

great advantage, we want them to feel quite satisfied that they will receive honest and fair treatment from us. So far as the workmen are concerned, they will be able to judge from the legislation brought forward by us whether we, on our part, are prepared to give them the same, or even better, consideration than those sitting opposite.

On motion by MR. SCADDAN, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.50 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 10th July, 1906.

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THE SPEAKER (Hon. T. F. Quinlan) took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—COPPER SMELTER PURCHASE.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: Were the negotiations between the Government and Mr. Chas. Kaufman for the purchase of the Government smelter at Ravensthorpe opened verbally or in writing?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Verbally.

QUESTION—COPPER LEASES, MR. GRANT'S.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: When were the negotiations opened between Mr. Grant and Mr. Chas. Kaufman for the purchase of Grant's copper leases at Ravensthorpe?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The hon. gentleman has asked for information as to some transaction between two private individuals. There is nothing in the records of the Mines Department to enable me to reply to a question of that sort; but I am trying to obtain the information which is asked for, and as soon as I get it I will give it to the House.

MR. TAYLOR: I asked the question because the Minister interjected, when I was speaking, that the leases were sold before the smelter; so I thought he knew.

QUESTION—GOLD BUYERS' LICENSES.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: How many gold buyers' licenses have been issued in Perth since the passage of that Act, and to whom?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: Presuming the hon. member means "The Mining Act, 1904," which came into operation on the 1st March, 1904, the following licenses have been granted:—1904, fifteen, one being temporary. 1905, sixteen, one of which was cancelled a few months after issue. 1906, sixteen. During the early part of 1904, prior to the coming into operation of the Act, seven other licenses were granted under the provisions of "The Goldfields Act, 1895," and amendments. Full particulars as to date of issue, to whom issued, etc., are shown on a Return which I have pleasure in handing to the hon. member.

BILL, FIRST READING.

Permanent Reserves Rededication, introduced by the PREMIER.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet): I desire to make a personal explanation in connection with remarks during the course of his speech by the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) on Thursday last. I was not present when that speech was delivered, because at half-past five I was compelled to take a train in order to visit my constituency. I can assure the House that had I been present I would have taken the strongest possible exception to the remarks and insinuations of

that hon. gentleman. To-day I have taken the earliest opportunity of making an explanation, and I hope that when I have done so the Minister will see his way clear to withdraw the insinuations he made on Thursday. According to the *West Australian* the Minister said, when dealing with my remark in a previous speech that he always received a deputation introduced by me with a scowl:—

Mr. Troy desired that a friend of his should, contrary to the system pursued at the State batteries, have his stone crushed first, and he asked the Minister to issue instructions to the manager at the battery to this effect. He declined in strong language to fall in with the proposal.

Reading that in the *West Australian*, one could not draw any inference other than that I had been endeavouring to secure some special privilege for a friend of mine; and I want to say that every person I have seen in my constituency drew the very same inference. Therefore I think it my duty to give an explanation to the House and point out the position of affairs. A gentleman named Schuman, at Black Range, who is interested in the Wanderie gold mine, with two others, Messrs. Griffiths Brothers, came to Perth in order to see if he could get some stone crushed or purchased, or treated, so that he might obtain a little capital to work the mine. Mr. Schuman, in the first place, is a friend of mine, just as all my constituents are friends of mine, no matter whether they be with me politically or otherwise; and I want to say in passing that, so far as I know, Mr. Schuman has never supported me at any election; and I am absolutely sure his partners, the Griffiths Bros., have always been opposed to me, because on every occasion on which I have gone to the electors at Mount Magnet the Griffiths Bros. have been the secretaries of my opponents; therefore they could not have been political friends of mine in the manner assumed by the Minister for Mines. I am pleased to say that they are my personal friends, and I hope that, despite the fact that we may differ politically, they will remain my personal friends. At the same time I want to state that these gentlemen are my constituents, and that, no matter what they may require from the Government of this country, it is my duty when they come to

Perth to present their claims to the Minister whom they desire to see. Mr. Schuman came to me, and I told him I did not think he would have an opportunity of having his stone crushed before other people, because there were so many at Black Range waiting to have their stone crushed, and he would have to wait his turn. The position was this. The proprietors of the Wanderie gold mine had spent something like £1,000 in the purchase of machinery. They are only prospectors. From the gold which they had won they purchased a boiler and winding plant, and erected a poppet-head, and they were prepared to raise stone. All the money they had won from the gold had been expended in developing the property and purchasing machinery. At the public battery at Nungarra were some two hundred or three hundred tons of sand which they desired treated, but could not get treated; and although the Minister for Mines tells us the Government purchased sand at that time at the value of 75 per cent., it was shown that so far as Black Range was concerned the sands of these individuals could not be purchased. That is what I want to bring under the Minister's notice. When Mr. Schuman mentioned that they had no money and required some in order to pay the wages of their employees and get a start, I said, "I will take you to the Minister, and tell the Minister your request." I took Mr. Schuman to the Minister, and I did what a member always does in introducing a deputation. A member tells the Minister what the deputation requires, and this is what I did in the case of Mr. Schuman. Mr. Schuman desired a certain concession. I was not personally concerned as regards Mr. Schuman's request. I introduced Mr. Schuman because it was my duty to do so. I had no personal interest in the matter at all, not the slightest. It was, I say, my duty to tell the Minister just what Mr. Schuman required; yet the Minister has seen his way to insinuate, and has endeavoured to convey to this House and the country, that I tried to secure a concession for a personal friend of mine. I take the strongest exception to the inference made by the Minister for Mines, and I think it is the hon. gentleman's duty to withdraw the insinuation that was conveyed in his expressions.

MR. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will not make a speech.

MR. TROY: I want to say, in conclusion, that I think these remarks are necessary, because no member on this side of the House will feel safe in introducing a deputation; for the Minister may come here or go on to some platform in the future and say, when a member has introduced a deputation, that he has introduced a few friends in order to gain a certain concession. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to withdraw the insinuation.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory): There was no suggestion in any remarks I made the other night that the hon. member had a personal interest in the matter which he brought before me. He drew attention to the way in which I treated a certain deputation, and I told the House what the subject of that deputation was.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SEVENTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous Thursday.

MR. J. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): I do not intend to delay the House long in discussing politics as we find them, and at the outset I want to say that one would find sufficient to keep this House for two hours in replying to some of the many misstatements made by the Minister for Mines on Thursday last. However, I think I will find sufficient time in thirty minutes to say all I desire. In the first place, I want to draw the attention of Ministers to the fact that it is usual, when occupying those benches, to assert that any statement made with regard to the administration of their departments is made out of personal spleen or for personal reasons. I want to say that as far as I am concerned any criticism I offer towards the Mines Department or any other—and I particularise the Mines Department because that is the one in which I take the greatest interest—is made out of no bitterness towards the Minister personally. I contend that I expressed my opinions when that portfolio was held by a member of the Government which I was supporting; and I will continue to express them so long as I am in this House representing a constituency. The Min-

ister for Works (Hon. J. Price) I believe on Wednesday last took to task members on this (Opposition) side for indulging in personalities. We listened carefully to the Minister; but I was much surprised next morning to find that he had journeyed to Midland Junction in support of a Ministerial candidate, and that the personalities then indulged in by the Minister occupied the whole of his speech. I think it would be advisable that the Minister, before reprimanding members of this House, should set them a good example; and I think the Minister for Works and the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) are about the worst offenders in this matter. On Thursday last the Minister for Mines, for some reason which I can hardly fathom, unless it were a desire to prevent Mr. W. D. Johnson from re-entering this House, made what was absolutely a misstatement of facts—one that was very misleading, and that could have been made for only one reason. At the outset, therefore, I desire to refer to this matter. The Minister, in referring to the Phillips River smelter, stated that the then member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) had tabled a motion in this House that the Government should erect a smelter, and that Mr. Johnson opposed the motion. I interjected, "Was Mr. Johnson the only opponent?" But the Minister carefully avoided any reply. I have looked up *Hansard*, and find that Mr. Thomas certainly did make a motion as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable to extend the system of public ore treatment by erecting a copper smelter in the Phillips River District.

Mr. Thomas enlarged on the necessity for the smelter; and after he had resumed his seat, and the motion had been formally seconded by Mr. A. E. Morgans, the present Minister for Mines moved the following amendment:—

That the Government should consider the advisability of erecting smelting works for the treatment of copper and other ores, and give special consideration to the requirements of the leaseholders in the Phillips River Mineral District.

I find on looking up *Hansard* that the Labour members then supporting that Government supported also the amendment of the present Minister for Mines. Mr. Johnson, I notice, was amongst that

number; and he concluded his speech by saying that "He would support the amendment in the hope that the obtaining of expert evidence would mean that we should arrive at finality." Now what object had the Minister in making his remarks on last Thursday night? Was it for the purpose of misleading the House, or of misleading the electors of Guildford? I say those remarks were uncalled for; and unless the facts were known, anyone hearing the Minister would have believed that Mr. Johnson had purposely opposed the erection of the smelter at Phillips River. This shows clearly what a misstatement the Minister was making; and I think it advisable that if he wishes to make statements, he should keep to the facts and fight fairly. Another matter which affects me personally I wish to discuss on this occasion, namely a remark by the Minister for Mines, made in an interview with the Press, in reply to some criticisms of his department made by me some months ago. The Minister will remember that I introduced a deputation pointing out certain disabilities under which we laboured as a result of the Inspection of Machinery Act. Some time afterwards I spoke in Perth at an engine-drivers' social. I referred to some of those disabilities, and mentioned the fact that while we members in Opposition were desirous of making known to Ministers the wants of the country, and especially those of our own constituencies, we had not the necessary opportunities, because Ministers—and I particularly pointed out the Minister for Mines—visited our constituencies without notifying us of their visits. I said that such a course was inadvisable, and that if a Minister was visiting any constituency, whether it was represented by an Oppositionist or by someone on the Ministerial side of the House, the Minister should inform the local member so that he could be in the constituency at the time, and could if necessary introduce deputations to the Minister. There are many things on which the Minister and I agree, and many on which I admit we disagree; therefore surely a member should be permitted, and I should be only too willing, to make known to the Minister, either personally or by deputation, all the facts

bearing on any subject, so that he might have the fullest evidence to guide him when coming to a conclusion. I say it is advisable that members should consider a question of this kind; and I should like to point out to members now supporting the Government that they may not always be in that position; and if any future Government were to follow the precedent set by the present Minister for Mines, those members would find themselves in a rather awkward position. I say it is most inadvisable that Ministers should act so high-handedly. They should certainly confer on public questions with members on this side of the House. However, the Minister, in his reply, got down to his usual personalities. He made no attempt to reply to my criticisms, farther than to say that we were a lot of firebrands, or something of that sort, because we dared to criticise the administration of his departments. In the first place, the charge I made was that the Minister ignored ordinary parliamentary etiquette, in not notifying Opposition members when he was about to visit their electorates. Though I waited for a reply, none was forthcoming from the Minister. The personalities I mentioned were indulged in; and the Minister said:—

It should be clearly understood that the regulations made under the Act were framed by the Government which Mr. Scaddan supported; and while that Government was in power, he was peculiarly silent. Since that Government left office, Mr. Scaddan and his friends besieged me for concessions.

Now I absolutely deny that here; and moreover, I challenge the Minister to prove the statement that I besieged him for concessions of any kind.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Big deputations waited on me.

MR. SCADDAN: Oh, yes. The position is that if members of the Opposition introduce a deputation to the Minister, on any subject, then we are besieging him for concessions.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: You, on that deputation, asked for a lot of things. You know that.

MR. SCADDAN: I should like to point out that although lots of things were asked for, they were asked for the good of the general public. [**LABOUR MEMBER:** They were national works.] I do not know whether they were national

or "combine" questions. However, they were not by any means concessions, but undertakings for the general good of the public. I contend that the Minister's remark was uncalled for, and say he had no justification in making it. I did not on any occasion besiege him for concessions of any kind. I take up the position that I believed then and believe still that the Minister, out of pique at certain things that happened during last session, allowed himself to prefer those personalities to the general good of the country; and I contend that such a course is unwise, and that the Minister, while he is supposed to be administering his department, should occupy his position for the good of the country as a whole. However, I do not wish to go farther into that particular question. There is another matter on which the Minister and I had a certain correspondence which I will deal with later when touching the Mines Regulations Act. As to the policy of the present Government, I wish to say that it contains many points on which I will support them; and moreover, I think that Ministers, if they will stand to their policy as announced to the country, will find it necessary to call on this side of the House for some assistance. [LABOUR MEMBER: "If."] I candidly admit there is an "if." The trouble I have had is in finding what is actually the policy of the present Government. First we had the Attorney General stating at Kalgoorlie that the Government intended to do certain things. [MR. TAYLOR: That was only an advertising trip.] I admit that Ministers often go on advertising trips. But the point is that certain statements were made by a responsible Minister as to the policy of the present Government; and then, in Fremantle, we find the Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price) making certain other statements. Subsequently we find one or two other Ministers making additional statements, until at last even the *West Australian* and the *Morning Herald* had to point out to the Premier that if he did not hurry up he would find his policy stolen from him—that the other Ministers were finding a policy for him, instead of leaving it to be initiated by him as Leader of this House. The differences are so wide that I would like to point out—yes, I will give just

one instance that might refresh the memory of the Minister for Works. I was present at the meeting of the Attorney General at Kalgoorlie when he stood for the seat after accepting a portfolio. Certain questions were asked the hon. member, and one was "Did he favour the construction of a dock at Fremantle?" The Attorney General immediately rose from his chair and said, "No, I do not." He said it most emphatically, I know; because I was present at the meeting. But what do we find to be the policy of the Government as announced by the Minister for Works at Fremantle when he was seeking re-election? That the Government were going to construct that dock.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing of the sort. It was an extension of the powers of the Harbour Trust.

MR. SCADDAN: That is only a subterfuge on the part of the Government. What is the object of extending the powers of the Harbour Trust but for the sole purpose of constructing a dock? The Government know full well that if the proposal were brought down to this House at the present time it would not be carried. [MR. BOLTON: Nonsense!] I say it is absolutely understood by the Government that their only reason for bringing down this measure is that they are afraid to face this House with such a proposition as building a dock at Fremantle. That is one instance where Ministers differ. The Attorney General, like the Minister for Mines, finds the columns of the Press handy at times. After being returned unopposed he came to Perth to find that the present Minister for Works was being opposed, and he immediately began to make explanations with regard to that reply he had made concerning the dock. I want to know, what is the policy of the Government? Who is the Leader of the Government; the Minister for Works, the Attorney General, the Treasurer, or the Minister for Mines? In this particular policy I can hardly see the shadow of the Premier, large as he is. The point I desire to touch on most is the fact that the main feature of the policy of the Government is a proposal to tax unimproved land values. I have read carefully the remarks of the various Ministers on this question when before their constituents, and I have not yet

been able to grasp how far the Government intend to go in regard to this important measure of unimproved land values taxation. As a matter of fact, judging from what Ministers have said in this House, the Government have not yet decided as to what they intend to do. I think their decision will be arrived at after the majority of members on the Government side of the House have spoken. Certainly Ministers are not clear as to how members are going to support them on the proposal; but I can assure them that if they bring down a genuine tax on unimproved land values they need not fear their supporters, for the Opposition will come to their assistance and help them over the ditch. [MEMBER: What about exemptions?] I am not going to deal with exemptions now; I will do so when the Bill comes before the House. We on this side of the House have always stood for measures, and this is one of the measures for which we have stood in season and out of season; and if the Government will bring it down, then the Opposition will loyally support them; but the true test of the sincerity of the Government in this regard will not be known until the measure is tackled in another place. The true test will be whether the Government are prepared to fight another place on this proposal. We have had the spectacle of members being returned to another place supported strongly—most strongly—by Ministers, though they were opposed to the proposals of the Government in this and other matters. That does not look on the face of it as if the Government were sincere in this matter. It is time enough to judge of their sincerity when the Bill is returned to the House chopped about as it will be in another place. I am going to watch this measure carefully. The Government are taking a lot of kudos for it, but I am one of those who maintain that the Government have stolen the measure. However, I do not object to that. They can steal it from us and they can go a step farther without any objection from me, so long as they are not cruel to the measure. If they allow it to be chopped about in this House or the other, I shall oppose them. Touching also on the taxation proposals of the Government, what is the attitude of some members on the Gov-

ernment side? The Honorary Minister (Hon. J. Mitchell) has always been a strong opponent of a tax on unimproved land values. However, he stated the other night that he was now compelled to support it. For what reason? It is only a short eight months ago since he stated his opinion on this question.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: When did I state my opinion?

MR. SCADDAN: During your election. I believe that the hon. member's opposition to that tax had a lot to do with his return to this House. What has caused the hon. member to change his opinion on it?

