past. Of course, any proposal to increase the price of lands may have a detrimental effect on settlement; but if we select areas and classify the land, that is go in for classification before selection, we will find that much benefit will accrue. I am pleased to see there is a practical proposal in that direction made by the Immigration Commission. If that Commission has done no good, as has been said in some quarters, it has in this direction. It has made a proposal which I think is most commendable. Although it may not have been applicable and may have retarded selection in the early days, now with the advance in railway communication and the improved conditions of the State, and now that we are able to obtain a larger number of surveyors, we should adopt the course in preference to the free selection of the past. Free selection means that the eyes of the country are picked out in many instances, and that pieces of land which appear to be of little use at the time are left out and ultimately taken up by the owner. If we have classification first we would place with the good land a certain proportion of the inferior land, and we would class the inferior land at a certain rate per acre and charge it up on the whole area selected. A man would then know what he was getting. At present the applicant comes along and takes up a good piece of land, and those who come after are pushed out on to the inferior lands.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (continuing) : When the adjournment took place I was dealing with the question of the land tax as proposed by the Government, and I alluded to the question of land settlement

which is so closely allied to this subject, because if we impose certain charges on the land of the country, I fear the effect will be deterrent to that settlement we are all anxious to see. I also touched on the question of other methods that could be resorted to for increasing the revenue; because if railways are to be built at the expense of the State, and settlement is to follow, as we expect it will, then those persons who are in the most favourable localities should not object to an increased rate being charged on their land. I hope I made myself clear that in regard to those who are distant from railways or from means of communication, a lower rate should be imposed on their land; and although we have been so eager to see settlement on the land and have been so encouraged by the phenomenal rate at which settlement has been progressing in some instances, yet now it seems that, with the facilities which are afforded and the advantages which settlers have, we can well consider the question of the reclassification of our lands, with a view to an increased price in certain directions. In regard to the question, I may say I feel that if proper economy were exercised, though perhaps it may be asking that this should be accomplished too early in the history of the present Government, with the opportunities we have of exercising economies I think the people themselves should restrict their demands and should assist the Government in every direction possible. I know it is difficult to deal with this question; because with a growing country and a population coming in so freely, every centre requires certain help from the country, and this makes it hard for the Government in power to deal with the demands which are made, and practice the necessary economy. Still, there are many economies to be practised with good effect, for if we look into matters closely we can find where money can be saved; first, by a careful preparation of the Estimates, and next by a close criticism of them when they come before this House. The same remark applies to the question of an income tax, which is a good resource and is applied in almost every country. When the time comes for its imposition here, and if we really need it more than we do to-day, let it be imposed, and the people

must bear the burdens necessary for the country's development. But at this stage it does not seem necessary, and that is the reason why I oppose it. Land taxation is not necessary, as I have said, because it will operate as a deterrent to settlement. It has been pointed out that the income arising from this source would not be a large one, that the cost of collection in such an extensive country would be large in proportion to the amount received. With regard to another matter proposed in the Governor's Speech, the tax on totalisators, it seems a reprehensible course for the Government to propose. Those who have seen the influence of the gambling rage in this State and in other parts of Australia, the great evils that have followed it, will wish to know whether this proposed tax on totalisator receipts is going to lessen or increase the gambling spirit; but outside of that, I think it is not a course which should be taken, because it would be giving State countenance to the very gambling evils we wish to see repressed. In no period has it been more necessary that we should look at this matter seriously than it is now; for the climatic conditions of Australia lend themselves to out-door sports, and we naturally wish to see people enjoy themselves in a rational way; but there is the danger that the attention which younger people should give to their business and their occupations is being taken away to a large extent and directed to those sports, especially to racing and other gambling forms of amusement which are detrimental to the interests of the country. That is bad enough in itself, but when we come to the gambling evil we find it is much more serious. Referring to what has been said with regard to the wonderful success of racing on the goldfields and the large amount of money put through the totalisator, I know as a business man that this seriously affects the ordinary trade of the country. Speaking as one who has to supply a commodity which comes into the every-day necessities of the people, the tradesman who retail it to the people say that after races have taken place on the goldfields there is the greatest difficulty in obtaining payment of accounts, and that for some weeks after the racing the bulk of the people there are not able to pay their

way. It seems the gambling craze has such an influence on those people that they are spending more money than they can afford, in the hope of making large hauls through the totalisator funds and in other sporting directions. The State will probably find it difficult to interfere; but if we look to England for an example, we see that a Bill is introduced there with a view to suppressing the evils of gambling. We in this State should take this matter in hand most seriously, and not only should the Legislature of the State look at it seriously, but we should have the assistance of some strong-minded, forcible, and energetic men who will try to form committees in various centres for suppressing this evil. It is influencing our young men; and not only influencing them in a small way with the totalisator, but it affects them in the larger systems of gambling; and consequently there are many defalcations among employees, more than people hear of, and those business men who employ clerks and other assistants know that this evil is growing fast, and they have to face the difficulty daily. Such matters have come under my notice personally, and I think we should introduce such legislation as will deal with these evils in an effectual way. I think the Government, in taking the course proposed for raising revenue by a tax on totalisator receipts, are encouraging the gambling spirit, and giving countenance to an evil which should be suppressed. In reference to old age pensions, I have never expressed my opinion fully, but I think the objects are most worthy. We already make provision for the aged, but under conditions which are perhaps objectionable in many cases. Still we must not be carried away by sentiment, but must deal with this question in a way that will make the least inroads on our revenue. In a country like this, where we have so much land available, especially in the South-West, alluded to just now by the Minister for Lands, and which is being drained, I say we should go in for closer settlement there on blocks of three to five or even ten acres, which will be sufficient for a man with his family to live on if he only gets a start. For instance, a man and his wife who have reached that period of life when they are not able to make all the provision that is desirable, could be

assisted very usefully in this way. Say we set aside portions of this area, and instead of spending a little money on them as we are proposing to do for the stronger people who are better able to bear the burdens, we might in this case try ten, twenty, or thirty of these little allotments, and at the expense of the State build a house, not costly, and clear so much land ready for occupation by some aged people. Give them an opportunity of cultivating these lands. When they are unable to work any longer, they can be provided for by other means. As we know, there are many old men and old women, both married and unmarried, who could take up this work and make a hobby of it, in preference to entering an institution or being otherwise provided for by the State. If employed as I suggest, they would be earning money, and could sell the produce of their land. I know personally that nearly everything required by the people of this State can be produced on the land, and that which could not be produced could be purchased out of those old people's earnings. That seems to me preferable to almost any scheme for old age pensions. People reaching a statutory age, to be prescribed by the Act, could be thus provided for without being offered monetary assistance, which in some cases might be resented. A most serious question, in my opinion, is the proposed referendum. On this point I am strongly opposed to the Government. I do not believe in the principle of the referendum. I fear the referendum is not a good or a safe means of ascertaining public opinion. Such opinion, when given on a referendum, is influenced by those who are more active than others in putting forward their own opinions, and who sometimes lead people to vote against their real opinions and the interests of the country. We have had an evidence of that in the referendum on Federation. The experiment was tried here, and with what success we know. We ultimately entered the union. I was a strong opponent of Federation, though now, as we have entered it, no one is more anxious than I to see it succeed. I am not one of those who were ardent supporters of Federation during the Federal campaign and who are now its bitter opponents. Some members say "Why not trust the

people?" If we could place a voting paper in the hands of every person in this country, without influencing any of them, that course might be safe. But when people are so easily led by the advocates or the opponents of a measure, then there is danger. Hence I am not prepared to agree to a referendum. Though it is said that the referendum might result not in the abolition but in the reform of the Upper House, I prefer things to remain as they are. The Minister for Lands has referred to-night to the proposed consolidation of the land laws. It is not well to say much on the subject till we have the Bill before us. Then will be the time for suggestions or objections. But I feel that the matter should be most seriously taken up. It is recognised throughout Australia that we in this State have the most liberal land laws of any on the continent. These are the outcome of the careful Administrations in the past. We had the assistance of those who held office before responsible government; we had also the mature experience of Sir John Forrest, who was so long Minister for Lands, and who knew the whole of the State from one end to another. Subsequently we had the experience of that veteran Lands Minister, the Hon. G. Throssell, who did so much to promote land settlement. Afterwards we had the successors of that gentleman, all eager to do their best in the same cause. We now find a determination on the part of the present Government to undo much that has recently been done to settle the country. I admit that what the present Government have done was initiated by their immediate predecessors, the James Government. I refer to the temporarily reserving from sale or from application of second or third-class grazing leases. This was done by the James Government; afterwards, those leases were restored and applications sent in; recently the lands have again been withdrawn. I agree with the Minister for Lands that there is some need for a modification of the law; but I hope the Government in their zeal will not go too far, because after all there is much to be done with what are called our third-class lands. Only those who, like me, know how such land can be developed, recognise what a difference there is between good and bad land in