THE HONORARY MINISTER: What opinion did I express?

MR. SCADDAN: The hon. member expressed an opinion, but now he states that he is compelled to support the tax. Why is he compelled? Is it that the finances of the State have altered since he expressed that opinion? In my opinion nothing has transpired to cause the hon. member to change his opinion on this particular question during the short eight months. There are other members who have altered their opinions on this question. I think it was generally understood in the country eight or nine months ago during the general elections that the finances of the State required some careful consideration. Mr. Rason, the then Premier, in announcing his policy at Midland Junction, said that he believed that with careful and economic administration he could make the revenue of this State meet the expenditure. I am sorry the member for Collie (Mr. Ewing) is not in his place, because I have here a clipping from a newspaper showing that when the hon. member was standing for election he expressed himself on this particular point, saying:—

Mr. Rason had determined to see if by careful and economic management, which they had not had in the past, he could live within the State's income and meet the liabilities of the State without increasing taxation; and with a liberal and progressive policy he (Mr. Ewing) did not believe in increasing taxation if it could be avoided, and a liberal and progressive policy such as that of Mr. Rason should obviate it. He had decided to give Mr. Rason's policy six months' trial and see whether they could not overcome the difficulty then confronting them.

I want to put this question to the hon.

gentleman: Six months have long since elapsed, and he has given Mr. Rason's policy its trial, but the finances of the State are now in a worse condition than when he made that statement—are certainly not better; what does the hon. member intend to do? Is he going to keep faith with his electors? I presume he intended to imply that if he was not satisfied he would cross the floor of the House or at least would make himself felt; but now he is prepared to swallow what he has said and go back on his pledged views. He believed in Mr. Rason's statement that by careful and economic administration the financial difficulties of the State might be overcome. However, the position is that they have not been overcome. The member for Collie is still a strong supporter of the Government. I do not know whether he meant six years or six months, but it reads "six months," and the hon. member has certainly not kept faith with his constituents in that regard. The Minister for Mines was somewhat of the same opinion. He said:—

To overcome the deficit and to have a surplus—

He was going one better than the member for Collie—

it was not necessary to increase the present taxation.

This statement was made by the Minister at Menzies during the recent general elections, yet we find some eight months afterwards that the Government of which he is a member bring down fresh taxation proposals. I want to know if this is not absolutely the best indictment that can be urged against the Government. They were prepared to tell the country that they would make the finances of the State straight without fresh taxation if the people only had confidence in them, and now eight months afterwards they propose fresh taxation. They have been an absolute failure from first to last.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Did not I urge a tax on unimproved land values?

MR. SCADDAN: The hon. member does so on every occasion he is fighting an election. It is nothing fresh for members on the Government side to do that; I give them credit for it; but I want to know whether views expressed in the country will place them on the

statute-book or whether it is what we do here. The Minister for Mines stated that he would support a tax on unimproved land values if it was found necessary. He said it was a popular form of taxation. He knew it was in the Menzies electorate; and that is why he made this particular statement. Then we have the statement of the Ministry that they intend to carry out the policy as announced by "the little man with the big heart," who was going to show where his strength really lay, in fact was going to reduce the franchise of the Legislative Council from £25 to £15. I believe this announcement of "the strong man from Guildford" was received at Midland Junction with cheers and hats flying in the air and everything else. However, we are faced by the position that another Government have to take the matter up and carry out the promise previously given. What position is the Attorney General occupying on this matter? I recollect an occasion when the hon. member made a speech at Kalgoorlie and set up a very high standard of political morality, and abused his opponent right and left for the fact that he was bound by a miserable caucus or something of that kind and could not please himself on many matters. I ask what position the Attorney General occupies himself. Is he going to support the policy of reducing the franchise of the Legislative Council to £15; or is he going to stand by his pledged word to his constituents? The pledge might not be in writing, for the hon. gentleman may object to that form of pledge, but this is what he said. His words were set out in the full side of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*:—

I am not an abolitionist, but would favour a liberal extension of the franchise to, at any rate, the extent of reducing the qualification to that of a household franchise.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: What are you reading from?

MR. SCADDAN: The *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Of what date?

MR. SCADDAN: Before the last general election.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I made a lot of speeches.

MR. SCADDAN : The Attorney General undoubtedly did make many speeches, but this is one he made which I took in the nature of a pledge. I consider he was pledged to carry out the statement he then made as equally as I am pledged to carry out any plank of the platform to which I have given my written consent. Where is the difference, I would like to know? The only difference is that we have something to show when members on this side of the House fail to carry out their pledges; whereas on that side "it is only newspaper talk." I venture to say that this particular part of the newspaper was printed from a type-written speech prepared by the Attorney General, or at any rate carefully revised by the Attorney General.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : Absolutely untrue.

MR. SCADDAN : Then I withdraw, if it is untrue. It may be untrue; but it was generally understood at the time, as it was so nicely and so carefully written up.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL : I interrupted the member, but did not think it necessary to rise and remark that the statement was not correct, that it was a matter of imagination. Seeing that the hon. member persists, I have to rise in my place and ask the hon. member to withdraw.

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. member must withdraw if his statement is contradicted.

MR. SCADDAN : I must necessarily withdraw the remark. The point I am trying to make is this, that a pledge was given to the electors of Kalgoorlie when the hon. member was returned that he would support household suffrage for the Legislative Council. I want to know what he is going to do. Does he intend to throw that pledge overboard simply because he occupies the position of Attorney General in the Cabinet? It is a most astounding thing to me that the hon. member is sitting where he is to-day, because it is not so very long ago that we heard him complaining about the Treasurer. They were never too friendly in politics, yet we now find the hon. member is prepared to sit in the same Cabinet with the Treasurer. The Attorney General took exception, when before his electors at Kalgoorlie, to his

opponent because he was prepared to sit with those who opposed him on purely personal grounds. If it was unwise and wrong for his opponent to have sat with those who opposed him for personal and not political reasons, it is just as wrong and unwise for the Attorney General to now sit with the Treasurer. We know they are very strong and bitter political opponents. As a matter of fact I have here a statement made by the Attorney General immediately after the election. It was published by the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and is as follows:—

Why did you join the Moore Ministry?

"Why I joined," remarked Mr. Keenan, "was because, in the interests of this country, I had taken a leading part in preventing Mr. Frank Wilson from forming a Ministry and in promoting the candidature of Mr. Moore for the post of Premier.

If it was in the interests of the country that the Treasurer should not occupy the position of Premier, it is equally unwise that he should occupy the position of Treasurer.

MR. TAYLOR : That was only a legal opinion.

MR. SCADDAN : The hon. member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) has tided me over a difficulty: it was a legal opinion expressed by the Attorney General. This goes to show that there is not that unanimity among the members of the present Government that there should be, that they are not working in harmony; and the Minister, in making a statement of that kind, was not doing justice to a colleague. This fully bears out the statement that the Labour party have made continually, that there was a certain amount of intrigue going on among the members of the Government is perfectly true. Those members were quite unanimous when each of them got his little billet from the present Premier; quite satisfied to let the past bury itself.

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. member must not impute motives.

MR. SCADDAN : I am not imputing motives, Mr. Speaker.

THE PREMIER : I thought you started with good intentions.

MR. SCADDAN : I started with good intentions, and I am carrying them out. One finds it very hard to attack the Premier. The position I am taking up is

not from any personal standpoint at all, but these are facts that have occurred, they are in everybody's mouth to-day, and I am perfectly within my rights in referring to the matters, not from any personal standpoint but from the standpoint of the country.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We had it all last week.

MR. SCADDAN: I intend to refer at length to the proposal of the Government to extend the powers of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. I agree with the member for Albany (Mr. Barnett) on this particular matter—that it is not after all a Fremantle Harbour Trust; it is a West Australian Harbour Trust and should be considered from that standpoint only. If it is a State concern and considered in that light, then the representatives of the people in this House should say whether the dock is to be built or not. [MR. BOLTON: Hear, hear.] I am not opposing the extension of the powers of the trust just because I will oppose them, but because I know the underlying motive. [MR. BOLTON: Are you going to oppose it?] The underlying motive is to give power to construct a dock because the Government are afraid to bring down a measure for the construction of the dock. I am opposed to the extension of power to the trust because I consider this is the proper place to consider matters of national concern such as this. I know I will be supported in my attitude on this matter by the Attorney General.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I was the only goldfields member at Fremantle who did oppose it.

MR. SCADDAN: Personally I have not been able to follow the Attorney General's attitude since his reply at Kalgoorlie—the only reply I ever remember him giving straight out. He said, "No; I am not in favour of the construction of a dock at Fremantle." But we find so many statements by the Attorney General since then that I do not know where he is in regard to this matter. I caudly admit he is all right; he is in good hands. He is sitting now in the same Cabinet as the Treasurer, who I am sure will keep him under slightly, and prevent the democratic views he has from getting too much on his mind. There is another matter I desire to refer to briefly, the proposal of

the Government to extend the light spur agricultural lines. I want to say that it was very unkind of the member for Collie (Mr. Ewing) to make the statement he did with regard to this matter in seconding the Address-in-Reply. We said the Labour party would not support three wretched agricultural railway proposals last session. I believe they were wretched; but I can quote the present honorary Minister (Hon. J. Mitchell), for he expressed that opinion after travelling extensively through that country. I think we adopted the right attitude last session, and I am prepared to stand by that attitude. In this respect the Attorney General is one of those who supported us on that occasion; his name appears in the division-list among those who were opposed to the railways. We opposed those lines, but not for the reasons that the member for Collie would lead the House and the country to believe. We were not opposed to the construction of those lines because they were going to do some good for the agricultural districts; we were opposed to them because we had not sufficient information before the House; we had practically no information. They were brought down in the closing hours of the session, and the House was asked to swallow them *holus bolus*. I have disapproved of that action before, and I will do so again. I would like to read the remarks of the honorary Minister on this subject. He made a statement, after travelling through this particular country, which appeared in the *West Australian*, and among other things he said:—

With every feeling of friendliness to the Rason administration, there can be no escaping the conclusion that the three agricultural railway proposals which they placed before the House last session were dealt with far too hurriedly. The subject was not fully brought before the members, and while there was a general consensus of opinion that light railways ought to be constructed in some of our most promising districts, the information supplied was quite too meagre.

He goes on to say:—

That myself for one, and I am confident the House as a whole, considered the agricultural railway proposals of the Government without a full knowledge of the surrounding circumstances. Personally, I am not at all satisfied that we have selected the best lines.

Seeing that a Government supporter, and

one of the members of the present Cabinet, has given expression to this particular opinion, I contend that the attitude we adopted has been fully borne out by the Government themselves.

THE PREMIER: He was in favour of one, not three; that is the only difference.

MR. BOLTON: But you have altered the route. There is a deviation of 10 miles in one.

THE PREMIER: That is provided for in the Act.

MR. SCADDAN: I am only expressing the opinion of the honorary Minister, and it goes to show that the attitude we then adopted was the correct one. We said that sufficient consideration had not been given to this matter. But I intend taking up a different attitude altogether on the next occasion. I am absolutely one of the strongest supporters in the House for the extension of the system of light agricultural lines. I believe it is absolutely essential in view of the fact that we are progressing at such a rate in the agricultural districts. But I am not prepared to go the length of supporting these lines while the interests of the goldfields are being overlooked as they are by the Government. I want to know from the Ministry what lines they propose to get authorisation for during the present session, so that the whole of the facts may be placed before the country. I want to know how they can excuse themselves for the statement of the Premier in his policy speech in regard to the Norseman Railway. I can remember Mr. Rason, when Leader of the Opposition, condemning the Labour Government at the prospectors' social, for the attitude they adopted in appointing a board to inquire into this question. He said there was sufficient information in the department, and if they wanted any further information they would find it in *Hansard*, for he believed Mr. Thomas filled three or four volumes himself. If the Labour Government were to be condemned for appointing a board, what is to be said of the present Government, who were prepared to overlook the question entirely, beyond saying "It is worthy of consideration." The exact words of the Minister are these:—

A farther proposition which is worthy of consideration, and which in circumstances

justify it will receive attention in due course, is the construction of a light line to connect the Norseman fields with the main Eastern Railway service at Coolgardie.

I assert on the floor of the House that there is no need to go any farther into this question; the line has been justified years ago. [**MR. BOLTON:** So has the dock.] I will come to that directly. The Dundas Goldfield has been languishing for years for want of railway communication. [**MR. BOLTON interjected.**] I venture to say the interjection by the member for North Fremantle shows the reason why the Government are not prepared to come forward with a proposition to construct this line. They are afraid of the vested interests on the coast. That is the reason the Government do not propose this railway—because they are afraid of opposition from their coastal supporters. [**MR. BOLTON:** That is the argument you used against the dock.] The member for North Fremantle knows full well that the dock question is a national question, but the construction of the Norseman line is a matter which affects that field alone, and it is a matter which should be given consideration to by the Government. I know the underlying reason why the coastal members will not support the line, because they are afraid it is the first section of the Esperance-Coolgardie Railway.

MR. BOLTON: Hear, hear.

MR. SCADDAN: The hon. member is prepared to admit that?

MR. BOLTON: I admit it, certainly.

MR. SCADDAN: The hon. member admits it. They think it is the first section of the Esperance-Coolgardie Railway. I believe if a line from Esperance to Coolgardie were built it would not be detrimental to the interests of the State as a whole; it would certainly be to the interests of the goldfields, particularly the Eastern Goldfields; but I am satisfied it would not be detrimental to the coastal districts. The Attorney General will be able to contradict that. I believe he turned a lovely somersault on this question.

MR. TAYLOR: He was president of the Esperance Railway League?

MR. SCADDAN: I do not follow that closely; I was never one of those who raved over the question. I was always a consistent supporter of the line,

and am still a supporter of the Esperance-Coolgardie Railway; and I believe it will be in the best interests of the State if such a line were constructed. I am prepared, however, to put the Norseman-Esperance section on one side for the time being, and say that in the interests of Norseman, the Dundas field particularly, the line is absolutely necessary. And I will oppose to the utmost any proposal of the Government for the construction of any other line until this project is brought before the House. I will admit that my vote will not make very much difference, but it will show this determination, that I am going to see justice done to the district which I represent before I am prepared to assist others.

MR. BOLTON: So am I.

MR. SCADDAN: Yes; the hon. member is probably in the same boat. But I say we have been treated absolutely unfairly in this particular matter. It has been pigeon-holed time after time. When the Attorney General (Hon. N. Keenan), the member for Kalgoorlie, became a member of the present Cabinet, everybody threw up his hat in the air and said: "Now we shall have the Esperance Railway." I was not so sure of that, and events have proved that the hon. gentleman is prepared to put that aside for the time being. I admit he has given his reasons for doing so. I have not been able to say that those reasons were such as would cause me to support his attitude. I have been a supporter of the Esperance line. I am a supporter of the Norseman line, and I say it should be constructed; and I am not going to waver from that position one iota. I will oppose the construction of any other line by this Government until such time as that proposition is placed before the House. Another matter, too, in which I am probably more interested than those subjects I have already touched upon, is the proposed amendment of the Mines Act as outlined by the present Minister for Mines. The proposals of the Minister are rather of a startling nature, that is he is standing to the speech he made in Cue some months ago; though I have heard privately that the Minister is now considering whether it is advisable to go to the length he then proposed. He said on

that occasion, when speaking on his proposal to amend the Mining Act:—

At the present time, no matter what labour or capital was expended on the lease, if unworked for a single day the lease was liable to forfeiture. After explaining the history of mining in Mexico and the provisions of the Tasmanian Act and the Queensland Bill—

I do not know whether he referred to any others not reported—

he stated that he proposed bringing forward legislation that would provide that after the expenditure of a certain sum per acre per annum on the lease, such lease would be protected. He did not approve of the exemption by favour of the Minister or Warden, but desired that any person investing either capital or labour on the lease should know that after the expenditure of certain specified labour or capital his property would be protected.

He stated that greater security of tenure was necessary. I have tried to study this question as well as I am able, and I am absolutely opposed to the proposals of the Government. I believe they will not tend to increase the flow of capital into this State at all. As a matter of fact, they will have the effect of closing up many of the mines at present working. We know that the effect of this kind of legislation in America has been a system of shepherding, and it is astounding to me that the Minister should propose legislation of this kind, at the same time that the Ministry of which he forms a part are proposing legislation dealing with the land question to prevent the very thing that this proposed legislation of his will bring about in mining districts. Mining speculation and land speculation are very much on a par. There are only two methods which bring about successful speculation in land, and it is very much the same in mining. If a man procures a block of land, there are two ways in which he may recoup himself for the outlay and obtain a fair investment. One is by holding the land until others use theirs surrounding it and have increased its value, to which he himself has added nothing. The other is to utilise the land by erecting buildings, and thus procure a return in the form of rent. The very same thing applies in regard to mining. If a man holds a mining lease, he has two methods of making it a successful proposition. One

is by working his mine in the same manner as the man who erects a building on his land, by adding farther capital to it, exploiting the lease, and then recouping himself by dividends from a paying proposition. The other method is by shepherding the mine until his neighbours have prospected and improved theirs, until they have tested theirs and found that through his runs a paying proposition, and then he gets an enhanced value. It is exactly the same as the man who holds a block of land until the other men there have given it an enhanced value. The proposals made will mean dummieing in mining leases, or what we term shepherding. It is absolutely inadvisable for the House to accept the proposals of the Minister. The present conditions are said to act harshly on the prospector. Who said so? Did the prospector say so? That is what we want to know. I have yet to learn whether the prospectors have made a demand for this particular proposal. [MEMBER: The prospectors have not made a demand.] None whatever. The proposals came from the Chamber of Mines; Bewick, Moreing and Co., and one or two of our London gentry who are interested in our mining industry, reaping the best benefit; more benefit than the State. We find that most of the dividends got out of those mines are going to the old country. Those people who complain most about the harshness of the present legislation are those who are reaping the greatest advantage from it, and those whom the Minister proposes to assist have not complained and are not complaining to-day. So I think the Ministry should take into consideration the advisability of getting the Minister to alter his proposal in this particular regard. If they are not prepared to do that, I hope that members of the House will assist other mining members to prevent this from being made law. The present mining conditions are supposed to act harshly on the leaseholder; but I think it would be as well if the agricultural members considered this question a little, and looked up the Mines Act which is in existence to-day. They will find there is plenty of provision to assist the prospector, if he is in need of exemption. We find him getting total

or partial exemption from labour covenants of any mining lease through want of capital after a fair sum shall have been spent on the lease in work, labour, or material. But there is this difference between the present Act and the proposal made, that under the present Act the leaseholder obtains exemption by publicly making application for exemption, and the public then become acquainted with the fact that he is getting exemption for something he has actually done. In the other case, the exemption will be granted quietly probably, and it will not be known what they have actually done. Then, again, under the present Act one can obtain exemption on the grounds—that time is required for the erection of machinery; the influx or scarcity of water; scarcity of labour; the collapse of the working shaft; that the mine is, from some other cause, temporarily unworkable; the death of the owner or one of several joint owners; that the owner or owners require to be absent, for some sufficient reason, from the locality, or is or are unable, by reason of sickness or other sufficient cause, to work the mine; that the title to the mine is in dispute; that bankruptcy proceedings are pending; or that the owner of several adjacent leases desires to concentrate on one or more of them the labour compulsory on such leases, and to obtain suspension of labour for the other leases. We provide for that already, to assist those who are in difficulties to hold mining leases. But we go farther than that. There is a farther provision, that they may obtain exemption by right, and the section which deals with that particular matter says:—

A lessee, in addition to any exemption granted under the preceding sections, shall, on application to the Minister in the prescribed manner, be entitled to exemption from labour covenants for the periods hereinafter stated, that is to say:—(1.) Four months' exemption shall be granted in respect of any lease the property of working miners, on proof to the satisfaction of the Minister that, for a period of eight consecutive months, such miners have, out of their own resources, continuously and *bona fide* worked the lease—

In every 12 months; if one has worked continuously for eight months, he can get four months' exemption by right, and leave the lease for that period. That is,

where *bona fide* miners are working their own show. The section proceeds:—

(2.) Three months' exemption shall be granted in respect of any lease—(a.) The property partly of working miners working such lease, and partly of persons who are not working miners but who are providing funds for working the lease; or (b.) The property of a registered company having a nominal capital not exceeding five thousand pounds, on proof to the satisfaction of the Minister that for a period of at least nine consecutive months the lease has been continuously and *bona fide* worked.

Then we have a still farther exemption—

(3.) Six months' exemption shall be granted in respect of any lease or group of amalgamated leases, on proof to the satisfaction of the Minister that for every twenty-four acres held under a gold-mining lease, or for every forty-eight acres held under a mineral lease, the lessee has expended in mining or mining machinery and other mining requisites at least one thousand five hundred pounds, independently of the proceeds of any gold or mineral derived from the mine; and twelve months' exemption shall, in like manner, be granted when the sum expended exceeds four thousand pounds for the above-mentioned areas; but on the removal of any machinery from any such lease or leases during the currency of the exemption, without the approval in writing of the Minister, the exemption shall become void, if such exemption has been granted in respect of expenditure on such machinery.

There is a provision already in the Mining Act for exemption for 12 months after the expenditure of a certain sum of money. What can be the proposals of the Minister? I think that if the Minister brings them down as he proposed to do at Cue, they will astound even agricultural members of the House. They will absolutely lock up for some time our mineral leases, and will cause a considerable amount of shepherding. This matter requires some consideration. I personally am strongly opposed to the proposal of the Minister as mentioned at Cue. The greatest danger, however, in regard to this particular matter is the way in which members on that (Government) side of the House are prepared to support the Minister in his proposal. The member for Swan (Mr. Gull), when moving the Address-in-Reply, said he endorsed the proposals of the Minister for Mines. Somebody on this side asked him what they were, and he said, "Oh, he knew they would be for the benefit of the State." That was the position of the

hon. member; and other members on that side of the House are in the same position. The Minister for Mines is the only goldfields member on that side of the House. I should include the member for Kalgoorlie.

THE PREMIER: The member for Coolgardie.

MR. SCADDAN: He is not yet in his place. When the Minister for Mines makes a proposal, members on that side, or a number of them, say, "He ought to know; therefore I am prepared to support him." The result is that when opinions are expressed on this side, it is said, "Oh, they are the Labour party: we cannot take any notice of them. We are here in opposition to the Labour Party, and we are in opposition to anything they propose." Therefore these proposals are carried through by weight of the Ministers' majority, and not because they are right. It is advisable that members who are not directly interested in the mining industry should be in their places when matters of this kind are being discussed, because affecting their welfare as well as that of the mining districts, and they should be here to hear what mining members have to say, and then form their conclusions as to what is best in the interests of the State as a whole. If they do that, they will be satisfied that the Minister's proposals will be absolutely detrimental to the mining industry in particular, and the State generally. We have heard from the Minister that he proposes to bring down a Mines Regulation Bill this session. We heard that before. I believe we heard it two or three years ago; until now it is a question that goes on for ever, like the babbling brook. On this particular question, I agree with the Minister that it is advisable to treat it from a non-party standpoint. There is nothing in the Mines Regulation Bill that should be of a party nature at all. But what do we find the Minister himself doing? He stands on the floor of this House and says he thinks it advisable to treat the measure in a non-party spirit and from a non-party standpoint. Yet we find him at every election, at his own election, and during the election which has just taken place at Coolgardie, using the Mines Regulation Bill for party purposes. If it is advisable not to do so in this House,

it is advisable not to do so in the country. I challenge the Minister to show me where I treated the Bill in a party spirit when the Bill was brought before the House by the Government I was supporting. The records and Orders of the Day will indicate that I moved something like 20 or 30 amendments to the Bill, which I was supporting, showing that I was not prepared to treat this in a party spirit. I was here for the purpose of seeing the best measure possible placed on the statute-book, in lieu of the one already there, which is not doing justice to the working miner. And from that standpoint I think the Minister should view the question, and should get an expression of opinion from all members of this House, irrespective of whether they sit behind the Government or in Opposition. If the Minister were now present I should like to show him some of his own dodgers issued during the Minister's election. This dodger sets out in one column the proposals of the Labour Government regarding the Mines Regulation Bill, and in another column the proposals of Mr. Gregory, now Minister for Mines. After reading it I have been able to find only a very slight difference between the proposals. I say it is not advisable that such measures, placed on the statute-book for the proper working of mines, for the protection of life, and the general safety of miners, should be treated in this manner. They should not be treated from a party standpoint, but purely with a view to the safety of the mines and the protection of the miners. I am prepared to support the Minister in many ways when he brings in the Bill—in many ways which he indicated in this House when he was in Opposition; and I hope that the Minister will be prepared to hear those who are able to bring to bear on the question their own practical knowledge, and will thus make the Act one which will not need amendment for many years to come. This question affects more than any others the members representing the Kalgoorlie district, where we have some 6,255 men working either on the surface or below ground. This number works on the Kalgoorlie field alone; hence the measure is one in which I take a particular interest, and to which, from the standpoint of Kalgoorlie, every

consideration should be given. Something has been said of the fact that while the yield of gold per ton of ore treated is decreasing, yet we find that the total returns are very much the same; and, moreover, that the dividends, the profits on the working, have considerably increased. This is due to two causes; and I wish to give credit where credit is due. In the first place, the results point to the fact that with modern machinery and economic management we have been able to reduce the working costs; but that reduction is due to another fact also—to the pernicious contract system by which the men have to work their lives out for the purpose of keeping down the working costs. This may appear to some a statement unworthy of much notice; but this pernicious contract system is after all not a contract system—anything but that—but a most pernicious system of piecework; and I will read directly the agreement under which the men work. The system results in the men's receiving in many cases a remuneration far below a fair wage, and working their hardest, practically eating their hearts out. It is nothing unusual for a goldfields member to meet comparatively young men of 35 to 40 years of age who ask him to find them jobs on the coast. One will say, "I am done for mining; I cannot follow the machines any longer." I can name scores of practically young men on the coast to-day who have had to find employment here, and even then cannot stick to it continuously, simply because their health has been broken down by this pernicious contract system. I wish to ask the Minister for Mines whether he is prepared to permit the present system to continue. The Mines Regulation Bill cannot prevent this contract system; so we find that something more than a Mines Regulation Bill is needed. I believe that the Minister promised on one occasion to have an inquiry by Royal Commission into the contract system as applied to mining. I believe that the members of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration did take a little evidence on the system as it applied to aliens working in mines; but I believe that the commissioners were all members of another commission also at the time, and found that to inquire into the contract system was more than they could

do. They recommended the Minister to permit them to let that portion of the inquiry drop for the moment, and to reconsider the question at a future date. The commissioners state :—

It appeared to us, also, that to go into this important question thoroughly, the *personnel* of the commission had better be extended in order to include representatives of more of the interests involved. We therefore approached the Hon. the Minister for Mines, and obtained through him the consent of your Cabinet to allowing this portion of our reference to stand over until after the Royal Commission on the Ventilation and Sanitation of Mines had finished its labours. We would respectfully suggest that when this inquiry is resumed it be extended to cover the whole question of the working of the contract system in mines, so as to thresh out the numerous alleged grievances that are stated to attend this method of working, and suggest means by which they may be remedied or removed.

The members of that Commission were satisfied of the existence of complaints against the contract system; and I wish to know whether the Minister intends to carry out their suggestion to Cabinet, that the powers of the Commission should be extended to inquire into the whole contract system. I have here a copy of the agreement under which these contracts are let on the goldfields; and I wish to ask the Minister for Works (Hon. J. Price), who since he has been for a few weeks in the Works Department probably knows something about contracts, whether this is a fair agreement. After setting out the work that should be performed, the agreement provides farther that—

The extent of the work specified above to be performed under this contract is approximate only, and the company shall have full power to determine this contract at any time, without liability to the company of any kind to make compensation for wrongful dismissal or breach of contract.

Imagine a man submitting a tender for the erection of a building, and finding in the contract a clause that at any time the owner could determine the contract and dismiss the contractor without liability to any claim. Imagine a builder laying a foundation, and the owner, after the builder had done a little work, discovering that he was making a profit, and that his price was higher than the owner thought necessary. What should we think if the owner or contractee should say to the contractor, "I am not prepared

to let you go any farther. You can leave the job, and I will let another contract. Next time I may get a lower tender"? On the fields, contracts are let only from foot to foot. The management can come down at any moment, after a man has worked his hardest, behind machines, in foul air, and amidst dynamite fumes, and can say to him, "You can leave"; and the management can get another party, or can get a reduction in the rate. The agreement provides also that—

The contractors, as part of the work to be performed under this contract, shall do all the timbering which may, in the opinion of the company, be necessary to secure the ground for safe working.

The manager can tell them, if he likes, to do a fortnight's timbering, to keep the men back; and the men cannot appeal to arbitration. The manager says that the timbering must be done; and they have to do it. Another clause of the contract provides that—

The company shall have power, at its discretion and without alleging any reason or cause, to dismiss any contractor, who shall be entitled only on completion of the contract to be paid *pro rata* for the number of shifts he shall have actually worked up to the time of such dismissal.

The following clause, No. 11, is about the loveliest provision I have ever seen :—

The measurement of the company's surveyor shall be final, and accepted by both parties to the agreement.

Imagine two parties to an agreement, and the decision of one party's surveyor being absolutely final! There is no appeal. The men have to take for granted the surveyor's decision. If they do not like it, they can take their baggage and go. This is the contract system in existence to-day on the fields. Moreover, there is a clause providing for a percentage. The company can stop the contractors at any time, and can keep back usually 25 per cent. of the contractor's earnings until the contract is completed, thus safeguarding the interest of the company. Should the men retire voluntarily, this 25 per cent. is retained by the company; but should the company feel inclined to stop them, there is nothing which protects the contractors. I have here an account from a certain mine, showing the earnings of the men during a fortnight; and I think I shall astonish some members when I tell them that in many cases the

earnings average only 3s. 6d. a shift, working 900 and 1,000 feet below the surface, and in hot levels, behind dynamite, where they have almost to burn out the ground. On the other side of this account no less than £12 17s. 4d. is charged for material supplied to the contractors during the month, showing that the men have actually to burn out the ground and their lives being eaten out by dynamite fumes, bad air, and dust; and the reward they get for it is from 3s. 6d. a shift upward. This is a system which should not be permitted to extend; and unfortunately it is extending. Moreover, it overrides the awards of the Arbitration Court. That court can decide on a minimum rate of wage; but the mining companies can escape the incidence of the award by means of this contract system. They can continually cut down the men's earnings. If the men make £1 a shift this fortnight, when working hard, the boss will say, "You are making more than the minimum rate. You will have to take 2s. a foot less." And so it goes on until the men become absolute slaves earning a miserable living on the fields. For the protection of these men—absolutely some of the finest miners to be found in the world—who are having their lives eaten out at a comparatively early age, it is absolutely necessary to abolish this pernicious system of contract; and the Minister should inquire into the whole matter, and if possible abolish the system absolutely. That is the only remedy. Why do the mining companies want it? If a man is working on wages and is not doing a fair thing, the employer has the option of dismissing him and getting someone else. Surely, so long as employers have that power, they cannot complain of the wage system. I know some will answer, "Is it not advisable that men of extra skill should earn a higher wage?" I admit candidly that it is advisable. But, unfortunately, under this system such is never the result. Some of the most skilful men, who work the hardest and have the greatest knowledge of mining, are working for less than the truckers, who knew nothing about mining when they went below perhaps a week ago. The earnings of the skilled contractors are lower than those of the trucker—the least-skilled worker underground. And

this is the system which is supposed to conserve the interests of the man with the greatest skill. I say it is a pernicious system, not of contract at all but of piecework, and of piecework in its absolutely worst form. There is a matter, too, that on account of a recent accident on the fields should be brought before members. I refer to the testing of cages. I do not know what the Minister intends doing in this matter; but I mention it because I think it absolutely essential that some provision should be made in the Mines Regulation Bill for the proper testing of cages. A little while ago an accident happened in the South Kalgurli mine. Dirt was being pulled from one level to another; and I understand that the platman at the top level was pulling a full truck out of the cage without putting the cage on the bearings; and owing to some misunderstanding between the platman and the engine-driver, the engine-driver lowered his cage, thinking that he heard a knock from below. Whether he did is a moot point. The truck tipped up in the cage, which hung the cage up; and 50 or 60 yards of rope were let down on the top of the cage. When the men on the plat saw this, they left the cage; and immediately the cage gave way, snapped the rope, dropped 60 feet on to the pent-house, and broke the wheel at the brace. The roof of one pent-house was exceptionally good; but the sides burst and allowed a considerable quantity of dirt from the pent-house to drop 105 feet on to the men who were sinking at the bottom of the shaft. They escaped by a miracle, for there was nothing but timber and dirt around them; yet only one or two were touched, and comparatively little harm done to any. This proves that even after the cage has come to a standstill, the grippers did not hold as they should. They should have prevented the cage from falling once the rope had slackened; but instead the cage dropped away. Though I believe it is stated that the cages were regularly tested by the management, I say that something more than this is needed. What we require is that there should be a proper test once a month by the inspector of mines, in his presence, and by him only. It is the only way to get over the difficulty. It was done in Victoria

after considerable agitation. They have two systems of inspection. In the first place the cage is tested in its empty form with no truck, and then it is loaded with a full truck and again tested, and if it do not act at the second test something has to be done until it acts or is condemned. I have a cutting from a newspaper which will be interesting on this subject. It says:—

Some time ago, in the Victorian Legislative Assembly, Mr. Bailes [one of the members for Bendigo] asked the Minister for Mines to revert to the old system of testing cages with an empty cage, instead of full and empty, as under the present Act. The Minister stated at the time that he had made inquiries in the matter, and one inspector informed him that in ten cases he had known cages answer the test without any weight, and then to fail when the weight was put in. Mr. Bailes the other day asked to be furnished with the name of the inspector who had made this report, and the names of the makers of the cages on which such results had been experienced. The Minister replied that he did not consider it desirable to disclose the particulars asked for. Since the date referred to another inspector had reported a similar case of failure, and one of the most successful makers of safety cages had congratulated the department on insisting that the test should be made with a loaded cage.