this State. I have said before in this House that we should not classify the lands as first, second, and third-class, but might increase the numerals and create even a tenth class. The question of the situation of the lands has never received attention when classifying them. Lands which are more favourably situated should be dealt with in the manner I have previously alluded to. The classification according to quality should be seriously looked into. Many of our lands officers are worthy men who know their work; but in the hurry and skurry of our development we have had to appoint some officers who do not know quite so much of the working of our lands system, and do not know enough of our lands to be able to make a just classification. I have not much fault to find in this matter, but I feel we should be most careful; and though so much has been said by the Minister for Lands as to the settlement which has resulted from the work of the Government, I do not think he can justly take credit for that settlement, because it results from the work of previous Administrations. No doubt the present Government did a good deal to help; but land settlement is a slow process. We sow the seed to-day, but cannot reap the harvest to-morrow. The seed sown by previous Administrations is now being reaped in a bountiful harvest. So it will go on. If the Bill introduced by the Government is one of which I can approve, none will be better pleased than I to give them every credit for their good intentions. We have heard much of the great success which follows in the wake of settlement; but we must not forget the goldfields, which did more than anything else to help the agriculturists. Were it not for them, we on the land should probably be struggling along, competing in a small way among ourselves, and not receiving the benefits we now enjoy. But the Lands is the most important department in the State, and requires most careful handling; so do not let the zeal of the Government bring about exactions which after all will be a deterrent to proper settlement. In every English journal one takes up, one finds great anxiety about getting the people on the land in England. The cry is, "Back to the land." And that cry ought to be much

louder in Australia. There is a tendency here for people to come into and to hang about the towns. Recently I have noticed numbers of men standing about the streets of Perth, perhaps watching buildings in progress. Many of them seem to be able-bodied workers, probably unable to secure employment, or perhaps their employment is irregular. It seemed to me that many of them would make most useful settlers, but they cannot obtain work in the country. There are, on the other hand, men who have a little means, but who do not care to go into the country; and even the financial institutions—I do not speak of the banks, because they do assist settlers, but the other financial institutions which lend money—look on country lands as of little value as securities. On city property these institutions will lend money much more freely than one would think safe. If it be true that they have a fear of the country's future, and retard its development, no wonder some people refrain from investing money in the country, and prefer city investments. There will be a serious and sorry awakening some day. What stood to Victoria in her distress? The broad acres. Even to-day those big institutions in Victoria which at one time did not look on broad acres as security are now seeking them in preference to city lands, except lands in the most important thoroughfares. The suburbs of Melbourne, Sydney, and other cities, are neglected by financial institutions, and more attention is being given to broad acres. With the acknowledged prolificness of our country, we have an immense wealth capable of development; and though we need caution in carrying out any proposals before us, do not let us fear as to results, if the departments are carefully administered, and the inducements held out are safe and reliable. We have many drawbacks in the country districts. There is in country life a dulness which seems to act as a deterrent to city people. But if they wish to see this country go ahead, they must do what has been done in other places, they must throw in their lot with the country people, and give up the idea of clinging so closely to the towns. They may get more pleasure from a town life; no doubt they do. But there is a limit to the growth of towns; for town dwellers must

dwindle unless the country thrives, and the time will come when, instead of looking with pride to our teeming streets, unless we help to forward country industries we shall find the town residents unsuccessful in the battle of life. On the whole, I do not find much fault with the administration of the Government. I feel that Ministers are imbued with good intentions, and with a desire to do their best so as to compare with any previous occupants of the Treasury bench. This I have said before, but I should have mentioned a disapproval in regard to the Government, and that is the matter of the reduction of railway rates. I feel that although there has been a clamour for a reduction of the railway rates, and although so much has been said about the infringement of State rights, still it was a case of looking after ourselves. We shall not get people in the Eastern States to look after us. We may look on their advancement with every pride as Australians; still there is a parochialism which may savour of self-interest, though it is self-preservation. I quite believe the Government will do all they possibly can to assist people in distant places. It has been said the reduction which should be made would be of assistance to the consumer on the goldfields, giving him his food cheaper. With the distant settlers I class not only the agriculturists but the goldfields people, and I do not think we are giving the distant settlers much by the reduction. The reductions are so small that a division cannot be made so as to reach the pockets of the consumer. In passing the new railway rates the Government did not look so closely into the matter as they should have done. They probably did look closely into the subject but without any special knowledge, and therefore did not effect such a just revision as could have been accomplished if they had had assistance or had obtained opinions from two, three, or four different sources to help them in arriving at a conclusion. As to the Commissioner of Railways, he has a statutory obligation to fulfil. He is appointed under an Act passed by Parliament, and he is there to regulate the business of our railways. We have often heard it said that he must make the railways pay, but we do not wish them to be made to

pay at the expense of the people of the country. I do not blame the Commissioner in putting forth his proposals: he is asked for certain work, and must have the money to carry it out. We have given him a certain right of revision, but we say in regard to the railway rates of the country the question of settling them still remains with the Government. Therefore the Government have the greater responsibility cast on them in the direction of carefully revising the rates to see that they do not press in an arbitrary manner on any section of the people. [MR. WATTS interjected.] I am glad the hon. member has spoken. He comes from a centre that has exhibited selfishness in regard to this matter which I say should not be present. The people in the hon. member's district have an advantage greater than that possessed by people a hundred miles south. They have their land at the same price as people farther away; they are at the very gate of the goldfields; they are close to the recognised port of this part of the country; and having these advantages they should not have objected to the slight disadvantage in the way of preferential rates. The difference between Northam and Katanning was 4s. a ton; to-day it is 10s. a ton. When one looks at the question all round this is an unfair change. People who reside at Northam or York or any of those centres can take a passage to Perth for 10s. second class, whereas from Katanning to Perth it costs 34s. second class. Then there is a decrease in the rates from 9s. 2d. a ton on the mineral class of goods to 3s. 10d. a ton in the more favoured localities referred to. We do not complain so much of this, but there is an injustice in having the rates changed. We ask for fair play in regard to preferential rates.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: You realise that the preferential rate should be abolished.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I do in the way the hon. member looks at it, but not in the way I look at it. As I have said in the House before, this has always been a bogey. The difference as between imported goods from Fremantle and local goods was only 3s. 9d.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: That is not the point.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I admit that when we come to the competing point we should make the rates the same for imported goods over the railways as for local goods. What I say is that on the branch lines and the long lines of railway, the longest throughout the State, the Government should take into consideration the question of giving what is called a preference on the zone system which is applicable in Australia. It exists still in New South Wales and in all parts of the world—in Canada, the United States, Cape Colony, the same system exists that I am asking for, the adoption of the zone system. We had it in existence; why interfere with it? I hope the Minister will look into this matter and he probably will give information when replying. It is a serious matter affecting the people. The member for Northam asks, Does the farmer get it or the merchant? I say the farmer gets it, because with the increase it means $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. a mile more for the carriage of wheat more than it did last week. Does the hon. member mean to say that will not have an influence on the price? The merchants must pay $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. less for it. If they did not get the advantage of that before it did not improve the position. The farmer will get $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. less for his grain than he did before.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: You do not argue that the zone system has been abolished. It is still in existence.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: But not on the lines I think should have been adopted. I say in assisting the Government in regard to these rates, that on to the goldfields we can send a ton of goods at less money than we could send them before, but what is the difference?—only 2s. 10d. Who is going to get the difference? How can you divide 2s. 10d. on a ton of chaff or a ton of flour? It really means that the Government will lose revenue without giving any advantage to anybody else. The buyer will get it, but not the public. On ton lots it will be available, but on small bag lots and pound lots it is not available. It is of no benefit to the consumer. The difference as between the rate from more favoured localities has not been improved; it has been interfered with. We are in a worse position as a competitor with more favoured localities. I admit that