The system existing on our fields is to test the cages empty. It is not a true test. On some of the mines they have a system by which they take the cage up at the mouth of the shaft and then let it go. That is not a fair system, because the amount of rope that hangs over the wheel into the engine house has a dragging tendency, and unless the cage is tested from the engine house from the drum, we cannot get a true test. There is only one way of getting over the difficulty for the sake of the men working in the shaft and riding day by day in the cages, and that is that the cages should be tested at least monthly by the inspector of mines himself. I have seen these so-called inspections by managers. They walk round, catch hold of the springs and give them a shake, and say "All right" because they are loose. The only practical test is to test the empty cage and then the loaded cage, and then only from the drum in the engine house so that the slack rope must go with the cage; because if men are in the cage and the rope breaks near the drum in the engine room, the rope has to go over

the wheel and that amount of rope between the engine house and the poppets might have a tendency to prevent the springs from catching. If the cages were tested from the drum, then we should learn whether the springs were as they should be. That is the system in Victoria; and if the Minister for Mines there found it advisable, in spite of a member asking that it should be modified, to stand to it, then I say our Minister of Mines should consider the matter and give effect to it in the Mines Regulation Bill. If he does not do so I am going to use every endeavour to have this provision made in the Bill when it comes down. There is a matter also that considerably affects the mines on the gold-fields, and while referring to it I should like the Minister to be in his place. It is a matter of inspectors paying surprise visits to mines. Some members may remember that in my first speech in this House, in reply to the member for Menzies (Mr. Gregory), who said that inspectors did, at his wish, pay surprise visits to mines, I said that if the hon. member when Minister had issued such instructions the inspectors were not carrying out their duty. I remember full well that the hon. member, who was then sitting in Opposition, rose and in righteous indignation said I should not make such a statement, and asked Mr. Hastie, who was then the Minister, if he had noted the remarks made, and said: "If it were untrue the aspersions should be removed." I forget whether it was correct, but the paper said "cheers." When I made my statement the hon. member absolutely denied that it was correct, but said that if it was correct that the inspectors were not carrying out their duty, they were not fit for their positions. What has transpired since? When the member for Menzies returned to his old position as Minister he had a conference with the Chamber of Mines, and also about the same period with the Miners' Association at Kalgoorlie. I was informed that at that latter meeting several members of the association rose and supported the action I had adopted in stating that these inspectors did not pay surprise visits. The member for Menzies when in Opposition said he was not prepared to take the statement I gave unless it could be substantiated. It was substantiated

at that meeting; for several rose in their places and told the Minister of particular cases that had come under their notice where the management had been notified by the inspector of his intention to visit, and measures had been taken accordingly. When the Minister had that brought under his notice he should have taken immediate steps to inquire whether it was right in view of the statement he had previously made. However, months went on. I gave notice of a question in the House, but owing to the dissolution, it was not asked. When the House met again I again gave notice of the question as to what action the Minister had taken. The Minister said he had caused a circular to be issued, and when the replies were forthcoming I would see them. I have not seen them to date, although I believe the Minister has published some of them. The Secretary for Mines, writing, says:—

Several months ago a statement was reported to the Minister for Mines as having been made at one of the meetings of your association to the effect that the inspectors of mines were in the habit of notifying mine managers of the hour and date on which they intended to visit their mines. At the instance of the Hon. the Minister for Mines strict inquiries have been made, and it is found, with the exception of the inspectors of the East Coolgardie fields—

I only referred to that field, because I had no knowledge of what they do on other fields—

none of the inspectors ever give notice of the time of their proposed visits. At Kalgoorlie and Boulder the conditions existing are somewhat different, and I forward for your information copies of the remarks of the inspectors of mines, in which reasons are given for the practice. These reasons now appear to the Hon. the Minister an adequate justification of the course adopted, and if other arrangements were made it could only lead to a tremendous waste of the inspectors' time.

So he goes on. That is absolute proof of the statement I had previously made in the House, and to which the member for Menzies, sitting in Opposition, took exception. In fact, he asserted that it was wrong, and said that if it was true the men were not fit for their positions, and, practically, that they should be dismissed; but when he finds that it is so, the rubber stamp "Approved" goes on, and the inspectors to-day are giving notice of their intention to visit mines.

It is contended that if they were to pay surprise visits it would waste a considerable amount of the inspectors' time. That should not be. The Government inspector has to look after the safe working of these mines from the standpoint of the safety of the men, and he should be prepared to go on a mine at any time, and to go below at any time. He should be able to say to the brace-man at the head, "Leave out that truck, I am going below," and the brace-man should obey him. He should be able to call on any man to show him a particular portion of the mine. Then we could get a proper system of inspection. I have heard it said that when walking around the inspector will sometimes ask, "What is up yonder?" and would be told, "There is no one working up there;" then he says "That is all right," and leaves; or he says, "What is going on down below?" and is told, "We have two men driving there," and he says, "That is all right," and that is all that is said. The inspector should not take it for granted as to what is said. He should be prepared to go below, so that if there is not a proper system of working he could give orders, and see that they are carried out. I hope the Minister will take this matter in hand immediately, and that he will cause inspectors to pay surprise visits to the whole of the mines in East Coolgardie. There is considerable agitation against the present system. I know that measures are taken to remove dynamite lying about, and other things not in accordance with the Act, when they know that the inspector is coming to pay a visit; and that has been borne out since by the evidence of the inspectors themselves. It is advisable that we should stop this particular practice, and that the miners should know that the inspectors make their inspections for the safety of the men. Another matter on which I corresponded with the Minister at the request of the Miners' Association, was in reference to a matter that cropped up after the fatal accident to Michael Sherry, who was killed in the Perseverance Mine by an explosion. It is not known exactly how it happened; but all we attempted to make out was that the present system of permitting men to work, and particularly to fire alone, was not in the interests of the

safety of the men. The Minister, however—I suppose on the advice of the departmental officers—said that it was impossible to stop this system, and that after all it did not seem to be so dangerous as we pointed out. He mentioned the case of E. R. Brown, who was overcome by dynamite fumes in one of the mines, and that it appeared to him that in that case an alteration to the system would have been not the cause of one death, but of two deaths. Anyone knowing anything about mining knows that nothing of the sort could have occurred. The possibilities were that had two men been working there instead of Brown alone, Brown would have been carried to safety, and his life been saved. It is very seldom in mining that you find two men constituted exactly alike. Two men will go into an end where there are dynamite fumes, and one will notice it, and converse with his mate and say, “I am not feeling well; I fancy there are fumes here”; because after all dynamite is not like stone, but is in the form of invisible fumes. Probably at that moment he drops, overcome by the fumes, and his mate, being differently constituted, is able to stand it longer and able to carry the man overcome out of danger. That happens many times. Through mates conferring, lives have been saved. We object to the system now prevailing of allowing one man to go into ends and stopes to fire-out alone. The Minister’s reply was that if Brown had had a mate, two lives would have been lost instead of one. I say that had Brown had a mate his life would probably have been saved. It is a matter we feel very keenly. They have introduced this system of a man working alone lately. Men are working alone on what are called baby machines, and they fire-out by themselves. The result is that they are not properly protected. We say the system is not a good one, nor in the interests of the miner, and certainly should be altered in the future. We have not been able to get any satisfaction from the Minister. His argument is based on a fallacy, and the sooner he knows it the better. I was going to refer to the Minister’s proposal to grant the fee simple to residential holders on the goldfields. I would like to point out that I interjected, after the Minister had quoted the

departmental report on this question, that the report was given after it was known that the Government intended to amend the Act in regard to residential leases; therefore great weight is not to be attached to that report. I knew that; other members knew it. Mr. Hopkins mentioned at Boulder that the Government intended to do this; therefore I say the report is not worth the paper it is written on. I should like to say the assumptions in the report are not exactly correct. The Premier stated that the present system did not tend to legitimate settlement. I may tell the Minister that the residential settlements at Kalgoorlie and Boulder are about the only sections in Kalgoorlie and Boulder that are completely settled on. I do not think there are a dozen vacant blocks except those reserved by the Government for special purposes. But one finds quite a different thing in places where freeholds exist. In the small portion of Boulder where freeholds exist there are many vacant blocks held for speculative purposes, but under the residential system the owners have residences erected on them. I happen to represent a constituency where there are probably more residential areas than in any other place in the State. When I first stood for election to the House I was opposed by an independent Labour candidate, who had signed the platform that I had signed in favour of the non-alienation of Crown lands; but after he became an independent Labour candidate he struck out the alienation of Crown lands, and made one of his main planks the fee simple of residential areas, knowing that in my constituency there are a great number of residential areas. In spite of this glaring red line in his election placards in regard to the fee simple, he was defeated by an opponent of the system. I want the Minister to take this matter into consideration, as I think he will see that the system is not so much desired as he has been led to believe. He says there has been agitation on the subject. The agitation has come from where? The Minister said the Kalgoorlie council; but after all the Kalgoorlie municipal council represent the bricks and mortar principally in Hannans Street.

THE PREMIER: And the Kalgoorlie roads board.

MR. SCADDAN : I would like to say that roads district contains very few residential areas, and if the roads board do represent them, have they ever taken a referendum on the subject?

THE PREMIER : There has been no protest against their action.

MR. SCADDAN : There are very few residential areas in roads board districts ; they are generally in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder municipal districts. Mr. Hopkins when standing at Boulder was opposed by a Labour candidate, the present member for Boulder, in opposition to the freehold system. In face of the fact that there was supposed to be such an agitation on the part of people to get their fee simple, Mr. Collier was returned to the House opposed to that system. The constituency represented by the member for Brown Hill is made up in the same way, the Hannans constituency also. In spite of the fact that the Minister would lead the House to believe there is a desire to obtain the fee simple of these blocks, how is it that we are sitting on this (Opposition) side of the House to-day? I want to point out to the Minister that when he compared Subiaco with these places he undoubtedly took a very bad example.

THE PREMIER : What about the man who has not sufficient to put up his house?

MR. SCADDAN : I will come to that presently. Under the present system at Subiaco, undoubtedly not 25 per cent. of the houses are owned by the people who reside in them. I live in Subiaco, and know something about it, and I say that 75 per cent. of the people pay rent. One man told me recently that he collects £200 per week in rent from householders in Perth. On the goldfields under the residential system a man procures a block for 10s. a year from the Government; he requires no money to procure that block and he does not require to borrow money to build a house. Almost any of the timber merchants or business people on the goldfields will erect a house for him, and he can pay the money back in instalments at the same rate that the freeholder does. The man who has to buy his freehold under the hammer has to expend all the capital he has to buy his block, then he is left penniless. If he has no money he has to borrow it to

build his house, so that he has really a double mortgage.

THE PREMIER : I had an application from a very prominent gentleman on the goldfields last week.

MR. SCADDAN : I am not contending that it is not the desire on the part of some persons to obtain freeholds. Those who want freeholds desire to get out of them at the earliest opportunity; they want the enhanced value. Is it to the interests of the workers that freeholds should be obtained where the present leasehold system exists? I say it is absolutely wrong. I challenge the Minister to put up these blocks under the hammer instead of the way he proposes, and he will then see if there is a desire on the part of the holders to get the fee simple. They want the fee simple at a nominal amount to sell at the enhanced value. I ask the Minister to put up the blocks under the hammer, and I am sure there will be a great outcry for the Minister to withdraw the blocks.

THE PREMIER : They were put up at Greenbushes under the hammer.

MR. SCADDAN : Will the Minister accept that challenge?

THE PREMIER : We will put them up under the hammer wherever there are business places.

MR. SCADDAN : I do not know what the Minister desires to do, but there is the challenge. He says that the system has not worked out satisfactorily. I want to know whether the Minister will sell the blocks under the hammer, as in other places where the freehold exists. If the Minister gives the freehold to people, no one will object to receive something for nothing; but I challenge the Minister to put up these blocks under the hammer, and if he does so he will have a letter not from one holder but from nearly every leaseholder in Kalgoorlie and Boulder to leave them as they are. In the interests of the workers it is absolutely necessary that they should be enabled to obtain their holdings as they have done in the past. There is only one reason why people wish to obtain the fee simple, so as to get out at the first opportunity at the enhanced value; that is the only reason there can be. A man does not require to mortgage his leasehold block to obtain money to build his

house. He can obtain money generally as easily as a freeholder. The statement made by the Minister that there were only shanties on these leasehold blocks is not a statement of fact. We know that at the present time on the goldfields, although houses are built of hessian they are comfortable and suit the climate admirably. There is no better house to suit the climate than the hessian house. I have lived in a brick house, a weather-board house, an iron house, and none of these will compare with the hessian house in the goldfields climate. After all it is not because the holders cannot build better houses, but because the way in which they erect them suits the climate best. I shall deal with this matter farther when it comes before the House again; for the present I shall say no more. I want to refer to one matter that the Minister for Mines spoke about in his speech last Thursday. He said something about the purchase of second-hand batteries, and by his half statement—for he did not make a full statement of the facts—he would lead the House and the country to believe that the Labour Government had gone out of their way to obtain rattletrap batteries as he called them. The facts are these. There were five second-hand batteries procured by the Labour Government. I have been in communication with the late Minister for Mines and he has supplied me with the particulars. The first second-hand battery obtained was the old battery of the Great Boulder Mine; it was bought at scrap-iron price from Silverthorne and Adair. This battery was fitted with new mortar boxes and re-erected at the outlying field of Randell's. It was a very good deal indeed, and was a deal that fitted the particular moment. It may have been a risky thing to construct a battery at Randell's then, but no doubt the Minister thought that here was an opportunity of obtaining a battery at scrap-iron price, and that if the field subsequently warranted a better battery it could be erected later on. In the Pilbarra region a nearly new battery was bought from Mr. A. E. Morgans, and shifted from its place of idleness to some miles farther away at Sandy Creek where there are a great number of prospectors, and it is still the only Government battery in the North-West. That was the other

battery we heard so much about on Thursday. The third battery was standing idle at Pig Well. It was erected to enable the prospectors in the Merton's Reward country to crush stone at a point where there was an abundance of water. That was the reason why it was erected there. I am told Merton's Reward is obtaining its water supply from that place, and that is the reason why the battery was erected at that site. The Yarri battery was bought from a mine near Menzies on the recommendation of the State Mining Engineer, and at the personal solicitation of the member for Menzies at an interview with the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Hastie. I wish the Minister were in his place to hear this statement, for if it is not true it can be contradicted; but I repeat that it was erected at the personal solicitation of the member for Menzies at an interview with the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Hastie. I may state that I asked Mr. Hastie when he made this statement to me whether I could repeat it to the House with his authority. He said "Yes; the statement is correct, and you can make it and you have my authority to do so."

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. SCADDAN (continuing): When we adjourned for the tea hour I was explaining with regard to the purchase of second-hand batteries by the Labour Government, which the Minister dealt with on Thursday night last. I was explaining in relation to the Yarri battery, which was bought after a report from the registrar at Menzies, on the recommendation of the State Mining Engineer and the personal solicitation of the member for Menzies, the present Minister for Mines. I am sorry, as I said before, that the Minister is not in his place, so that he might refute this statement if it is incorrect. I have been given the statement as authentic by the late Minister for Mines, Mr. Hastie; and I think the Minister should be in his place to refute it, if it is incorrect. The fifth battery I was speaking about is the battery erected at Yerilla. This battery was bought to extinguish a bad debt and to save the State from a heavy loss on money lent. This is a legal matter, and

perhaps the Attorney General will do well to remain in his seat. The Melba Consols Company at Yerilla, of which Dr. Summers was a director and Mr. Iffa was the secretary, procured an advance of £500 from the Minister for Mines in the James Government, which advance was secured by a mortgage over the plant. This company made default, and when it was sought to enforce the terms of the mortgage it was found that the deed had never been registered, and was therefore mere waste paper.

MR. TAYLOR: That could not happen with the present Attorney General.

MR. SCADDAN: In the circumstances Mr. Hastie decided that the best course to adopt was to quietly buy up the whole of the estate of the company, lock, stock, and barrel, and convert it into a State battery pure and simple. This was done by the payment of an extra £350, and the subsidy of 3s. per ton previously granted was saved. Now I have explained, as it was explained to me, why these particular batteries were purchased, and I think that when these facts are known to the House it will be admitted that the attitude adopted by the then Minister for Mines was certainly the right one to adopt; and the present Minister was, on Thursday night last, certainly very misleading in the way in which he referred to this particular matter. I think it advisable, when one is hurling charges across the floor of this House, that he should be careful to give the whole of the facts and not half a statement. Make the whole statement, and let the light of day shine upon it. If it will not stand that, then I think it is time for some of us to make a noise. These are the facts dealing with the whole question. I say, particularly as far as the Yerilla battery is concerned, that if there is any blame attaching to anybody, the present Minister for Mines is absolutely and solely to blame.

THE TREASURER: He did not blame anyone.

MR. SCADDAN: The Colonial Treasurer says the Minister did not blame anyone. He attempted on Thursday night to make capital out of the fact that the Labour Government had obtained five second-hand batteries.

THE TREASURER: Because he was accused.

MR. SCADDAN: I made no accusation against the Minister, and I have yet to learn that Mr Hastie did so.

MR. HOLMAN: The present Minister for Mines is responsible for almost every second-hand battery. He denied that he was responsible for any.

MR. SCADDAN: I have stated that these purchases were made on most occasions after the recommendation by the State Mining Engineer and the personal solicitation of the present Minister for Mines.

THE TREASURER: What has that got to do with it? Nothing whatever.

MR. SCADDAN: I contend that it has everything to do with it. Surely I am just as much interested in the welfare of the State when sitting in Opposition as I would be if on the Ministerial benches; and if the member for Menzies was then sitting in Opposition, surely he was just as much interested in the welfare of the State then as he is now when sitting on the Ministerial benches.

MR. TAYLOR: I doubt that.

MR. SCADDAN: If not, he should be, and the fact that he personally solicited the purchase of these second-hand batteries in my opinion stamps him as equally to blame, if there is any blame attachable to anybody, with the then Minister. I am satisfied that no blame is attachable to the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Hastie, who in the circumstances did the best thing possible. There was no other way out of the difficulty, and particularly so far as the Yerilla battery was concerned. I think I have dealt sufficiently with that question to show the House that some of the statements made are only half statements, and until the whole of the facts are known members may be prone to accuse a man wrongfully. I have pointed out where the Minister made other mistakes; and I think he should be somewhat careful when making statements to give the whole of the facts. The Minister gave an interview to the Press after a public meeting had been held at Guildford protesting against the construction of vans for the railways being given to private enterprise — the Westralia Ironworks Limited, at North Fremantle. At the interview the reasons he gave were:—

The protest which the people of Midland Junction are making with regard to the ques-

tion of constructing rolling-stock by private enterprise when the workshops at Midland Junction are available for the work was mentioned to the Minister for Railways by a *Herald* representative yesterday. Mr. Gregory replied that tenders were called for the construction of 10 AJ brake-vans, and among the several received the lowest was that of the Westralia Ironworks Ltd.

That would make it appear that they were the lowest tenderers; they were not taking into consideration the fact that the estimate of the Railway Department was considered in the light of a tender:—

Their tender, however, was above the departmental estimate, and the Government, with a view of thoroughly testing that estimate, decided that the Westralia Ironworks tender should be accepted for the construction of five of these vans, and that the other five should be built at the Midland Junction workshops.

I do not know that I ever heard such an argument adduced by a responsible person. The idea of a man saying, after calling for tenders for work and on receiving two or more tenders, "I will test each person's tender; I will let the work to the two lowest; I will give the lowest man half and the next man half, so as to test the other fellow." It is a most absurd thing. Could not the estimate of the department be tested equally as well without letting half of the work to that particular company? Could it not be tested in the same way as it is now proposed to be tested, by having a supervisor, and keeping close supervision over the work? I contend that the whole of the ten vans could have been constructed there, and at the same time the estimate of the department could have been equally as well tested as by giving the other half to the next tenderer. This seems to me a most ridiculous argument altogether, and I say that it was done, as we know, for one reason—because the Government are supporters of private enterprise.

THE TREASURER: What does the member for North Fremantle say about it?

MR. BOLTON: You cannot draw me.

MR. SCADDAN: The greatest champion, and certainly the greatest champion I know, of private enterprise is the gentleman who has control of the purse in the State, the Treasurer. When he went so far, as Minister for Works, as to give away to private firms that were

tendering for Government work the price for which work was done in the department, he showed himself to be the strongest opponent I know of to departmental construction of public works; absolutely. It is tantamount to calling for tenders to close on a certain date, opening those tenders earlier, and saying to a friend, "So-and-so's tender is in for so much." If he knew the departmental cost of the construction of those pipes, and told those coming along prior to the acceptance of tenders, "That is our price; if you can beat that you will get the job," it was absolutely opposed to the best interests of the State. However, I think I have stated sufficient in regard to that particular matter. Personally I am a very strong supporter of the departmental construction of public works. Any work that can be done by the Government should be done in their own interests, and we can get better supervision if the Minister in charge is in sympathy with the principle. We have only to look back to the fact that when Mr. Johnson was Minister for Works certain works were constructed by day labour under his supervision; and I contend that they will stand the light of day. As a matter of fact, the Government have been challenged to compare those works with any work done previously under contract, or any they propose to do in the future, and up to date that challenge has not been accepted. There is another matter I wish to refer to, which was brought under my notice to-day, and it touches slightly on the question of immigration. It seems rather peculiar to me that we cannot find men in this State capable of doing work in connection with small jobs or small matters? I refer now particularly to the sewerage of Perth. I heard it stated in town to-day that the Government had engaged four draftsmen in Melbourne in connection with this work. They made an undertaking, I have been told, to pay the passages of these people to Western Australia. That is not so bad. They do that in other cases. But they went further than that,—or at least it is stated that they did—by making an agreement with these men to pay the cost of bringing their families to Western Australia. Is this to be the method of increasing our population—

sending over to the Eastern States for men we can procure here? Are there no first-class draftsmen in this State?

MR. HEITMANN: Is that true?

MR. SCADDAN: The statement has been made, and it remains for the Minister to contradict it if it is untrue. The rumour is made, and it is current in town to-day, that these men have been engaged in Melbourne, and more than that, an agreement has been made that this Government will pay the cost of bringing their families to Western Australia. If this is to be the way we are going to study economy and increase our population, the sooner we know it and the country knows it, and the sooner the Government are brought to their bearings, the better. Perhaps this is only a small matter.

THE PREMIER: Are you satisfied the information is correct? It is news to members on this bench.

MR. SCADDAN: I am glad to be able to give the news to those members. I do not know that it is incorrect. The hon. gentleman is in order in calling attention to it, if it is incorrect. The statement has been made in town. If it is untrue, the Minister for Works should contradict it, and that quickly. However, Ministers know whether it is true, and should not permit a statement of that kind to go unchallenged.

MR. TAYLOR: It has not been contradicted yet.

MR. SCADDAN: No; it has not been contradicted, so the statement I made can stand. I want to say before sitting down that the object I have attempted to attain in this House has been to support measures and not men. I want to draw the attention of those gentlemen who occupy the front Ministerial bench to the fact that if they bring down measures which I consider to be in the interests of the State as a whole I shall be prepared to support them wholeheartedly; but I am not going to support any of those half measures, any of those milk-and-water measures. Until the Ministers are prepared to meet the case fairly in the face and attempt to do something to take Western Australia out of the position it is in to-day, I am going to be just as strong in my opposition in the future as I have been in the past. Absolutely

I know that there are many conflicting interests in the present Ministry; and in my opinion Ministers will have to be carefully watched. We know that the Treasurer and the Attorney General, while disagreeing on some matters, can agree when matters affecting the Chamber of Mines are at stake.

MR. TAYLOR: What about the Minister for Mines?

MR. SCADDAN: He is not here. I will not say anything about him. I know that the Attorney General has said it will be his duty to look after the interests of the Chamber of Mines in this House.

THE TREASURER: Where and when?

MR. SCADDAN: When he was being "treated" by the Chamber of Mines, after his being elected to this House. They had a function, and complimented him on the fact of his being returned; and he made the statement. Or if he did not make the statement, their own journal published it, and I have not seen the Attorney General's contradiction. I am not saying it is wrong that the Attorney General should take the part he has taken in connection with the Chamber of Mines. What I object to is that, while he holds that opinion and voices the opinions of the Chamber of Mines, he should, both in this House and before the electors of Kalgoorlie pose as a democrat looking after the interests of the workers. I say he cannot fill the two positions; that the interests of the workers on those mines are absolutely opposed to the interests of the Chamber of Mines, the members of which are interested in foreign companies. I noticed in the Press that one member of the Chamber of Mines, when supporting a motion for the exclusion of the Press during the discussion of a certain matter, said: "We must bear in mind that we are not here representing ourselves; we are here representing certain companies, and, as such representatives, must express opinions in the interests of those companies." That is what we have to remember when the Attorney General expresses an opinion concerning the mining industry, that he is expressing an opinion in the interest of the Chamber of Mines, and therefore in that of the foreign mine-owner who is reaping great benefits from the mining industry to-day. When the hon. member (Mr. Keenan) first came to Kalgoorlie, we people there

used to look on him as the haw-haw autocrat. I do not know whether we were correct. However, by a process of evolution, having political ambitions, he subsequently posed as the democrat of democrats. [LABOUR MEMBER: He is still revolving.] He is. I say, there is nothing more detrimental to placing fair legislation on the statute-book than a man's posing as if in one position while he is actually in another. If he is the representative of the Chamber of Mines in the House, why does he not say so? I do not object if he or others in this House say that I am here looking after the interests of the miners on the Belt.

THE PREMIER: He is the representative of every interest.

MR. SCADDAN: I will admit that the hon. member may be; but he is jack of all trades and master of none. My first duty, representing such a constituency as Ivanhoe, is to the miners, because my constituency is made up of a mining population. And that being my opinion, I try as far as possible to leave that impression on members of this House.

THE PREMIER: What about the rest of your constituency? What about the storekeepers.

MR. SCADDAN: There are no storekeepers in my constituency. They are all one community.

THE TREASURER: What about the masters?

MR. SCADDAN: The masters? I am pleased that the hon. member mentioned them. The masters' interests are well looked after by the Treasurer and the Attorney General. Unfortunately, while the masters are in a minority in the country, they have more than a majority of representatives in this House. Why, the Treasurer knows full well that he has appeared on their behalf in the Arbitration Court, and has on many occasions made to the Press statements supporting the employer against the employee; so we can leave the masters in the capable hands of the Treasurer. But the whole point is that when those Ministers, the Treasurer and the Attorney General, express opinions in this House, I wish those opinions to be viewed as my own are viewed. I am here representing the miners, and am not ashamed of the fact; and when I make statements, I wish

members to recollect that I am making those statements on behalf of the miners; and when Ministers opposite make statements, I wish those statements to be viewed from a similar standpoint. I assert that the Treasurer and the Attorney General are representatives of the mine-owning interests, and should be viewed as such representatives.

THE TREASURER: You are absolutely wrong.

MR. SCADDAN: I may be wrong; but I must be a very poor judge if I read wrongly statements appearing in the Press. The Treasurer has always been recognised as the strongest opponent of Labour in this State, the strongest supporter of the employer against the employee. I know that he has in the Arbitration Court made statements which he is not game to make in this House.

THE TREASURER: Game every time.

MR. SCADDAN: I heard him, only last session, rise here and severely take to task a member who asserted that the hon. member's statements, made in the Arbitration Court, were his own statements. The hon. member, now Treasurer, replied: "I was appearing there as the representative of the Chamber of Mines; and as such, I only expressed their opinions." And now the Treasurer would lead us to believe that he is prepared to express the same opinions in this House as he expressed in the Arbitration Court. I should not like to believe that of the hon. member; for if he did, the members sitting with him could sit with him no longer and still hold those democratic opinions which they profess to entertain. I am sorry to have detained the House so long; but these subjects required some discussion, and I could not pass them over lightly, because they are of considerable interest to my electors in particular and to the goldfields in general; and I should not have been doing my duty had I allowed this opportunity to go by without expressing my opinions as strongly as possible on the subjects with which I have dealt.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price): May I make an explanation on the point raised by the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan), who stated that the Works Department are paying the expenses of the wives and families of

draftsmen who are being brought over from the East? I think that the hon. member showed but little sense of the responsibilities of his position.

MR. WALKER: That is not an explanation.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The explanation is that the statement is absolutely inaccurate.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (West Perth): May I, with other members, join in the congratulations which have been extended to you, Mr. Speaker, on your return from the old country in greatly improved health? I think it is generally recognised that the object of the debate on the Address-in-Reply is expressed in the motto of the olden times: "Redress grievances, and then vote money." So far, it seems to me hon. members have been engaged in the redressing of grievances, so far as they are personally concerned; and between statements on the one side and replies on the other, we have not as yet got very near to the Address-in-Reply. I do not intend to occupy at any great length the time of the House.

LABOUR MEMBER: All the other fellows said that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There is a considerable difference between saying and doing. In the Governor's Speech, the first intimation which is, to my mind, of importance is the statement concerning the change of Ministry; and a good deal has been said on that score. It strikes me that in the people of this State, or any State, resides the power to make laws and enforce them, to collect taxes and spend them. Some party leaders owe their positions to the vote of a majority, whether it be of the individual or of the party. A party necessarily elects its own leaders. Even the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) claims the right, I think, to elect his leader for his own party. In the same manner, the stronger party becomes the governing party; and so long as the Premier can retain a majority of this House, he has a right to dictate the country's laws and to order its affairs. Enough is said on that question. The great subject which is brought up in the Speech, the great principle on which I think the life of this Ministry depends and which will be the subject of the principal Bill for this

session, is the question of taxing land values. Now a great many years ago—it seems a long time to me—in 1894, I was strongly in favour of, and at Cue at the old well, and frequently since, expressed myself in favour of a tax on unimproved lands, as my object at that time was to endeavour to get our lands occupied. It is not sufficient to alienate land. I wish lands to be improved; and only so far as land is improved can it be of any great use to the State. Unimproved land is of little value to anyone. Now we have come to a time in our history when the problem has assumed a different form. At that time we had plenty of revenue from all sources. We were able to expend from revenue between £800,000 and £1,000,000 a year, down to about £500,000 a year. The question which now presents itself in the Government proposal is not merely how to get land improved, but how to raise revenue for present necessities. I should like to call members' attention to a few ideas which have been passing through my mind in reference to this question. We ought certainly to tax unimproved land. When we ascertain how we stand to-day, we find that we have alienated 11,500,000 acres of land, of which not more than 400,000 has been cultivated; and we are faced with a great question. We are still endeavouring to get our land alienated. We are doing all we can to get people to take up land. But of what value will that be to the State if, after being taken up, the land is not improved? Out of the earth come profits, and out of the profits comes all our wealth. Unless our land is improved in some way, no advantage is gained in having it alienated. I contend that we want a land tax for the purpose of inducing settlement, and for the purpose of inducing people who have land to put it to some proper use, if only by ring-barking, when perhaps two blades of grass are made to grow where one grew before—a quotation which members of olden time will remember. If such an improvement is made, something is done in the interests of the State as a whole. Now we come to the other question; and I do not think members have clearly realised the result of certain occurrences in the years that are past. We entered Federation in 1900. Does it strike

members that since that time we have remitted in taxation nearly a million of money, indeed more? During that period we were able, under the sliding scale, to continue to collect—from ourselves, let it be observed—a certain sum of money by way of Customs duties on intercolonial produce. Such produce, at the time of our entering Federation, brought into the coffers of this State between £350,000 and £360,000 a year. But after the settlement—within 12 months after the fixture of uniform Customs taxation—we remitted to the people of this State not less than £60,000 for the first year; in the second year we remitted £120,000; in the third year, £180,000; and altogether we remitted over £900,000. Our revenue has gone back all this time to the extent of £900,000. On that question alone, if we had continued to spend as we were spending, then our deficit, instead of being £120,000 to-day, would be nearer a million; but we do not so spend, nor do we tax our people in any other direction. We have continued to remit this sum of money until we will have remitted nearly a million by October next. In addition to that, there was in connection with Section 95 of the Federal Act, a condition which compelled us to reduce our duties on spirits by 2s. a gallon after the first year. Thus for four years we have lost income which previously brought to the State £50,000 a year, so that here is another £200,000 we have remitted, so much gone back in our taxation. I am sorry this £200,000 has not gone into the pockets of the people. I believe that the quality of the liquor has not improved and that the quantity has not decreased, so that this money is going into the hands of the special class who run that particular business. Perhaps that has something to do with the value of exchanges of licenses and licensed premises. However, we have remitted taxation, since entering Federation, to the extent of £1,100,000. Of this sum the bulk of it—not spirits I think, but the remaining portion of it—is in the pockets of the people; and we have met our expenses from year to year, not by any increased taxation, but by a reduction in the amount of works we have performed. Instead of spending £700,000 or £800,000 each year on public works,

we have been gradually reducing, because we have not had the money to spend. The conditions are now that we have only a small sum of money to spend on public works; and even in connection with the rabbit-proof fence last year, we had to take a small portion of loan money—a very bad precedent. The question now arises as to how we are to make good the loss of revenue. It is proposed that we shall make it up by a tax on unimproved land values. Now what is unimproved land? It is a question difficult of solution; perhaps because land which is not used can be scarcely said to have a value. If the land produces nothing it can be scarcely said to have a value; but the average value, I presume, of the land we shall be called upon to tax on an unimproved land value basis—speaking of agricultural land which will not amount to more than 11 million acres—will be £1 per acre. It will not exceed that; it will not come to that; but it will yield us only £45,000 at a penny per pound, supposing that to be the basis; and I think it will be found that city and suburban lands and lands about towns will yield two-thirds of the whole taxation. This is a serious question of course to the city people, the people I represent, and to the people other members represent in the cities and large towns; but we have to face the question and to show some reason why the tax should be imposed. I want to affirm in the first place that the State has, since Federation, remitted to the people of this State over a million of money. Now there is something else that has to be taken into consideration in dealing with the financial question. We have a system of sinking fund, and upon our railways we have a sinking fund of one per cent. In this connection we have a matter arising which I should like the member for Forrest (Mr. A. J. Wilson) to take notice of. Dealing with the term of the present Commissioner of Railways, the net profit during 1902-3 was £30,887, but no provision was made by the Commissioner for sinking fund. The State, under the conditions of its loans must provide this sinking fund, and the sinking fund on the £10,000,000 spent on our railways amounts to £100,000 at 1 per cent.; but the railways themselves during that year only provided