when we joined Federation we had to conform to the conditions which were necessary in regard to inter-State rights obligations. The Premier at Hobart had to agree to it because such a clause was necessary, but we have a perfect right in this country to deal with our own when it does not come into competition with the products of the Eastern States. Another thing I should like to say, and perhaps this is not the fault of the Commissioner, because the rate book, I believe, was intended to be brought into force earlier in the year, it has come into force on the 17th July, which will mean a loss to people who have entered into contracts. It may mean a loss of thousands of pounds. It is said the farmer has a large advantage now. He got the higher rates in the earlier part of the year, but next year he will not get the advantage, he will lose it, because all the goods will have to be carried longer distances at rates from 2s. a ton to 12s. a ton. Take a man who has made a contract in which his profits are small. Supposing he has to deliver in Perth. There is 2s. 6d. a ton on chaff. He has to pay 6s. 6d. more for his ton of chaff, therefore he is going to lose on it. The rates should have been brought into existence in October. There would have been a loss then, but not so great. The present is an inopportune time for bringing the rates into existence. Contracts with the goldfields may not mean loss, but there is no gain, for the reduction is so small. In regard to the public works policy, that will be brought forward later on, but I would like to say that I disagree with the construction of a floating dock for this great country, with its possibilities and population of over a quarter of a million, and in a few years the population will be far greater. Even if we take the normal increase in ten years' time the population must be large, especially if we carry out an immigration policy. Our ports will have to be made use of, and instead of having the shipping which we have to-day there will be ten times as much shipping in five years. Therefore it seems to be unwise on the part of the Government to think of constructing a floating dock at such an important port as Fremantle. Let us set aside something else. I prefer to stop some other development

work rather than construct a floating dock at such an important port as Fremantle. It will give us a bad name. I agree with the Minister for Works that it is a very good thing to have such a dock as a temporary measure, that is if it had been constructed some time ago and we could not afford more money, but to-day we can afford more money. What is half a million pounds for the construction of such a dock compared with the advantages to be derived?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: Half a million will not do it; it will cost three-quarters of a million.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: We got an estimate some time ago of £560,000, and I think the work could be carried out for that. We must have a good dock at Fremantle, for it is the last port of call in Australia and is on the high road of the shipping of the world. It means that if you have a good dock here ships will come into this place for repairs. It will be a noted port of call, and we should do everything we can to induce that; because I believe that one of the elements of success and one of the essentials is to do the best we can, rather than attempt a temporary measure such as this. [**Mr. TAYLOR:** How are the docks paying in the rest of Australia?] It is not a question of paying, but of finding these conveniences. The hon. member is not a business man. We have to spend thousands before we can get a start on our work often, and we have to do it to develop business and trade. It would frighten people if they knew what has to be done before one penny is returned. [Interjection.] I think most of the floating docks have answered well. At Natal they had a floating dock, but look at the trouble; the first year a total wreck. There is trouble in bringing it out, and there is loss of time. We have now had loss of time in regard to this matter; and I as Minister controlling that department in earlier years take some of the blame for its not having been pushed on before. But, after all, the delays have not been such a great loss, if we are successful in carrying out the work now. I have almost concluded all I wish to say, and I shall leave other questions until such time as they crop up. I think the seriousness of the situation is evident. As an old member of

the House I have seen many no-confidence motions brought forward, and have seen them disposed of too; and I know well that there is a restlessness hanging about this House that is not good for the country, and the sooner the matter is brought to a conclusion the better. There are many harsh things said which perhaps we regret having said. We have perhaps said many things which hurt the personal feeling of members of this House. I always try to avoid them, if I can. I say, as I said just now, there is a desire to give credit where credit is due, and I can only re-echo the words of the leader of the Opposition in regard to the good which the Government have done in the directions I have mentioned. But of course there is no Government without a fault, and when the position is so serious, in our opinion or the opinion of the member who perhaps should have the matter in hand, let us either remove it or simplify it farther by carrying the vote we propose to a successful issue, so far as we are concerned. It may be asked, what serious charge have I against the Government? I have mentioned several things in which I disagree with them, but the most serious against them, to my mind, after all, is this, that though we have a lot of good men sitting on the Government side who have the best interests of the country at heart, still, after all, there seems an influence from without which has acted most detrimentally in some directions, and that is one of the troubles which I see from having what might be termed an exclusively Labour Government. If we are not going to be free in our actions, if we are to be governed from without by unions and other methods, it interferes with the good working of such an institution as this. We should be free to act. We are pledged to our constituents and to the interests of the country; and there are many men who come to the House with strong pledges who perhaps change their opinions, and perhaps for the better. But after all I do not care to see an outside influence dominating in a measure the good intentions, the good work of useful men. Among the members of the present Government I have many friends—personal friends—men who have visited my part of the country, and it has always been a pleasure to see them there; and

after visiting the country they have not only gained experience but they have given us encouragement in certain directions. There is much good in these visits, but I feel that I am not at one with the Government in those points I have taken exception to. Therefore, under the present circumstances I am sorry that I do not see my way to support them in a position in which they are now going to vote in regard to the amendment by the leader of the Opposition. Before concluding I would like to say that a remark by the member for North Perth (Mr. F. F. Wilson) a few nights ago or last night—for it seems so long since we started this—was that he has heard nothing but good of the present Government. No doubt that is true. I do not wish to doubt the hon. member, but he travels among a different set of people from the people I travel amongst, and I hear the opposite. I hear good said of the Government personally and of individual members of the Government; but—although it may perhaps be more of a bogey than anything else—there must be an unrestfulness in regard to the condition of affairs of the country. It seems to me that the parties in this House are so equally divided. They are divided in a way, and yet they are ruled as it were by a small section, and that gives unrestfulness too. The public do not know what is going to happen, and whilst this unrestfulness goes on things will not settle themselves here. Of course this motion may not have the result that is expected on this side of the House. If it has not, let us settle down to good and solid work as soon as we can. I feel that the position of affairs is an influence in the direction of unrestfulness; it has an influence in the direction of the staying of business, as it were. But I will say this in credit to the Government, that I feel they have looked as closely and more closely perhaps into the expenditure than any other men who have been there, and they have turned over every shilling, in a measure, before they spent it. I repeat that if the Government can continue in office and if they go on and do work such as will be useful to the country, there will be no one better pleased than I. I would like to say, too, there have been allusions made to the seekers for office. I have had experience.

I have known what it is to have perhaps the two busiest offices of the State under my control; and if I were to-day free from my own cares and the country needed me, I would be only too glad to take up any position they offered me for the good of the country. But I am not able to do this. I am so earnest in this matter that I would go so far as to say that, if need be and if there is a man outside who would be well fitted to take the leadership of any party in this House—and I say it without any reflection upon the present leaders—I would, with the consent of my own constituents, rather than continue the position I now hold, which I regard as a great honour and which I have held since the beginning of responsible government, give the position up and let someone else take it. That is the feeling I have to-day. It seems to me so serious. It grieves me to the heart when I see politics in this country degraded as they have been during the last few days by the political intrigues, the search for office made by a certain section of this House, especially by its leader. I think that at no time in the history of the State has it been more necessary for people to pull themselves together and act with determination, and let us end this unsatisfactory state of affairs, a condition which I take it is in no way countenanced by the members who sit on the Government side of the House, nor by those who sit on this side of the House.

MR. CONNOR: Ungenerous and not true.

HON. F. H. PRESSE: Quite true.

MR. CONNOR: It is not. You have no right to make a statement on reports you believe right.

HON. F. H. PRESSE: I believe it.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): In rising to speak to the amendment I need hardly say I do so with considerable regret. It grieves me to find that in the execution of what I believe to be my conscientious duty to the pledges which I gave my constituents 12 months ago, I should find myself as it were out of harmony with the ideals of the majority of that party which was returned 22 strong at the last general election. In anything I may say to-night I desire to make no bitter attacks on any members of the House, and those who were anticipating that I would give utterance to

some, shall I say spicy, phrases in regard to my views generally will, I hope, be utterly and entirely disappointed. In my opinion the country to-day—not only this House, because after all this House is but the servant of the great State we all desire anxiously to serve in its best interests—is looking anxiously forward to a satisfactory settlement of a condition of affairs which, in my opinion and I believe in that of the vast majority of the people of the State, is absolutely intolerable. In connection with the position of the Labour Government we find they were returned at the last general election 22 in numbers, in a House of 50. We also find they were assisted into the ranks of office by the generous aid of my friend the member for Kataunung (Hon. F. H. Piesse), who has just sat down, my friend the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), and certain others who, whilst opposed to the principles of the then Government, were even more vitally opposed to the principles and practices of the present party. But if we remember the circumstances under which my friend the member for Beverley voted for the deposition of the James Government and the elevation of the Labour party to office, we find that on the Address-in-Reply in the last session of Parliament he gave utterance to these words:—

For many years past there has been a steady rise on the part of the masses seeking power. That is the natural result of education. Anyone who objects to the masses obtaining power is condemning himself if he supported the cause of free and secular education. It is a natural corollary that men of ordinary intelligence should, when they can utilise that intelligence, seek for power; and the man who blames them for doing so is, I think, hardly worthy of consideration. In my opinion, as this activity on the part of the masses, or a portion of them, has strengthened, so have the masses pressed their desires upon the Ministry and the Parliament of the day; and the present Ministry have gone a long way towards meeting those desires. To-day the position is that the Ministry do not possess a majority in the House, nor have the party directly opposing them a majority. If this state of affairs continue, the result must be that the desires of the Opposition will grow stronger every day, as will their influence on the Government benches; and the Opposition may force their desires upon Parliament, owing to the persistence of the Ministry in trying to maintain office with a very narrow majority. This situation I consider very

unhealthy for any State, and therefore I think the sooner it is ended the better. Such is my reason for taking my place on these (Opposition) cross-benches.