£30,000 towards the sinking fund, consequently out of our other revenue there had to be taken to provide for sinking fund a sum of £70,000. The following year, 1903-4, however, things were better, and the net profits were £111,724, which provided the whole of the sinking fund on the £10,000,000 and gave a little in excess towards the general revenue. In 1904-5, the return was £109,957, which also gave something to the general revenue, besides recouping the State for the sinking fund that had to be provided. This year, I understand the profits on the railways amount to 5-19, which will mean that nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. in addition to the provision for the sinking fund will go into the Treasury this year. Another matter comes up on which our revenue has been depleted, leaving less money available for public works, and that is the Coolgardie Water Scheme. Members are aware that provision was made in the Act by which the money was authorised to be borrowed for a sinking fund of 3 per cent. That was absolutely necessary, or at any rate most desirable, because these works will be gradually wearing out and will require replacing at considerable cost. I have not the exact figures, but the estimate I make is well within the figures, I am sure. I say that during the last three years, since the operation of the sinking fund, the deficiency as regards sinking fund in the return from the Coolgardie Water Scheme amounts to nearly £200,000, which sum has been provided from general revenue to make good the sinking fund of the Coolgardie Water Scheme. So it will be seen how our available revenue during the last six years has gone back nearly one and a-half millions on the losses through the Customs and the provision for sinking fund for the railways and the Coolgardie Water Scheme. It must be borne in mind that though the works show, as the railways do, a satisfactory profit, if they do not earn sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund in addition to working expenses the State from other sources has to make good the revenue. I think we have here the real reason for what is called the depression. It is not a question of this Government or that, nor a question of individualism, but it is because we have been re-

mitting taxation without making provision for farther taxation. Consequently, taking this view of the question, I am prepared to support the imposition of land values taxation. I would have preferred that the whole taxation should fall on unimproved land; I think it would be the wisest and best thing for the State in every way; but it would not yield the revenue we require for the purpose of public works. I have held the opinion long, and spoke on it in the old House where I was for ten years, that people would prefer to pay taxation which Parliament may impose, an equitable tax, rather than stop public works. They want the country to be developed and all to be done that is necessary to improve our estate, looking at the State as a whole with all its wealth and possibilities; and they are not anxious that we should remit taxation, but that we should develop the country; and in order to develop the country, I think there will be no objection to raising farther taxation. The source of this taxation, it seems to me, will have to be unimproved land values. It will not pay to raise taxes, as we are doing now in the cities, on improvements. We may fairly raise them on that which is unimproved, and the effect of it will be that large quantities of land not now improved, nor used for the benefit of the people of the State, will gradually come into use. When we come to look at the position in which we stand from a financial standpoint, some other few things may be said. Our latest returns show that we have a national debt of £18,016,000 odd. Our sinking fund amounts to nearly £2,000,000, and our net debt to £16,869,006. I like to satisfy my own mind on this question; and perhaps it will be interesting to members to look at it from my standpoint. We owe at the present moment net £16,000,000. The question is, where has that money gone? The answer is: ten millions have gone into our public railways. They are paying interest and expenses, and up to date sinking fund, with the exception of one or two odd years. More than that, the railways are improving their condition. The condition of our railways to-day is better than when they were first built, and improvements have come, not out of revenue and not out of loan,

but out of the earnings of the railways themselves. Every engine destroyed or cast on the scrap heap is replaced by another engine of the same value, and so with every truck. Also the lines are better to-day than they were, and continued improvements are being made, so that the value of this £10,000,000 worth of railways is really better to-day than when the money was first expended. That being so, we may fairly account for at least £10,000,000 of the £16,000,000 we owe. Then, if we take our water schemes, principally the Coolgardie Water Scheme, we find that we have £3,000,000 invested there. It is provided for, as I have already suggested, by a sinking fund that will cover wear and tear; and the loan will disappear as a debt. Our sinking fund if carefully invested, as it ought to be, in our own stocks below par, a system which I myself instituted when I was Treasurer, will cause the debt to disappear in twenty years; or we will be able to expend farther money in farther improvements or repairs to the scheme. That will account for £13,000,000 of our debt. In addition to that, we have the harbour works at Fremantle and elsewhere, representing about £2,000,000 more, so that we have £15,000,000 of our money in absolutely reproductive works; and under the circumstances, in view of the sinking fund of 3 per cent. for the wasting Coolgardie Water Scheme, we have absolutely sufficient money to keep good our works and repay the money when it falls due. Only £864,000 has been spent on public buildings; and I call attention to the fact that over £2,500,000 of the money we have borrowed is owed to ourselves. It is borrowed in this State, being trust funds and Savings Bank money borrowed by the Government at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and is owed to ourselves, and the interest is going to our own people. So we have a financial position that is absolutely undoubted, a position in which, if we took some of our own properties, such as our railways, and sold them, if it were deemed wise to do so, we could pay all our debts. In the face of this state of things, and in the face of the fact that we are surrounded in all directions by development works that are necessary for increasing the wealth of the State, why should we as a people object even to a little taxation?

I have tried to show that the taxation is only the replacing of taxes that we have already remitted to a large extent. To-day we can cheerfully go forward in the development of the State without fear. The Government propose to do so by extending certain railways. I want to put in a word of warning here. We have hitherto—I have advocated it all the time, and members who sit with me also have always stood firm to the position—that borrowed money should be spent on reproductive work only. We are proposing now to make somewhat of a departure. We are proposing spur railways for agricultural and mining purposes. I am strongly in favour of this being done; but these railways must be carefully managed and cared for so that we shall not go back. We cannot afford to take much more from our ordinary revenue to make good the interest and sinking fund on our schemes. I hope the Government will take care, in the railways they propose, of the cost of their construction and the cost of their management. I want to say a word or two on the next proposal of the Government, which is constitutional reform. The Government propose to make a reform of the Legislative Council. I do not object to the proposal on the whole; indeed I heartily support the Government in their effort to reduce the franchise. I am strongly in favour of a second Chamber. I always have been, and I think the widening of the franchise will strengthen that House; rather than go in the direction of doing away with the dual system it will go to strengthen and establish it. I hope members will bear in mind, and the Government will take note of the fact, that there is a tendency in certain quarters to make the Federation into a unification. I hope the House, and every individual in the State, will do their best to resist this tendency. Federation as it now stands may be a benefit to us; but unification must be a very serious disadvantage, and when it is proposed to put more legislative power in the hands of the Federal Government, we go in the direction of unification. When it is proposed to take away one of the Houses, for instance, that is going in the direction of unification. The 39 articles in the Federal Constitution cover all the grounds of use to us as a

federated people, and we ought to do all we can to retain all the other powers in our hands, and allow the Federal Government to work out their destiny with the power they have. I hope the Government will watch also the question of the division of the surplus. And I hope they will see that we get our fair share. No doubt it will be borne in mind that the Federal Government have not proposed to alter the condition of the division; but certain Premiers have so proposed, and it may be possible for sufficient power to be brought to bear on the Federal Government to carry that point. The tendency of the Federal Government is to increase their power and increase their revenue. What is called the Braddon blot—which is perhaps the brightest blot in the Act as a matter of fact—was carefully conceived, so that first of all the Federal Government should not extend their powers by having too much money at their disposal, and we must watch the division of the surplus and see that no *per capita* basis be brought about, at least for some years; and until we can supply our own requirements in something like equal quantities with those produced in other States, there will always be a disadvantage. Nearly £2,000,000 to-day is paid for goods imported into this State from other States, for goods that ought to be produced in this State; and until we overtake this consumption with our own produce, we shall be at a disadvantage with the other States. It will be for the Government to watch most carefully the tendency of the Federal Government in this particular direction. I spoke just now of the spur railways, and urged the Government to be careful in their expenditure, both for construction and for working. When I was Treasurer of the Leake Government, just prior to the decease of our Premier the late Mr. Leake, I could see as Treasurer we were going to have a considerable surplus, and I proposed to that Government certain works which I desired to have undertaken, and amongst them was the beginning, not the whole, of the railway to Pilbarra. I held the opinion then, and I hold it still, that this railway ought to be built, and I am surprised and disappointed at any rate that the Government have made no definite proposal in that

direction. We have a vast territory there of wealth which requires development, and when we have to deal with this question later on I hope the Government will be prepared to say something definite in regard to the construction of that line. We also require that railway so often spoken of from Magnet to Lawlers, or some other point to Lawlers, a connection of the two fields, the Eastern Goldfields and the Murchison. I am surprised this is not spoken of in the Address. Although we cannot expect to have everything said in the Address, still I hope the Government have not overlooked it. There is another question I feel a good deal about, something that is very much required, and which is not in the Governor's Speech for this session, that is the question of the Electoral Act. In my own electorate there are at least 1,000 voters shut off the rolls. Of course every one of them would have voted for me if they had had the chance; but the fact remains they were shut off the roll, and I fully expected this Government would take early steps, earlier than it proposes, to deal with this question. When before my electors in October last I strongly advocated what I desire to advocate now, that we should have another system in reference to the voting for candidates. I have thought a good deal about this, and the conclusion I have arrived at is that the French system, the second ballot, should be brought about to obtain an absolute majority of votes. It is the most fair system. The system we have to-day is unfair to the public, and unfair to the candidate. It is unjust all round. Three or four men place themselves at the disposal of an electorate, and they are fully justified in so doing. A committee of some kind is formed to select a candidate so there shall be only one candidate against the Labour man. It is the merest chance that the individual selected is required by the majority of the electors; in fact in many cases it would seem he is not, as we have seen at Fremantle recently. The electors themselves have not any voice under the present system. I contend everyone who is qualified and has the ability has the right to place himself before the electors for their choice, and the electors should decide on the very best man at the same time. It is most desirable to secure a

man to sit in the House for the majority and not the minority. In order to accomplish this we ought to bring into our Electoral Act, and I hope that the Attorney General will see to it, the second ballot system, so that every man who wants to stand may stand, and the electors at least will see that they get the man who has a majority in the electorate. That has already been spoken of a few days ago by the Premier, and I have every hope from what he said that the Government are prepared to introduce this system into the Electoral Act. The second ballots will not be numerous. It has proved so in France. The cost will not be very heavy, but the Government of course will have to pay the cost of the election, not the candidates. The cost, I take it, will not be heavy in the State. But after all where does the power lie but in the majority of the people, and how can that majority express its will unless the people are represented by the majority? To obtain that point is worth some money, a considerable sum of money. It is a matter of great importance, not only to the individual but to the State, to know that one side here has the voice of the people in whom the supreme power exists. If it does cost some money I hope the Government will see their way, and I know the House will see its way, to pay the cost. A suggestion has been made, I do not know if it is exactly a proposal of the Government, that Ministers' salaries shall be reduced. This looks perhaps very nice on the surface, but I ask members to consider that in Perth to-day there are managers of private establishments receiving salaries from £1,500 to £2,000 a year. Why do they get these salaries? Because in the character of the business, such as it is, certain ability is required. Are we prepared to say the Treasurer of the State, or the Minister for Lands, or the Minister for Works, is of less value to the State than these managers of private institutions? [Interjection.] Of course there are plenty of men who would take the position at £800. Some would take it at £400. There are plenty of men who would undertake the management of Foy & Gibson's for £500 a year; but the question is whether it would please the firm to give them that management. If

we are going to reduce the salaries of Ministers to £800 a year, I say it will be a very great mistake, a step in the wrong direction; and I hope the House when the time comes will vote against the proposal, which I shall do. If Ministers are worth anything at all, if we are to have Ministerial portfolios and Ministerial control, we ought to have men who are worth at least £1,000 a year. We must remember that the heads of departments receive from £600 to £700 a year and if we are going to reduce our Ministers to mere echos of heads of departments, where will our Government be? Surely the value should be there, and if it is not, we should replace the men by those who are worth the money.

MR. TAYLOR: They are not worth it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. member no doubt knows, because he was himself a Minister. The country at the present time is willing to pay them the present price at any rate. In reference to constitutional reform, one portion of it I am going to support as fully as I possibly can—the reduction of the franchise—for the reasons given. But when the Government propose to reduce Ministerial salaries to £800 a year I think they are going in the wrong direction.

MR. LYNCH: They are not serious.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They may be serious, because possibly they have in view the reduction of other salaries, and they think it will look better if they reduce their own first. That is all very well, but we shall find it is not the right direction, and that we shall not be able to conduct the State on those lines. We want in this House the very best men, the best skill that can be brought to bear on the affairs of this State. The largest financial thing in the whole State is this Government, dealing with millions of money, and unless we have men sitting on these Treasury benches in whom not only we have confidence but the country as a whole, men of skill and ability to conduct the affairs of the State, we shall lose an amount equal to a great deal more than £200 a Minister per annum. A Minister may make a mistake which may cost the country £100,000.

MR. TROY: One did make a mistake which cost us £3,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is what I am pointing out. I am pointing out that this is a step in the wrong direction. I do not wish to occupy the time of the House at any great length. What I want to say is that I have had some experience of the finances of this State and have watched them for very many years. In looking upon this country as a whole I am satisfied that we have a great country here. We must be prepared to develop it. If we are prepared to develop it, we cannot do so on the lines of remitting taxation as we have been doing for the last six years, but we must reinstate the revenue by some other system of taxation. A system of taxation which appears most effective and useful at the present time is a tax on unimproved land values. I wish we could do without the extra money and confine it to a tax on unimproved land. I would rather see the tax on unimproved land doubled than have money obtained as suggested; but I am afraid that with even double the unimproved land tax we should not be able to raise what we require. I assert that this country during the last few years has had remitted to it in one form or another nearly £200,000 a year. This new taxation will not come to that amount, but the country must be prepared—and it will be better to state that it must be prepared—to raise at any rate an equal tax to that which we had up to the time of Federation; and this unimproved land tax is a step in the direction likely to do that. I thank members for their consideration, and hope that we shall take up the view that this State is worth developing. It is a great State; it is worth putting money into; it is worth putting thought into; it is worth putting energy into; and the best efforts of this Parliament and of this Government as well as the earnestness of the people will go to make Western Australia the land it ought to be.