I do not quarrel altogether with the sentiments expressed by the member for Beverley in the words I have just read in regard to the position he took up on the no-confidence debate in relation to the James Ministry. It seems to me that there is a good matter for application in that sentiment, which may be applied to the position so far as the Labour Government in this House is concerned. The ideal of the Labour party, so far as I have understood it, has been the attainment of certain fixed principles which, in the eyes of that party, would not make for the interest or advancement of any section of the community, but which, if realised and placed on the statute-book of the country, would make for the actual advancement of the whole State in common. Had it not been so, I venture to think that the Labour party, as a party outside Parliament, would never have drafted the programme which it did to ameliorate the social condition of the people of the State; and in seeing that there are readjustments of social conditions, it may in all probability be necessary to do some slight injury to some members of the community who are small in number, but who have probably prospered at the expense of the major portion of the community. If that be true—and I do not think it can be gain-said—it seems to me to be something quite justifiable in the circumstances. I ask members on this (the Government) side of the House what would be the position taken up by the leader of the Federal Labour party in regard to the present situation? Would Mr. Watson have found it necessary, in the language of the present Minister for Works, to have said:—

These members should remember that although the Government's methods might not be ideal, it was absolutely necessary—and it had been found so in every State where the policy of the party was in existence—to revise its plans to meet the exigencies of the moment. That had been found to be so even in Queensland, where they had the *crème de la crème* of the party, and where they also found it imperative to make common cause with people who were not of their own ranks. The same was being done in Victoria, and critics here should realise that in this State also it was

necessary to revise their plans according to the circumstances of the moment?

If that be true, it is tantamount to condemning everything that the intelligence of the Labour party outside this House has deemed necessary and requisite in advancing the interests of the community at large. If it has been necessary to revise plans, it will seem it has been necessary to do so not so much in the interests of the State as that the Labour party may continue in a dominant position in the Legislature of this State, and that it may be enabled by its minority representation in this House to absolutely carry out the programme we all went for so straightforwardly at the last general elections. A position in which any party in Parliament has the responsibility of office without the numerical power to carry out its wishes is in my opinion subversive of all the sound principles of responsible government. How can we have responsible government when we have a party of 22 members holding the reins of office and anxious to stay there, and 23 men in Opposition anxious to get to the places occupied by the 22, and four other members neither directly nor indirectly allied to either party? The position must necessarily be that the dominating influence must always go to that portion which represents the buffer between the two parties interested in obtaining the seals of office. That is absolutely unavoidable; and unless there can be some satisfactory compromise, some fair, square, equitable, and above-board arrangement either between the whole of the members sitting on the Government side of the House, or between some of those sitting on this side of the House and those in Opposition, it will be absolutely impossible to carry on the affairs of the country with satisfaction and credit and with any degree of stability. What is the alternative? In my opinion it is a scandal to think that, coming fresh as we have from our constituencies, it is impossible for the 50 gentlemen elected to carry on the affairs of His Majesty's Government in this House. Why is it found impossible? Is it because there are not sufficient men of capacity, brains, and intelligence in this House to carry on the affairs of the State? No. It is because there are certain rigid party lines laid

down to the exclusion of the best and ablest men who stand in this House today. The alternative, in my opinion, is one which, I believe, has found a prominent place in the platform of the Labour party, that is to do away with the present system of appointing Ministers, and to adopt the principle that the House of 50 members may elect the best, the ablest, and the most qualified men returned to this Parliament to take the responsibility of administering the affairs of the State. My friend the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan) remarks that I might have a look in then. If I had no more chance than the hon. member has, I would never get in. [MR. TROY: You imagine that.] If my imagination were as wild and woolly as that of the member for Mount Magnet, I might do equally idiotic things as himself. If it be found impossible in this House to agree to an amendment to the Constitution Act to enable this state of affairs to be brought about, there is only one alternative, and that is to allow the people of the country to say whether or not they approve of the present intolerable condition of affairs; and I am quite prepared to go to the country and refer the questions which are engaging the attention of Parliament to the constituencies of this State for their verdict.

MR. BURGESS: Some members do not want to go.

MR. TAYLOR: It is not the going: it is the coming back.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I speak in regard to this matter as one who represents a constituency where by far the predominant influence is the Labour influence; and I speak as one who undoubtedly believes that the principles I advocated at the last general election are the principles which, if carried out and placed on the statute-book of this State, would make for the advantage and prosperity of every member of this community. Labour men are sent to Parliament for the purpose, if possible, of realising to the fullest possible extent the ideals they have fought for, and which they have advocated so ably, so eloquently, and so consistently in the past; and it seems to me that until the Labour party as a party are returned from the constituencies in sufficiently strong numbers to enable them to carry out their pro-

gramme which they are supposed to believe in, it will be absolutely impossible for them to represent their constituencies and their policy with any degree of credit or honour to themselves. In passing, I say it is significant to observe the attitude of the leader of the Federal Labour party in regard to this matter. We find that in the recent division which resulted in the defeat of the Reid Ministry an opportunity presented itself to Mr. Watson and the members of his party to become associated with the administration of the affairs of the Commonwealth in a joint Ministry with the Deakin party; but I am informed on the very best authority and from authentic sources that it was clearly and definitely decided on the part of the Labour party that in the future they would not ally themselves with any other party in the House, that is that they would not join in any coalition Ministry, and would only support the Deakin Ministry in so far as it was consistent with the tenets of their faith. It may be that they have found it necessary to do this, but it is significant that Mr. Watson has taken up this attitude after so recent a tour through Queensland where a coalition Ministry exists to-day, and where, I believe, there is almost unlimited and unbounded trouble among the Labour party, caused by the truckling and trimming that must be carried on owing to the inability of the coalition Government to carry out their programme when they have a majority in Parliament. In connection with the present Government and in connection with the attitude I have taken up in the past, I think it is only fair for me to say that any dissatisfaction I have had has not been born during the last 24 hours, that it is not a thing of yesterday, and that it is not one that has been born by a refusal of the leader of the Labour party to recognise my ability or otherwise for Ministerial office or any office in this House. My opposition, it will be remembered, dated from the time the first policy speech at Subiaco was announced when in my opinion there was a complete and defined departure from the Labour policy of this country; and while I am to-day bound to confess and admit that the policy of the second speech, enunciated at Subiaco recently, is more progressive, democratic, and in harmony with the ideals of the Labour

party than the previous one, I am still forced to the conclusion that it is even now a contravention of the beliefs and tenets of the Labour party of to-day.

MR. KEYSER: What did Congress say?

MR. A. J. WILSON: In my opinion Congress carried a vote of censure or want of confidence in the policy of the present Government.

MR. SCADDAN: You show your usual density.

MR. A. J. WILSON: Congress carried a resolution based on the policy of the Government in the matter of land values taxation. [MR. SCADDAN: You are absolutely wrong.] In the language of the member for Hannans, it affirmed almost unanimously the principle of taxation of land values without exemptions. [MR. SCADDAN: The future policy.] It is evidence of the customary absurdity of the member for Ivanhoe that the opinion of the Labour party of to-day is not its opinion, but is the opinion of two or three years hence. It is absolutely absurd for any man to say that the opinion of Congress to-day is not in favour of land values taxation without any exemptions at all. I say, therefore, that decision proves conclusively that the policy of the Labour Government in the matter of the exemption of land to the extent of £400 is entirely opposed to the policy of the party in this House to-day. [MEMBER: What did the previous Congress say?] I do not know whether it is the idea of some members of this Labour party that they should revive the ideal of the Labour party of 50 years ago. I say that the Labour party is up-to-date. Now we will go to another question, regarding which I think the Labour Congress passed a vote of censure on the present Government, and that is the question of the continued and persistent alienation of lands by the present Government. [MEMBER: They would soon turn you out if you brought that in.] Whether that be so or not, I am only dealing with what I believe to be the enunciated policy and the firm policy of the Labour party in this State to-day. And if I am here to represent that Labour party I certainly want to do the best I honestly and conscientiously can to see the realisation of those ideals at the earliest possible moment, and I am not prepared to truckle and to trim my

ideas and views on this matter at the whim or will of any party or any section of parties that may be assembled in this Chamber at the present time. There is another question on which my hon. friends will remember the Labour party are opposed to the proposals of the Government. I refer to the construction of the Pilbarra Railway by private enterprise. What is the resolution carried at that Congress? It reads as follows:—

That in the opinion of this Congress the proposal of the Government to construct the Pilbarra Railway by subsidised private enterprise is against the principles of the Labour party.