MR. A. J. WILSON (Forrest): I want to say at the outset that I re-echo the congratulations which have been extended by members to other members in this Chamber, and also to state that I regret exceedingly the personalities that have unfortunately been dragged into this debate, to the detriment of proposals which are certainly contained in the

Speech of His Excellency the Governor. Perhaps there is no man in this House who, in the present circumstances, is more entitled to indulge in personal explanations or personal recriminations than I am myself; but I have no desire to drag in any questions affecting myself alone or members sitting on this side of the House, when there is so much calling for the immediate, urgent, and practical consideration of members in this particular Chamber. In the course of the remarks I shall make this evening I shall not in any way touch upon the questions affecting the great timber industry in this State, because in doing so I should certainly have to traverse ground which it will be incumbent upon me to traverse when I speak to the motion standing in my name upon the Notice Paper. In delivering myself of views or sentiments in regard to the Address-in-Reply I feel that we have something higher to do than to indulge in mere petty, carping, captious criticism as to whether or not this Government or that Government originated all the political ideas, or whether the gentlemen there have stolen the political clothes of the gentlemen here. The only thing that should concern us as legislators is not whether the clothes have been stolen, but whether those clothes are such as are calculated to push forward the State and make for its progress and development, irrespective of the gentlemen who for the time being father those proposals. It should clearly be our duty to do our utmost to push forward in the best interests of the State good measures, and good ideas are just as much the inalienable right of gentlemen sitting on that side of the House as they are the inalienable right of gentlemen sitting on this side. Whenever any party in this House and any person in this Chamber is prepared to come down with a good idea, I personally am not going to concern myself whether the gentleman is an intelligent gentleman or otherwise, whether he is a good or bad man. All I want to know is whether the idea he has to submit to this House is good, bad, or indifferent, and I will judge it on the basis of the idea and not on the basis of personality. I think we have the right to ask ourselves at this stage, how stands our State? Do we stand in a

position to-day in Western Australia which is desirable? Have we reached the summit of our hopes, or is there in existence in this State a condition of affairs which it is desirable should be improved? My friend the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Rath) was good enough to tell us that there was depression in the country to-day, and the member for West Perth (Mr. Illingworth), who has just resumed his seat, would seem to hold a somewhat similar opinion. I am not inclined to agree with either of these two gentlemen as to the causes which are the root of the present depression which admittedly exists in the country. The Leader of the Opposition was good enough to say that there were thousands of artisans unable to find employment in the metropolitan and goldfields districts, that there were many serious cases of distress, that during the last eight or nine months the affairs of the State had been mismanaged and misgoverned, and that during the last 11 months there had been a reduction in the expenditure of the Public Works, Mines, and Railways Departments of nearly £200,000. I do not know whether this is so or not, but if I interpret the argument of the Leader of the Opposition to mean that because there has been a falling-off in the expenditure of our Public Works, Mines, and Railways Departments thousands of artisans are unable to obtain employment, then I do not think the expenditure of public money upon these departments is the right way of solving the difficulties attached to the unemployed question. I do not for a moment believe that the true solution of the difficulties of lack of employment lies in the direction of bolstering up artificial relief works by expenditure from taxes taken out of the pockets of the people. I think that an entirely different view of the matter is the correct one. But the Leader of the Opposition went farther. He said that his objection was that the Government have made no attempt to exploit the sources of taxation which would have given them the same amount of money to spend in these departments as was spent in previous years. I hope we shall not in any measures of taxation that are brought down to this House follow a practice that will resolve itself into levying taxes upon the people of the country merely for the pur-

pose of providing work for artisans. I take it that we have a higher duty to urge and a higher aim to serve than to do anything of that particular kind. I want to ask members honestly and fairly whether the objection stated by the Leader of the Opposition is a fair objection. Is the hon. member not aware how long the present Government have been in existence? Is he not also aware that the previous Government of which he was a follower made the plea, when challenged by myself, that it could not bring down certain legislation because it had not had time? No Government can in a moment exploit any sources of taxation which do not exist. They cannot exploit sources of taxation without having the authority of this House to raise taxation from the people, and in the circumstances the hon. member knows perfectly well that in any case, whatever the shortcomings of the Government may be, they are not culpable for having refrained from exploiting other sources of taxation to which he refers. Another aspect of this question that strikes me is that it was quite incumbent upon the hon. gentleman to tell this House, when he made the statement that there was a falling-off of £200,000 in the public works expenditure, what works of urgency and what important works had been denied or kept in the background. The falling-off in expenditure might easily be accounted for by the completion of works already in hand, and a curtailment of expenditure in these circumstances is perfectly justifiable. We do not want to reach a period in the industrial history of this State when it will be necessary for us to use the public exchequer for the purpose of starting public relief works in order to overcome the difficulties surrounding lack of employment. What is wanted is encouragement of development, and that cannot for a moment be done merely by public expenditure, and in my opinion the only way in which we can overcome the difficulties surrounding a lack of employment and the depression which exists in the country is not by spending huge sums on public works. Whilst in the initial stages of development that might be thoroughly justifiable, it should only be done with one clear object in view, namely to make the conditions so

satisfactory that there will eventually come a time in the history of the State when the necessity for the Government to give such aid will have ceased, and will have given scope to the enterprise and energy of the people in this State, enabling them to paddle their own canoes. What is wanted in this country is not relief works, but opportunities given to workers, with the large area of land we have at our disposal, not to become the servants of taskmasters in our mines, our forests, or in any other industrial employment, but to be their own masters, so that it shall be possible for them to make a way for themselves, independently of the expenditure of moneys by the Government or of expenditure by private enterprise. There is no State in Australia which, in my opinion, gives greater opportunities for the application of this remedy. Consider for a moment what are the real and immediate causes of the existing depression. In my opinion, it has been brought about not so much by a diminished expenditure of public moneys as by a set of circumstances which have existed in this State practically from the time when Sir John Forrest left local politics. Since that time, there has been a period of unrest and dissatisfaction through the repeated changes of Government. The member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) has been good enough to make a statistical calculation in the matter, and he tells us there have been eight Governments since Sir John Forrest left local politics. And if I do not misjudge the position, that is where the kernel of the whole matter lies. We have had no clear, definite, settled policy in this country; and such a policy is needed, not only to enable us to realise the possibilities of our own State, but to inspire confidence in those who contemplate making homes in this State and bringing with them their money. The lack of stability of Government has been largely responsible for breeding the croakers whom we find from one end of the country to the other, and to whom is due much of the present minimising of confidence in the State. The changes of Government have prevented the fruition of a settled policy, and have consequently been responsible for the lack of confidence and for the depression which exist to-day. We ought to direct our attention to the

fact that in our great natural resources there has been no change, except a change for the better. Our heritage of natural resources is to-day even greater than it ever was previously in the history of this State. One has only to cast an eye over the returns recently published showing the increase in the agricultural and the pastoral industries, to confess that the possibilities are greater to-day than they have ever been in the past. Yet in spite of this—in spite of the greater opportunities that exist to-day—we are face to face with a depression; and if the statements of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath) can be taken at their face value, there are thousands of artisans who are unable to find employment. Why should it be necessary, in a country with the possibilities and potentialities that our State possesses, that any man should have to beg employment from any employer? That it is necessary would seem to be apparent, judging by the fact that so many are doing so. I respectfully submit that in the policy foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech we have the foundation of a policy by which the man who cannot get work from an employer may become his own employer. And if that man have the indomitable energy, the grit, and the enthusiasm of a true Australian worker, he need not go cap-in-hand to any employer and offer his services for less than he could get from the produce of his own labour on the agricultural lands of this State. All these natural resources, I repeat, are shown to be in a healthy state of improvement to-day; and I believe that they are capable of still greater improvement than we have yet witnessed, if we can only guarantee anything like a settled policy in our State affairs. The effect of a settled policy would not only help those people who are now in the State, who are desirous of making it their permanent abode, but would restore the confidence of investors abroad, and would make it possible for us to get more money for the development of our great natural resources. What do the present Government propose in this connection? I cannot see that theirs is a "parish pump" policy, so far as my own electorate is concerned, anyhow; but I honestly believe that they are desirous of bringing about conditions in

this State along right lines, which will make for solid and genuine progress; and I believe this fact is largely due to our having at the head of the Government a gentleman who has unlimited confidence in the resources of what he is proud to call his native land. No one in this State will seriously question the wisdom of aiding the reproductive industries of the country. I think we all admit that the salvation of the State lies, not merely in its mining possibilities, but ultimately and permanently in its reproductive industries—agricultural, pastoral, and timber. Now, while I make this classification, I do not wish my goldfields friends to think for a moment that I underrate the value to this State of the gold-mining industry. But I wish to emphasise that the contrast lies here. Every ounce of gold, every ton of coal, tin, lead, copper, or other mineral taken out of our soils makes those soils poorer. But with the great reproductive agricultural, pastoral, and timber industries, that is not so. I venture to think that the proposals of the Government respecting the agricultural industry and land settlement are very sound; that they are on lines which this country needs, and which it can adopt with very satisfactory results in the future. I welcome the proposals of the Government to decentralise the Lands Department, so that facilities for taking up our lands may be increased, and many of the obnoxious delays now existing avoided. Another most important feature of the Government policy I take to be the proposal to overcome the difficulty foreshadowed by the member for West Perth (Mr. Illingworth), when he stated that about 11,000,000 acres of land have been alienated, while less than 400,000 are under cultivation. The rigid enforcement of the improvement conditions will, in my opinion, overcome a very serious difficulty in our land settlement policy—a difficulty caused not exclusively by the large landowner, but by other men who have taken up conditional purchase areas as mere speculations, and not with any intention of becoming *bona fide* settlers. I say, we have just as much right to block the small speculator as we have to block the large. The evil is the same. The difference is one of degree in the enormity of

the offence. Another proposal that I hail with considerable pleasure is for the establishment of special settlement areas. I understand from the Speech that the Government will undertake, in these areas, such work as the clearing of land, and other works to promote their wise and progressive settlement. The railway construction proposals of the Government will, I am sure, call for the approbation of the great majority of members. But the contention of those who insist that before these lines are finally authorised an opportunity should be given the House to consider whether the lines and the routes suggested are the best, is well founded; and I hope that before any farther movement is made to construct the proposed railways, the House will have an opportunity of discriminating between those proposals which, in its opinion, are most immediately to the advantage of the State, and those which are not. We know there are proposals bobbing up everywhere, like mushrooms, for opening up by railways the resources of every part of the country. I should like also to express my appreciation of the Government proposal to liberalise the conditions of the Agricultural Bank Act. There can be no doubt that one of the best species of investment for the State is that which, while guaranteeing to the State interest and sinking fund on its money, assures it the advantage of a large agricultural production. Whilst on this question of land settlement, I hope that the Government will seriously consider the advisability of making available on the various timber areas and timber concessions lands which are now being withheld from use, merely at the discretion of the lessees or owners of those areas or concessions. It has been reported—and there are numerous departmental reports, one of which I have before me, though I do not wish to weary the House with it—that many areas, particularly on the Rockingham and Jarrabdale concession, are admirably suited for orchard purposes. In this connection, one cannot help pausing slightly on the results that have followed the trial export of apples from this State. These have recently brought most satisfactory prices in the old country; and the results of that experiment indicate the direction in which the best energies

of this or any other Government ought to be expended—in trying to promote in every possible shape and form the build-up of a substantial fruit industry in Western Australia. On such areas and concessions as I have referred to it has been estimated that, within a short radius of Perth, there is something like a million acres of land practically withheld from use. I believe that recently, so far as the Canning concession is concerned, it has been made possible by some arrangement to make the land available for settlement. I hope in view of the possibility of fruit-growing in this State, some measure will be brought down by the Government which will enable us to deal with these portions of the State that can be made use of for practical purposes on the Darling Range. The dairying industry is another very important industry which needs fostering in this State. There can be few more deplorable facts in connection with the import statistics of this State than the fact that we are importing every day of the year such an enormous quantity of, I was going to say foreign butter, a commodity which, at all events, we ought to be able to produce within our coasts. It seems to me that this industry has not in the past received the encouragement and assistance from the Government of the day it should have received. One has only to travel, as I did recently in the Eastern States to see in Queensland and New South Wales the wonderful strides they are making in opening up the dairying industry. One may go along to-day to a forest, almost a dense jungle, good scrub country but excellent land, and in eighteen months' time he will see cattle browsing on every hill throughout the length and breadth of that country. There is no doubt every encouragement has been given to this industry in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria, and the results attained are in every degree absolutely satisfactory, not only to the State itself but to those engaged in the industry. I trust something more than an ordinary departure will be made to establish on something like a sound footing the dairying industry in this State. In regard to the railway proposals of the Government, there are many proposals being brought forward at present; and I want to emphasise, so far as the South-

Western District is concerned, the necessity for opening up some of that country so admirably adapted for closer settlement. We have in the South-Western District areas of magnificent soil on which it would be possible for families to make a very excellent living and to thrive and prosper on proportionately small areas of land, as compared with the larger areas that must be alienated in the Eastern District. I think we should encourage as much as we possibly can the small holder and closer settlement. In the strong advocacy for opening up our Eastern wheat and other cereal lands, and I am reminded our great North-West country, I am rather afraid that the possibilities of the South-West may unfortunately be overlooked. While I have no desire to depreciate for one moment the great possibilities of our Eastern District or of our great North-West country, I do not want anyone to lose sight of the possibilities of our South-West country. There are many railways that could be opened up in the South-West with considerable advantage, not only for the purpose of opening up the immediate lands they would traverse, but to bring them within measurable distance of the ports, so as to make it possible, so far as the future of this State is concerned, that the produce of the Eastern and other districts may be carried to the ports in the South-West with the minimum of railway carriage. It is a question that ought to have some little weight in connection with the building of these railways. Their object should not only be to open up certain agricultural lands which they will traverse, but also to provide for the future, that is to provide for shipping facilities for the country that lies farther back. There is one railway which I hope will not be lost sight of, and that is one along the Preston valley, which will ultimately be continued to the Upper Blackwood and then on to the Great Southern Railway. This is undoubtedly one of the best proposals submitted to this country. [MR. EWING: Hear, hear.] Not only will it have the effect of opening up some of the finest orchard land in the South-West, but it will also, I may add, serve to open up some of the finest timber country that the State contains. There is another proposal, and I am

glad to know that my friend the member for Murray (Mr. McLarty) was good enough to give notice of a motion concerning it this afternoon; that is the railway from Pinjarra to Marradong, which, if constructed with a view to aiding the timber industry, will be the means of bringing within use a large scope of good timber country lying to the east of Pinjarra. I hope that if serious proposals are made in regard to this railway, due regard will be paid to the interests of the timber trade; and I am sure we could very easily combine the interests of the timber trade with the interests of those engaged in agriculture in that neighbourhood. There is a good deal of talk of joining the present Jandakot Railway with the South-Western Railway. The proposal to junction it with the South-Western Railway is one that meets with my hearty approval; but I would like to see something more definite in regard to this matter. I am not one of those who agree to the extension being made to a village called Armadale. If it is to be built at all, I want to see it built with a view to the timber possibilities which exist there, with a view to the 160,000 acres of the Flora and Fauna Reserve and the timber areas lying to the east of Pinjarra; because it is most likely that the port of shipment for that timber will be Fremantle. If the junction is made at Mundijong it will be the means of materially reducing the mileage and railway freightage on the timber from the South-West to Fremantle. It is not only a question of distance; it is also a question of grade. One of the most difficult grades in the South-Western Railway from Perth to Brunswick, is the section between Mundijong and Armadale.

MR. BOLTON: Where did you get your information?

MR. A. J. WILSON: It is immaterial where I got my information. The only thing that is material is that my information is correct.

MR. GULL: The grade is 1 in 80.

MR. BOLTON: It is not; it is 1 in 99.