MEMBER: What are the words which were struck out of that resolution?

MR. A. J. WILSON: It does not matter what were the words struck out. The only question that concerns the followers of the Labour party to-day, and those who desire to interpret that policy, is what was left in. Congress expressed the opinion that the construction of that line by private enterprise was against the platform of the Labour party. That ought to be acted upon by the Labour party in this House, if they wish to fall into line with the Labour party outside Parliament. The words that were struck out were "and should be withdrawn." What difference does it make? Is it not a sufficient direction to those who believe in the principles of the Labour party in this State, when a thing is in contravention of Labour principles, without adding the superfluous and unnecessary words that it should be withdrawn? I have given expression to these sentiments, first because I desire to deal now with statements made by the Premier in this House in regard to certain members of his party voting on the Address-in-Reply. It will be remembered that the Premier, turning round to members on these benches and with both eyes on myself, said that he was prepared to ask members on this side of the House who had no confidence in him as leader and who had no confidence in the Ministry to vote against the Ministry and against him as leader; and he went on to say that if he was hampered continually and repeatedly attacked by members sitting on this side of the House, he would have no alternative but to hand his re-

signation to his Excellency the Governor. What does that mean? Does it mean anything but a threat to members on this side of the House? Does he think that the threat of a possible dissolution will prevent men from having the courage to vote in accordance with their principles? He went farther in regard to this matter and said he hoped only those members would support the Government who supported the policy contained in the Governor's Speech, and that those who voted for the Government would be fighting for the Government policy. It is idle for the Premier to wax courageous in a matter of this kind. In my opinion it is to a very large extent cowardly and contemptible to do so, in face of the fact that he knows that every member of the Labour party in the House has signed a pledge to do something, to vote on questions affecting the fate of the Government not as his constituents say, but as the majority of the caucus of the Labour party say. And I assert that in my opinion, if it had not been for the inclusion of that pledge in the Labour platform, the Premier would not have had the courage to say what he did say in regard to members voting against him on this particular question. I am expressing my opinions, and I would like some members who have already expressed their opinions in regard to this subject, and some who have opinions yet to express, to say what they are going to do in regard to the Governor's Speech. What do we find there? We find we are committed to the construction of the Pilbarra Railway by private enterprise. The Premier, in dealing with this matter at Subiaco, said that providing a satisfactory offer was received he was prepared to recommend the House to accept it. What is the position of the Labour party in regard to that matter? I venture to say there are not eight members of the Labour party who would dare to vote for the construction of the Pilbarra Railway by private enterprise. My friend the member for North Perth (Mr. F. F. Wilson) has already signified his opposition to the Pilbarra Railway, and thereby has, in my opinion, already violated the utterances of the Premier in regard to the support of it contained in the Governor's Speech. The hon. member has always been consistent on that

matter, and on the question of the taxation of unimproved land values, and I think he believes in the principle of nonalienation of Crown lands; yet notwithstanding the challenge of the Premier he feels bound to endorse the policy of the Government, after the Premier has said the endorsement of that policy means, as I believe he intended, the building of the Pilbarra Railway by private enterprise, a tax on unimproved land values with exemptions, and the continued alienation of the Crown lands of this State. [THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do you not recognise that an election took place on those issues lately?] If there be any accusation against myself, and I have no doubt there will be because I have the courage to take up a stand which I believe I am honestly entitled to do, holding as I do the principles of the Labour party, the accusation will be, and the only accusation can be, that I have stuck tenaciously to the principles I espoused when I sought the suffrages of the electors of Forrest 12 months ago. [MR. SCADDAN: What about the amendment you seconded?] My friend wants to know why I seconded the amendment moved by the member for West Perth. [MR. TROY: Probably because he asked you.] That may be true, but it is quite evident that the member for West Perth would not descend to ask the member for Mount Magnet. [MR. TROY: He will not get the opportunity.] I may say in regard to the Midland Railway that I find myself somewhat surprised at the fact that members should seek to drag this question out of this important debate. In my opinion, with all due respect for those who desire to have it withdrawn from this discussion, it is not a question altogether of what is the value of this land or what is the value of this railway. It is a question that the Government have already agreed to make this purchase if they can get the consent of Parliament to do so. The Government are therefore, in my opinion, absolutely bound hand and foot—irrespective of what Parliament may think, what members of this House may think, what their own party may think, they are bound hand and foot to purchase that line in accordance with the price offered and submitted by the company possessing

this property. The position is this, and it is a position against which I protest most strongly, that there are at all events 16 members of the Labour party on this side of the House who have not had the opportunity of deciding in their own minds whether or not the purchase is a fair and equitable one or not, or whether it is advantageous to purchase the line at the present juncture. I say they had not had the opportunity up to the time the Government agreed, subject to the consent of Parliament, to make the purchase of the line. And what will be the result? The result will be that if these 16 members are of opinion that this line should not be bought to-day, my friends on the Opposition side will be able to come over and assist the Government to buy the line in spite of the principles and views of the Labour party in this Parliament to-day. I think it is certainly a question of principle. It is a most vital question so far as increasing the indebtedness of this State is concerned. We want to bear in mind that already we have a heavy public indebtedness in this country. Our public debt is growing in a ratio entirely out of proportion to the growth of population. From the year 1898 until the end of December, 1904, subsequent to the purchase of the Great Southern Railway, the total indebtedness of this State has increased by 74 per cent., whilst the population has only increased in the small comparative ratio of 40 per cent. If we go on increasing our public indebtedness, what will be the inevitable result? It will eventually lead us to absolute ruin. There must be a time in which we must keep our indebtedness in a fair proportion to the growth of the population. In addition to that, we have to consider whether or not, after all, as my friend the member for West Perth pointed out, the necessity itself really exists to buy this line at present. What are the grounds which are commonly alleged for the necessity? They are that the company at the present time are blocking settlement upon this area. And why are they blocking settlement to-day? Is it because the company are asking exorbitant prices, or because the land is richer than the Crown lands available for settlement? If they are asking unduly high prices, and are only

postponing the sale until equally good Crown land becomes scarcer, and in consequence of that increasing scarcity the good lands of the company rise in value and command a higher price, the best way to overcome that difficulty is not to buy the land and throw on the State the onus and expense of settling it, but to apply the principle of land values taxation, so as to make the company settle the land themselves, and relieve the country of the expense and the responsibility of promoting that settlement. The only other argument for the purchase of this railway is that of the convenience of the travelling public. Are we to saddle this State with an increased indebtedness of $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions of principal, and the consequent interest, merely for the convenience of the paltry handful of people who now use that railway? In any case, have we not now, in the terms of the agreement under which the railway was constructed by the Midland Company, the power and the opportunity to enforce such conditions as will make the standard of comfort and convenience on that line equal to anything that can reasonably be expected? Though, like the member for Hannans (Mr. Nelson), I do not pose as a financial expert, I am satisfied that the ability of this or any other State to meet its obligations can be only in proportion to the population and to the productive power of its workers. If our national debt is to be piled up, as I have already suggested, in the ratio of 74 per cent. of debt to 40 per cent. of population, the inevitable result must be disaster. And if we pursue that policy, can we wonder that there are cries of bad times and a demand, as there has been and is now throughout the State, for lower wages, for a reduced cost of production in the mining, the timber, and every other industry? There is undoubtedly an all-round general demand for a reduction of wages; and is it any wonder, when our public indebtedness is being piled up in so great a ratio to our increase of population, that the increase of our debt is so great and the increase of our population so small? One cannot close one's eyes to the fact that there does exist in the State to-day, in spite of the presence of a Labour Government, a condition of industrial affairs which I do not think has been equalled here, at all

events for the last 14 years. To-day on the goldfields, as everyone knows, there is an increasing cry for a reduction of miners' wages. [LABOUR MEMBER: There has always been that cry.] Yes; more or less; but it has not always been true that the reduction has taken place. It has now taken place; and consequently the purchasing and spending power of the workers has been reduced; and when we reduce that power we must inevitably lessen the prosperity of the State as a whole. In addition to this general reduction of workers' wages, there has been an increasing number of people who find it almost impossible to get anything like regular work. On the goldfields, as I am assured by those who ought to know, there is a constantly increasing number of people out of work. In the metropolitan district this is so in a large and accentuated degree. There are more unemployed men now walking about Perth and the metropolitan area than there have been for very many years; and all through the southern districts we find a similar state of things. In the timber industry, no less than eight or nine mills have closed down during the last 18 months; and this necessarily means that the men who were engaged therein are thrown out of employment and must seek it elsewhere. The majority of them swell the already overcrowded ranks of the unemployed. [LABOUR MEMBER: Your namesake is taking notes.] I do not care who takes notes; but if some of the Labour Ministers would take a few more notes on the industrial position, things might be very much better. I am sure the House will bear with me if I refer to the condition of the worker in the timber industry to-day. The Minister for Mines (Hon. T. H. Bath), in speaking on this question, said the Government are doing something for the workers. The Government propose to curtail the area of land held by the Millars' Combine, to reappropriate certain lands held by the combine and not now utilised. That is something which certainly ought to be done. I think no company has any right to hold more land than it can conveniently and advantageously use; and it has no right to hold country to the exclusion of other people who may be desirous of utilising it for any wealth-producing pur-

pose. But the mere fact that the Ministry are prepared to curtail the area of land held by the combine will not assist those workers now threatened with a serious reduction of wages and an extension of working hours in spite of the high cost of living at the timber mills. I do not think this reduction will take place; but it is indisputable that a strong attempt is being made by the representatives of the combine to bring it about. [MEMBER: They want more mills.]

Whether they want more mills is not the question; but I say the men in that industry want more assistance, and they have the right to look to a Labour Government, above all other Governments, to do something, to raise a little finger, to prevent the encroachment by a big combine such as is now threatening the freedom of the workers. Outside of this proposed curtailment of the areas of land held by the combine, what else have the Labour Government done to improve or ameliorate the condition of the workers in this great industry?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. W. D. JOHNSON): Would you urge a reduction of railway freights?

MR. A. J. WILSON: I have not urged a reduction of railway freights; but I have urged that on this question at all events, if the Government are really interested in the welfare of the workers, it is about time they made some inquiry into the matter, to prove whether there is any justification for reducing the freights, whether these workers or this industry are entitled to any consideration. I say unhesitatingly, it was not the duty of this Government to treat the whole question with silent contempt, and to ignore the almost unanimous request of the workers in that industry for an inquiry. The workers did not ask for concessions, but merely for investigation into the actual position of the industry, with a view, if possible, to some remedy and some improvement in the industrial conditions. I may say it is significant, and only in keeping with the manner in which the Government have treated the timber industry, that they should refer in the Governor's Speech only to the developments in the mining, agricultural, and pastoral industries as being substantial and of a gratifying nature, and giving indications of progress in the

future. Probably Ministers knew nothing at all about the timber industry; and if so, it is additional evidence of the fact that they ought to have made an inquiry. Dealing with the question of land values taxation and exemptions, I may say I am an uncompromising supporter of no exemptions. One of the ideals I have always fought for has been the securing of equality of opportunity for every person in the community. But I think that the natural corollary to equality of opportunity is equality of burden; that the poor man as well as the rich should bear his share of public burdens; that the man who owns five acres should bear his share of taxation as well as the man who owns 500 or 5,000 acres. I think it is absolutely inconsistent with the ideals and aims of the Labour party as a party to advocate class taxation in the nature of a proposal for a tax on land values with a £400 exemption; a proposal which I believe would put a tax on 13 per cent. of the landholding community and allow the remaining 87 per cent. to go absolutely free. Of course it is scarcely to be expected that I should be found in agreement with the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) on such a matter, although I seconded his amendment.

MR. MORAN: I am not opposed to the principle, but say the money is not wanted.

MR. A. J. WILSON: I quite understand; but I am dealing with the question of exemptions. I am certainly opposed to raising this money merely to make up deficits or to carry on the administration. In this matter we should always study financial economy. I say we ought to keep the administration of Parliament and the State within fair and reasonable bounds; and we should not always spend just as much as we can drag out of the people. If we are to put a tax on land values, we should not, if we raise £200,000 or £400,000, take advantage of that to pursue a reckless administrative and public works policy. If we initiate land values taxation and an income tax for the purpose of swelling the funds available for the ship of State, we shall act very unwisely. But if we impose a tax on land values for the purposes of bringing into use suitable agricultural lands, and of appropriating for the general requirements some of that value created by the

whole of the people, and we find ourselves piling up revenue, we must relieve the people in some other direction. That seems to me absolutely inevitable. [MEMBER: How?] When we find what we receive from the taxes on land and incomes, when we find how much we have received in excess of our actual requirements, we shall then be able to judge in what way other taxes can be reduced so as to relieve the taxpayer. I am bound to take exception to the recent reshuffle in the Ministerial dovocote. I do so, not because I think that the men who are put in are less able than the men put out, but because I think that the methods adopted in this connection by the Premier were utterly unworthy of any self-respecting member of the House. I say that to have done what the Premier did in this matter is certainly something that would cause the average person to have no confidence in the administration of a gentleman who would do as he did. Particularly in Mr. Holman's case we have evidence of something which would be an inducement to shake one's confidence in the ability of the gentleman who, for the present time, is leader of the Labour party. We find Mr. Holman is allowed to go away to his constituency and address his constituents as Minister of the Crown, and at a time when the leader of the Government knew that he and his colleague (the Colonial Secretary) were to be jettisoned out of the Ministry. In all fairness to Mr. Holman and to his colleague, the least the Premier could have done was to have communicated with them and said, "I believe my Ministry can be strengthened, if you two gentlemen would retire, by the inclusion of two other members of the House." I venture to say that if the Premier had gone to these men in this way, they were sufficiently patriotic Labour men in the interests of the party to have voluntarily resigned, instead of being chucked out in the dirty and mean way they were. This, at any rate, shows a characteristic of the gentleman who is leader of the party which would lead me at all events to have no confidence in him as a leader. In addition, taking into consideration that his policy, as a policy, is one with which I am not in harmony, and that it is in contravention of the principles I placed

before my constituents 12 months ago, I find it absolutely impossible to support him and the policy contained in the Governor's Speech; and in these circumstances I feel justified in seconding the amendment of the member for West Perth. In view of the challenge thrown out by the Premier, and not being willing to adopt everything in the Governor's Speech, I feel amply justified in taking the stand I have taken. At all events I have been consistent throughout my political career towards the Government. I am actuated, not by any personal spleen or petty animosity to any member of the House, but by what I believe to be conscientious and straightforward principles; and whatever the consequences of my action may be, I will bow at any time to the will of the people I have the honour to represent in this House.

MR. C. C. KEYSER (Albany): I desire to speak at the present time in order that I may follow the member for Forrest in so far as, being a Labour member, I find it my duty to stay here and support the Government, while he finds it his duty to vote against the Government on this no-confidence motion. He has given his reasons for doing so. I shall endeavour to give mine. I should like to review the position from the beginning. After the last general election 22 Labour members were returned, and practically 24 members were returned to support the then Premier (Mr. James), and there were four Independents. When the vote had been taken we found that the Independents were not prepared, or could not see their way clear, to support the James Government. The only natural result when the James Government had been voted out was that the Labour party, being the stronger party, took office with the voluntary support of the Independents. We must remember that, so far as the country was concerned, the issue before the people was very clear. It was a question of a Labour Government or government by the James Government. What did we find? The people sent in 22 members in favour of the Labour principles and 28 against them. So far as the country was concerned, it spoke strongly against the Labour party taking the reins of office. Then why were the Labour party, seeing they were in the minority, allowed to take the

reins of office? Why were they given the opportunity to do so? Simply because, though the country had spoken against them, there was some personal antagonism between the Independents and the then Government; and rather than that there should be a coalition between the James Government and the Independents and rather than bow to the wishes of the State, those members were content to allow that personal spleen to separate them and see another party in power.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in making that statement.

MR. KEYSER: I withdraw it; although I think it is the case.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw it in an unqualified manner.

MR. KEYSER: I withdraw. Seeing that the Labour party took office with the support of the Independents, some exception has been taken that they have not tried to carry their Labour policy in full, that they have not in its purity tried to place it on the statute-book. How could the Labour party, in face of the fact that the State had spoken against them, make any endeavour to place their platform in its purity on the statute-book? They could not possibly do it. There was practically a coalition between the Independents and the present Government. I take it that it is a maxim of coalition economy that there should be equality of sacrifice. Where we have two parties amalgamated for the purpose of having stable Government, one party gives way and the other party gives way also; and that was the arrangement made. The Government agreed to give away so much of their policy, to tune down their platform, and the Independents on the other hand agreed to tune down their conservatism. [MR. CONNOR: Oh!] That was the exact position. Personally I do not think anything else could have been done. How was it possible for 22 members to carry on Government unless the Independents helped them? The Independents stated they were not willing to help the Government unless their views were considered; and that is how the Government have carried on up to date. The member for Forrest said that he thought the present position was intolerable; and the leader of the Opposition said that the

present position was an outrage against the principles of responsible government. I think the leader of the Opposition was stating what is correct. I agree with him *in toto* that the present position is an outrage against the ideas of responsible government, and personally I think the sooner a period is put to the present condition of affairs the better it will be. [MR. CONNOR: Go to the country.] I would rather see the Independents as a party come over to the present Government, and a coalition take place between them. Let them adopt a common platform to which both parties give assent, and let us have stable government. If they cannot agree to that, then let the Independents go over and join the Opposition as a body. [MR. BURGESS: We won't have them.] If the Independents are not prepared to do that, I quite agree with the member for Forrest that there should be a dissolution. I am perfectly agreeable to take part in a vote that will bring about a dissolution. [MR. BOLTON: Hear, hear. Never mind the cost to the country.] I do not think the member for North Fremantle is considering the country; he is considering himself; and while my position at Albany may not be too secure, for I have no mortgage on the seat, I would far rather lose my seat in order that we might have stable government than remain in the House under present conditions. The member for Forrest said he was against the construction of the Pilbarra Railway by private enterprise, and also that it was against the platform lately adopted by Congress. I may say that no shibboleth of private enterprise or of socialism will ever prevent me from supporting any principle which in my opinion would be in the interests of the State. I am not wedded to the goddess of socialism or of private enterprise. I would not make it a fetish of either principle. I believe that time and circumstance alone decide the advisableness of adopting either principle. On the Opposition side there are members who are afraid of socialism under some circumstances, and who worship private enterprise. I believe in monopolies being nationalised for this reason: whilst I believe in private enterprise, it cannot exist unless there is opportunity. If you have trustism or monopolism you

cannot have opportunity for private enterprise. For the State to nationalise monopolies does not interfere in any degree with private enterprise. [MR. FRANK WILSON: What about commercialism?] Yes; Sir John Forrest's commercialism. The member for Forrest stated that the Premier had not followed in full the Labour platform, and because of that he had spoken strongly against the Premier on various platforms of the State, and had called the Premier a renegade and political traitor, and had said he was mean and contemptible. The Premier challenged the member for Forrest, as he had thus spoken of him, to go a step farther and vote against the Government. And I ask, could any hon. member take a position other than the position the Premier has taken up? Instead of its being a cowardly act on the part of the Premier to challenge the member for Forrest, it was dishonourable and cowardly on the part of the member for Forrest.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is transgressing the rules of the House in using those words.

MR. KEYSER: The hon. member used those words.

MR. SPEAKER: I understand the hon. member is accusing the member for Forrest of dishonourable conduct. If he does so he must withdraw.

MR. KEYSER: I withdraw. What I said was that the hon. member accused the Premier of being cowardly, and said the Premier challenged him to leave this party, as according to the pledge when a question of the fate of the Government was brought forward he had to vote with the Government. I said I thought it was cowardly to some extent, or altogether, on the part of the member for Forrest to hide himself behind that pledge, yet on the public platform to attack the Premier as he had done. For the Premier to ask the member for Forrest to carry out the logical conclusion of his talk on the platform and cross the floor of the House was the only position any honourable Premier could take up.

MR. FOULKES: Has the Premier power to grant absolution?

MR. KEYSER: When a member feels himself out of touch with his leader and his party, and considers that his party is wrong and that he is right, he ought to

take up the position of either crossing the floor of the House or resigning his seat and contesting it again against the party. If I found that I considered my party violated their pledges as a party, I should not hesitate for one moment to resign my seat and contest it again against the party who I considered were breaking their pledges. The member for Forrest has referred to the Midland Railway. The Cabinet decided after viewing the evidence they could get, to bring the matter before Parliament, and decided to support the purchase; but the member for Forrest should have told the House that Cabinet absolved members from supporting the proposal unless they thought it the right thing to do. The Premier gave the member for Forrest thoroughly to understand this; he knew the position well; yet in his place in the House the hon. member tried to lead Parliament to believe that the Premier was going to make this a test of life, and that when it came to a vote the Premier could claim the vote of the member for Forrest. I may inform members that such is not the case. With regard to the timber industry, the member for Forrest complained that the Government had not done anything at all to look into the timber industry and try to devise means to place the industry on favourable terms. One of the first things the Government did was to appoint a select committee to inquire into the timber industry of the State. The committee held meetings, and went into the question thoroughly. The member for Forrest was the convener of the meetings; but the evidence obtained by that committee might have led them to report that the only solution of the difficulty meant a reduction of wages. For that reason probably, a report was never submitted to the House. The member for Forrest stated that he did not believe in an exemption in the land tax, because he believed in equality of burden. I believe exemptions in a land tax do mean equality of burden. If a man owns 200 acres of land and gets from that the bare necessities of life, and another man owns 400 acres of land and gets more than the necessities of life from it, for both to be taxed means that there is an inequality of sacrifice, because one is taxed on the necessities of life and

the other is taxed on money that he could put away or invest. To come to the question of the amendment by the member for West Perth, I think we might for the moment consider the position. A conference was held the other day between the Government supporters and the Independents, and according to the printed result of that conference, which appeared in the newspapers and which is public property now, so that I shall not be tied in any way in referring to it, we had this fact: the member for West Perth wanted to get the position of Premier of the Labour party, and failing the position of Premier, he was willing to be included as an honorary Minister of the Daglish Government.

MR. H. GREGORY: Who suggested that?

MR. KEYSER: Never mind who suggested it.

MR. FRANK WILSON: Why did he want to be honorary?

MR. KEYSER: I believe the reason was that he did not want to face his electors. The fact remains he wanted to become an honorary member of the Government. What did that carry with it? It carried this: had he become an honorary member of the Ministry he would have been pledged to the policy as delivered by the Premier at Subiaco, he would have become a party to it. What did we find last night after the member for West Perth had been rejected? We find him condemning the policy of the Government to the utmost, saying practically, in the words of the leader of the Opposition, that it was a reckless gallop policy. He said that the Premier when propounding his policy had no idea of where the money was coming from. I venture to say the leader of the Opposition's charge against the Government paled into insignificance in the light of the charge delivered by the member for West Perth. Yet this very member who so sharply criticised the Government and tried as he did to hold them up to ridicule, was the very member who wanted to become an honorary Minister. The leader of the Opposition stated during his speech that he doubted the sincerity of the Premier. I think we have some cause for doubting the sincerity of the leader of the Inde-

pendent party. The position now appears to me to be this: after not being successful in getting into this Ministry, the member for West Perth is now prepared or he has gone so far as to move practically a vote of no-confidence in the Government. He was prepared to join the Ministry, and because it would not have him he has gone so far as to move a vote of want of confidence in the Government. What does that mean?

MR. A. E. THOMAS: Who would not have it?

MR. KEYSER: The Labour party.

MR. THOMAS: Tell what did occur. I will tell the House what did occur, and your speech will be amongst the number.

MR. KEYSER: You are at liberty to do that. As a matter of fact I did not speak.

MR. THOMAS: I flatly deny that. You were the first speaker at the conference.

MR. CONNOR: And the worst.

MR. SPEAKER: The member for Kimberley is out of order in making a remark when he is not in his place.

MR. KEYSER: What I have stated is absolutely the fact. The report that appeared in the newspaper was written by the Premier and the leader of the Independent party, the member for West Perth, who will bear my statement out. If we had accepted the hon. member as honorary Minister he was willing to support the Government and keep them in power. Because he was not accepted, he does not want the Government to reign any longer.

MR. FOULKES: Was he willing to carry out the platform?

MR. KEYSER: The fact that he was willing to become an honorary Minister carries that, because he would have been only one in seven, and the policy of the Ministry had already been propounded.

MR. A. E. THOMAS: You say you did not speak at the conference?

MR. KEYSER: That has nothing to do with the question. The position is this I take it, that either the hon. member must put this Government out, and if he does not succeed in that, the Independents must support the Opposition in putting the Government out.

MR. R. G. BURGESS: We won't have them.

MR. KEYSER: Because if they are unsuccessful in the position they take against the Government, and it is a position to get rid of us, how can they logically vote in favour of retaining us here after they have failed in their mission? And another position that appeals to me is this. How, after trying to retain this Government in power, can they logically put in power those in opposition to this party? That is the position. I think the only logical end of such a state of affairs must be an appeal to the country as soon as possible, and I hope it will come. As regards the encouragement of immigration, our population during the last four years has increased by 70,000, which is over a quarter of our entire population, and it is a question, notwithstanding this large increase, whether our unemployed to-day are more numerous than four years ago. I very much doubt whether they are. What does it prove? It proves that Western Australia, with a large area of country, roughly a million square miles, a country sixteen times larger than England and Wales, with large quantities of excellent land, with a beautiful and varied climate, with a sure rainfall, with a climate practically free from drought, is able to absorb an immense population, and for that reason I think every endeavour should be made by this Government to attract immigrants to our shores. Personally I am not against steps being taken that will assure to Western Australia a large influx of population. I think we can absorb all who come here. In fact, it would be a calamity with our large area of land if we could not support more than 250,000 people. The thing is absurd. I take it we have enough land sufficiently good not only to give employment to 250,000 but to four million or five million; and that is what is required. We have a certain market for all we are able to produce, and a growing market, in face of the fact that so many people are coming to Western Australia, but in addition to that we have a market in the old country, an inexhaustible market when we remember that the old country annually imports grain and flour to the extent of £70,000,000, meat £30,000,000, dairy produce £60,000,000, fruit and wine £20,000,000, and when also we remember that very shortly not only shall we

have the right to participate in this market, but a preferential right. Surely this ought to be a strong inducement to the legislators of this State to settle our lands. I venture to say that unless this State or the Commonwealth in general solves the problem of population, our fate will be that of the ancient civilisations of Assyria and Egypt, Greece, and Rome. We are practically the only State in the Commonwealth making any headway so far as population is concerned. The population of the Commonwealth is going down; and we must remember that although gold has contributed largely to this State, the continued prosperity of any country is ultimately based upon its agriculture. For that reason I agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) in this respect, and in this respect only, that we ought to do our very utmost to encourage population. [MR. F. CONNOR: Abolish Parliament. That is what you ought to do.] I venture to say it would be one of the best things that could happen to this State, if Parliament shut up for five years, if we passed no farther legislation, but gave our Ministers opportunity to administer their departments, and also gave the people an assurance that there would be no farther experimental legislation for that period. Now I wish to touch on the subject of the finances for a moment. I think that the fact that we have a deficit at the present time is highly unsatisfactory. I hold that with a revenue of 3½ millions and a population of only 250,000 the Government ought to be able to administer the affairs of the country so as to keep within their revenue. I do not think there is any justification at all with wise and capable legislation for a deficit to appear in this State on any one year. The Premier stated that there would not be a deficit this year under capable administration, and I think there has been capable administration. The only reason why there has been a deficit is that the Premier anticipated getting from the copper smelting returns £75,000, which he was led by his responsible officers to expect, whereas he only received £29,000. This goes to show that had his officers been correct, had he received this amount, there would not have been a deficit. [MR. BURGESS: Who is to blame

for that?] I take it the officers concerned. [MR. BURGESS: No. Is not the Minister for Mines?] Not the Minister for Mines, who is governed entirely by his officers' reports and estimates. But the fact remains that whosoever fault it was there was a deficit. [MR. BURGESS: If you look up *Hansard* you will see that mentioned last year.] I think steps will have to be taken to place our finances in a sound position, and so convinced am I that the State ought to be in a sound financial position, that unless this Government, if it remains in power, is able to grapple with the question, is able to get a knowledge of detail, and to proceed along the lines of sound finance and leave the State with a surplus, I am not prepared to support it any longer. [MR. RASON: Hear, hear.] (Interjection by Mr. Connor.) I am not so much under the whip as the Independents are. I know the Independents are very solid. They do as their leader tells them. But to get on. I believe that our present administrators are quite capable of grappling with the position. Some members have expressed their want of confidence in the Premier and his Ministers. [MR. F. CONNOR: You did not do that in caucus?] Let me say that the majority of the party, with the exception, I think, of only three, have expressed their fullest confidence in the Premier and the Ministry. I think those against the Premier ought to cross the floor of the House. I thoroughly agree with the member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson) that party government has proved a failure, not only in Western Australia but throughout the Commonwealth. It has proved a failure in the Federal Parliament; it has proved a failure in Queensland practically; it is about to prove a failure in South Australia; and it is a failure here. [MEMBER: What is the reason?] One reason is that we have three parties, and that is not the only reason, another being that if a Ministry brings certain measures before the House the followers of that Ministry have to support them, or if they do not support them cross the floor of the House, and that might be the means of putting out a Government which would give them four-fifths of their political beliefs, and putting in a Government which would only give them three-fifths. Party government

or any system of government which will compel any representative to vote against his best judgment, against his conscience, is, on the face of it, wrong. [MR. F. CONNOR: Then why are you a member of the Labour party?] That is what party government does. I do not see any reason why we cannot carry on our business the same as does the Legislative Council. We do not find parties there. That Council may be elected on a limited franchise, but the difference between the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council is that in the Council no pressure is brought to bear on any member to vote against his judgment—[MR. H. BROWN: You are admitting your weakness there]—and the same principle applies in the municipal councils and roads boards, that whenever a question is submitted to a council or road board it is settled, I think, invariably upon its merits. But what do we find in this House? We find that a question is not settled upon its merits.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in reflecting upon the House.

MR. KEYSER: I say then that party government practically prohibits on many occasions a matter from being settled on its merits; that a man must be true to his party. [MR. HARRY BROWN: That is one of your sworn pledges.] What I contend is that when measures are considered in this House they ought to be considered irrespective of partyism and judged entirely on their merits; and I think the time will come, and come very shortly, when the members of this House will elect their own Ministers; and not only that, but when measures submitted to the House will be decided by the majority. If that were done to-day, we would not have this wrangling after office and wrangling about considering a no-confidence motion. There would be no need for it. Every measure then would be decided upon its merits, and if we put such a measure, say, as the non-alienation of lands before the House, and a majority decided against it, the matter would be settled. But it will not be settled now. The next Government that may come in during a session—and there may be three or four Governments—can again introduce that very measure, and

hour after hour be wasted in discussing it. I hope that the amendment will not be carried, because I do not think it is an honourable way of disposing of the present position.

On motion by MR. FRANK WILSON, debate adjourned.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message received from the Governor, assenting to Supply Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 25th July, 1905.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 3:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES AND RAILWAYS: Regulations under "The Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904."

By the MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND LABOUR: Land Titles Department, Annual Report for 1904.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

MR. MORAN, MR. PIESSE.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): As a matter of privilege, I desire the indulgence of Mr. Speaker and of the House in first expressing my regret that the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H.

Piessé) is not to-day here in his seat. The other evening, when I was absent, he made an unfounded charge against me in connection with the recent political situation. I spoke to him about that charge; and I consider he ought to be here this afternoon to hear me or to make his own explanation. But I take this opportunity of stating that he, in the conclusion of his speech in this House, made a pathetic appeal to the effect that his heart was bleeding because—

MR. SPEAKER: I should like to draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that on a point of privilege he is not within his province in attacking another member. The hon. member may make an explanation.

MR. MORAN: That is what I am doing, and that is my sole object. It is impossible for me to make an explanation without recounting the hon. member's expression, with which I entirely disagree, and which I resent. The member for Katanning said that it made his heart bleed to see the degradation attendant on the political intriguing of a certain party in this House, and particularly on the intriguing of the leader of that party. There was no doubt in anybody's mind as to whom he referred. He made that perfectly clear. The hon. member accused me of endeavouring to intrigue for office in this country and this House. I give that a flat contradiction, and state that I have never intrigued, that I have never approached anybody to ask for office, that no one in this Chamber can with justice accuse me of asking for office; that, on the contrary, so unjust is the accusation of the hon. member that on the morning when the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rason) called his caucus to consider the moving of his want-of-confidence amendment, the member for Katanning himself approached me in the Reading-room of this House and asked me, for the sake of the personal friendship between us and for the sake of the old days when we worked and fought together, to accept a portfolio from the (Opposition) side of the House, whose cause he was advocating. That is the gentleman who accuses me of political intriguing. He approached me—I do not know whether or not he was authorised. I think I am entitled at the present moment to say he was not. His leader