MR. A. J. WILSON: The effect not only of shortening the distance but of minimising the grade will be material to the running of the railways on this particular length. In the Governor's Speech I find proposals in regard to con-

stitutional reform. So far as I am personally concerned, the Government have not by any means gone far enough. I think in Western Australia to-day that 80 members of Parliament are more than is necessary for the domestic government of this State; and I think in any proposals for constitutional reform we should provide for a reduction in the number of members of Parliament. I think we should seriously consider whether or not the time is not ripe in the history of State Governments in the Commonwealth of Australia for some constitutional reform in the direction of the unicameral system. I am inclined to the conclusion personally that if we had a House consisting of 30 members elected on the present Assembly franchise and 20 members elected on the Legislative Council franchise, sitting together, it would be ample for all the requirements of the State of Western Australia at the present time. This strikes me as being a very much better way of economising than by the proposal emanating from the present Government in the direction of a reduction of Ministerial salaries. We ought also to seriously consider in the matter of constitutional reform whether or not it is not consonant with the best principles of constitutional government that when members of Parliament are sent to a House of Parliament to legislate for the affairs of the country, we ought to select from the elected representatives the five or six ablest and most capable men to administer the affairs of the State. I think the time has come when, in the interests of the State, there should be a stop, once and for all, to the game of "ins and outs," and when we should have a fairly defined settled policy, and when it will be possible for us, by the adoption of the principle of elective Ministries, to overcome the jealousy and the scrambling for office so frequent in Australian Parliaments in these latter days. In connection with the question of electoral reform, I hope that when the Electoral Bill comes down, some provision will be made along the line of issuing voters' rights. I think we ought to have some investigation in regard to this matter before the Bill comes down, and I believe that if we had a committee of this House to go into it and sift the matter to the bottom, it would be possible for

us to inculcate in the Electoral Bill a provision for the issue of electors' rights. In regard to exhaustive ballots, I was pleased to hear the announcement of the Premier and also the announcement of a Minister at Fremantle; and I sincerely hope that there will be provision in the Electoral Bill for exhaustive ballots. In regard to the reduction of the franchise for the Legislative Council, I do not agree with the proposal of the Government for a reduction to £15. It seems to me that the interests of that section of the community in whose interests primarily the Legislative Council exists would be perfectly and thoroughly safeguarded by a reduction of the franchise to that of household franchise. The reduction to £15 will, in my opinion, have very little effect in increasing the number of voters for the Upper House. Another very important matter is the question of the Public Service Commissioner. I do not for a moment propose to enter into any criticism of the Public Service Commissioner, but I desire to direct the attention of the House to the fact that it is not long since we were engaged in the passage of the Public Service Act, in which it was sought in my opinion to relieve Ministers of the responsibility of dealing with the difficult work of classifying the public service departments, and removing the responsibility from their shoulders to one person who should be a Public Service Commissioner, and should be answerable directly to the House for the work he was required to do. It is clearly the duty of the House when we find the Public Service Commissioner trying to do his work honestly and fearlessly, and without favour I believe, to strengthen the hands of the Public Service Commissioner just the same as we would hold up the hands of the Auditor General of the State. One cannot but regret that the Government have not seen fit up till the present, although the first section of the classification has been before the country for some time, to arrive at any conclusion on the matter. Personally I regret the fact that the classification was attempted in sections, because in dealing with it in sections the effect on the State which the criticism already levelled at the Public Service Commissioner would have, and in many cases very unfair criticism indeed, may

very seriously and prejudicially operate against the successful classification of the remaining departments. It strikes me it would have been better had that particular classification been held back until the Commissioner had been able to report on the whole of the service. However, in this matter I hope we shall recognise, as far as the House is concerned, that the Commissioner is the servant of the House, responsible to the House, and it is the duty of the House to hold up his hand and see that he is not unfairly treated in his arduous work. In connection with the financial position of the State I do not pose as a financial expert, but I want to say personally, in view of the fact that there is a wide discrimination between taxation *per se* and revenue in the ordinary sense, I want members to ask themselves first whether there is a necessity for more taxation until such time as we have satisfied ourselves that there is no possibility of retrenchment taking place without injuring the efficiency of the departments. I am inclined to agree with the member for Katanning (Hon. F. H. Piesse) when he says that the carrying of a deficit is not a matter of very serious moment as far as the State is concerned. In view of the figures quoted by the member for West Perth (Mr. Illingworth) this evening I am more than ever convinced on that question, when we find that fifteen millions of our sixteen millions of loan moneys have been expended on reproductive works. When we find these works in such a satisfactory position, I think more than ever we ought to recognise that the taxation of the people in this State is not very high comparatively, and although our revenue may be higher per head than is the case in the Eastern States, yet we have to recognise they have in existence in the Eastern States forms of taxation that do not exist here, and our revenue is only high because we have undertaken more State operations in Western Australia than is the case in the Eastern States; and after all I think our revenue is about £11 per head of the population that is taken by taxation from the people of the State. When we consider the direct services rendered through the Railway Department, or the Mines Department, or other public departments of the State, I think

we shall recognise that there is no need for any retrenchment. At all events before we decide on retrenchment we must be thoroughly satisfied that we are not retrenching at the expense of the efficiency of any of the State departments. If there are any wasters, or any unemployed in the public service, I say the Public Service Commissioner, or the Minister controlling a department, ought not to hesitate to take action in regard to that department. We must have our service as efficient as possible, and whilst we desire to give adequate value for services rendered, we desire to have adequate service for the value given. Then we have to consider in the question of retrenchment whether we cannot pay too cheaply for the able conduct of the affairs of our departments. With the proposal to tax unimproved land values I scarcely need say I am heartily in accord, and I hope when this proposal comes down at least it will be a proposal that will be of some practical utility as far as the country is concerned. As to the loan policy of the Government, I have no serious apprehension as to this particular line of policy, because I believe the fact of spending loan moneys on such works as are enumerated in the Speech of His Excellency the Governor completely safeguards the State and secures us against the possibility of unfair expenditure. What strikes me at the present time is that it is clearly the duty of members of Parliament and the people of the State to recognise that we have in our province one of the most wonderful heritages in the Commonwealth of Australia. We have practically unlimited possibilities in our great natural resources, and all we require is a wise, settled, progressive Government. From the people we ask for support and confidence, indomitable energy and industry, which are essential to the promotion and steady progress and the well-being of our people; and with these it is possible for us to make our State what it is destined to be, one of the brightest jewels in the crown of empire.

MR. A. MALE (Kimberley): I had no intention of speaking this evening, as I am suffering from a rather bad cold, and in fact my only excuse for speaking at all on the Address-in-Reply is the fact that I and one of the two few members who repre-

sent that vast and valuable portion of the State known as the great North-West and Kimberley. I would like to point out that owing to the resignation of the member for Pilbarra there are at the present time only three members in the House who represent that vast portion of the State, and for that reason I shall confine my remarks as much as possible to matters affecting the North. In the first place I would like to point out that I regret, and I think the people of the North regret, the fact that in the constitution of the present Ministry no direct representation has been given to the North, and we rather regret that fact for the reason that the ex-Premier when forming his Cabinet gave us direct representation in the Ministry, an honour that has seldom if ever before been extended to the North. Perhaps that may not be such a great detriment to that portion of the State, but at the same time we cannot help recognising the fact when we analyse the Ministry that we cannot find any Minister with a real or personal knowledge of the North. In fact I doubt very much if any of the Ministers has travelled farther along the north coast than Geraldton. In pointing this out I do not wish to imply that the Ministry by any means are going to neglect the North, for I firmly believe they will to the best of their knowledge do all that is necessary for its development and improvement; but I only point that out to emphasise the fact that without any direct knowledge of the North we can hardly expect that amount of attention which we undoubtedly deserve. We are told that a number of Bills are to be submitted to this House for our consideration, and amongst them will be a Bill for amending the Constitution, and under that I would like to point out the fact, which I have already referred to, of the poor representation of the North in this House. Perhaps from a population point of view we have as much as we deserve. I do not think we can look upon it as being the only factor when we consider the vast area involved, the different industries that are concerned, and the slow means of communication throughout that portion of the State. Under these circumstances we have some justification for referring to the fact of our poor representation.

Let us take Kimberley alone with its something like 1,000 miles of coast line, and its population scattered hundreds of miles inland: it seems to me perfectly impossible for any one man to properly represent and look after the interests of that district. It would take months to go all over that district and get familiar with the different portions of it, and it seems to me hardly fair to expect one man to undertake all that and at the same time to try and do a fair thing to the whole. We have heard a lot about the construction of light railways and the development of agricultural areas, timber areas, and so forth, but we hear nothing at all about the opening up of the great trunk road to the North. There is some slight mention of it in the Speech of the Governor, in which he refers to the fact that—

Strong representations have from time to time been placed before the Imperial authorities regarding the urgent necessity for a proper survey of the North-West coast of the State, and my Ministers are at present giving further attention to this matter, with a view of securing the assistance of the Admiralty at the earliest possible date.

That is satisfactory, and I trust it will not be left to drop. The ocean is our great trunk road to the North, and I think we have a right to demand the same consideration as is required by the more favoured centres of the South and of the Goldfields. The want of proper and complete surveys has been responsible for numerous accidents on our coasts. I am glad to say we have not had to report the loss of life, but at the same time we have had to report the loss of valuable property. Therefore, it is very necessary that surveys should be effected. In addition to these surveys there is the matter of the lighting of our coast, and I regret to say that no mention has been made in the Governor's Speech in reference to this. I regret it for one reason, that I think at the present time we are losing our golden opportunity, an opportunity which will probably never occur again. I believe it is the intention of the Federal authorities to, at a very early date, take over the whole of the management of the lighting of the coasts of Australia, in which case it will probably take them a year or two to get the department in order, and then when they have money to spend on the lighting of the coast, I do

not think much will be spent on our coast, but it will be spent on the coasts of those States where they have the thickest population. If we take our own coast line from Dongarra to the north-east extremity of the West Australian border, a distance of some 3,300 miles, we find we have 23 lights. Eight of these lights are mere lanterns or jetty lights. As to the 15 remaining, with the exception of three they are only port lights; and that gives us three coast lights in a distance of 3,300 miles, and it is a noticeable fact that the farther north we get from Fremantle the more the strength of these lights diminishes. At Rottnest we have a 45,000 candle power, at Geraldton 20,000 candle power, at Cossack 2,500, and then anything is good enough for Kimberley and the rest of the coast farther north. I think that when we consider that the trade of the North is increasing every day, that the passenger traffic is getting more and more, and that large steamers are travelling up and down our coast with valuable cargoes, the members for the North are justified in demanding that reasonable and proper facilities should be granted to afford a safe passage up and down the coast. I may point out that the exports out of the State from the more northern ports during the last three years, according to the figures given by the Federal authorities, ran into more than £1,100,000, and then when we consider that the amount that came to Fremantle from those ports last year alone comprised over 20,000 head of cattle—brought down for the metropolitan and goldfields markets—and 100,000 sheep, these figures, I think, will show that the trade of the coast demands some consideration. I am pleased to say that provision is to be made for improvements and additions to the North-West tramways. The Premier, in his Bunbury speech, referred to the fact that criticisms had been made of the works of the Public Works Department, and I think that in that respect the North perhaps can speak rather feelingly; I know I can speak feelingly myself. Only a few weeks ago, when I was in Broome, the tram ran off the line three times between Broome and the jetty. A short time ago I was at Wyndham. There I saw one of the piles of the jetty eaten right off, and the pile

was simply wobbling about. These facts are small in themselves, yet I think they speak rather forcibly as regards the Public Works Department in the North. The Governor in his Speech refers to the fact that it will be necessary for Ministers to effect all possible economies. I would also like to point out the fact that "a stitch in time saves nine," and it is not altogether economy to try and cut down expenditure at the expense of public works already in existence. It is not economy to let our tramways, jetties, or public buildings go to rack and ruin.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH took the Chair.]

It is very essential that they should be properly maintained, and it seems to me that for the true and economical working of the North it will be necessary for the Works Department to have some re-organisation of their system there. When we find buildings that have been constructed of wood and iron—as buildings in the North have to be—left exposed to the extremes of the tropical climate, left for a period of six years without being repainted and done up, it stands to reason that they must go to rack and ruin; and it is necessary for the Works Department to take steps to look after these buildings. To do that it will probably be necessary to give a much larger grant for their upkeep. It will also be necessary to provide more supervision to look after these works. At the present time we find them with one officer who is supposed to look after the whole of the buildings of the Public Works Department from Carnarvon to the Far North, a task which on the face of it is absurd. It takes that officer all his time to travel over the vast areas there, and he has not only a coast line of some thousands of miles, but has inland places. He has Hall's Creek, Marble Bar, and all round there to look after at the same time. It simply means that when he lets work in one place there is no supervision over that work, and when it is completed he has to wire to a postmaster, magistrate, or some other official who has no knowledge of public works, to find out if this work has been constructed, and payments have to be made on the word of this postmaster or other official person. It seems to me that for the true economic working of the North it should either be

divided into two or more districts, or an officer should be given supervisors capable of going round and supervising new work and looking after old work already in existence. In his policy speech the Premier made allusion to the Pilbarra Railway, but no reference is made to it in the Speech of His Excellency the Governor. I trust that this matter will not be left to drop. The subject of the Pilbarra Railway has been before the public for a long while, and it is quite time it should be brought to some definite conclusion. Probably this matter has been treated from a wrong point of view in some respects. In my opinion the public have been considering rather too much the merits of Cossack and Port Hedland, and whilst considering the respective merits of those places have failed to give due consideration to the miners who have been requiring the railway. What I think is required is a railway from Pilbarra to the coast: it does not matter what portion of the coast it touches, as long as it is a suitable place. Having decided, as I think has already been decided several times, that such a railway is justifiable, the route may in my opinion be left to the experts, namely the Government engineers. I really think that if the people in Cossack and Port Hedland had considered more the interests of the miners and not so much their own respective ports, the chances are that the railway would by this time have been an accomplished fact. In connection with that railway—and as I take it with all mining railways—it must be more or less of a speculative nature, and under these circumstances I think all that is required is a narrow-gauge railway, to be built at half the cost of the standardised railways such as tenders were called for a short time ago; tenders which included the construction of large stations and other items which could very easily be left out of consideration at Pilbarra. It seems to me rather a matter for regret that the present Colonial Treasurer, when acting as Minister for Public Works, was unable to take that contemplated trip of his to the North, together with the Engineer-in-Chief. [Interjection.] That is quite probable, but even in spite of the broken bottles the people would favour what few visits they could get from southern

members as well as southern Ministers, and they had anticipated some good results from such a visit. The fact remains that more good can be done by a personal sighting of things than can often be gained from quires of foolscap; and even now, if it is not possible for the present Minister for Works to make that contemplated trip, I trust that he will before long be able to see his way clear to allow the Engineer-in-Chief to make a trip to the Far North, so that he will be able to see for himself the nature of the public works of the North, and will then be much better able to cope with requisitions which come down for farther works. I am pleased to see that provision has been made for the completion of the rabbit-proof fence; also for a Number 3 fence from Warra Warra to the coast near Northampton. It is a matter of great regret that no provision apparently so far has been made to save Kimberley from the rabbits. At the present time the fence running from Eucla to the North-West coast can only be looked upon as a track on which the rabbits can run straight into the West Kimberley District. As soon as they touch the fence from the east they simply run along the fence as fast as they can, and it seems to me that it will not be very long before they are into the Kimberley country, if some attempt is not made to stop them. Properly to block them would be a very big undertaking; that is, to run a fence right across to the South Australian border. But I think it is quite necessary that some provision should be made to check them—to put up a curb fence, perhaps, of some two or three hundred miles into the desert, to try by that means to turn them back. When we consider that the whole of the beef supply of the south and of the goldfields comes from Kimberley, when we consider that there are millions of acres of land up there capable of carrying stock, I think it is quite a fair thing to ask that the Kimberley districts should be protected; for it is very certain that if the rabbits get there that country will be practically ruined. It seems to me that a question of that kind is quite as important to the State as the fostering of the agricultural areas and the building of spur lines. I am pleased to see that the Government are

going on with the pioneering work of artesian boring right throughout the North-West. This work, which has been started to the north of Carnarvon, has been crowned with success at Broome, and for that town solves the question of water supply, which has been one of serious moment to it for some time past. I trust that the success which the bores have attained there will be the forerunner of their farther success in the North, where at the present time water is badly required in the dry areas. The Governor, in his Speech, refers to the fact that rains have fallen in the North; but that, unfortunately, does not apply to the Far North, the Kimberley districts, which are experiencing a dry season following on a dry season, with the result that where people have water now the feed is all done, and where they have good feed they have no water. It is in these dry districts that we hope to see the artesian bores. By getting a good supply in these areas it will be possible for the country to carry not only the present stock, but hundreds and thousands of stock in addition. As a representative of the pearling industry, it may be advisable to say a few words, although there is really not much to say. At the present time the pearling industry is in anything but a flourishing condition, owing to the low prices ruling. But the pearl-ers do endeavour to assist themselves before they come to the Government for assistance. At the present time they have decided to send a representative to Europe, to see whether they can find new markets and improve the present market for their commodity. The only manner in which we do hope the Government will assist us is by introducing a Bill to deal with illicit pearl-buying on our coast; and if they do that, it will be of great and material assistance to the pearl-ers in keeping down a vice that is getting very prevalent in the North-West. Land settlement in the North has been referred to. This is a phase of settlement which will have to come; but I doubt if the time is just yet. There is no doubt that the millions of acres of rich land in the North will have to be developed. Already we have had small instances of what can be done there. At Sunday Island samples of cotton have been produced which are equal to anything that can

be required. At Beagle Bay, some years ago good samples of tobacco were grown by the Trappists who were residing there; and although they did not actually smoke the leaf themselves, they were able to supply the tobacco required by the natives. At the same place there is a fine banana plantation. Cocoanuts have been in full bearing in the North for several years, and there is no doubt that much might be done to cultivate tropical crops if suitable labour could be found and suitable areas provided. It seems to me that some small amount might well be spent in experimental work in the North, to find out what really are suitable crops for the climate. The mineral resources of the North, no doubt, will prove to be of great value; and I think that we are justified in asking the Government to give all possible assistance to prospectors and others who are willing to risk life and capital. I should like to refer to the matter of protection to settlers in the North. We continually hear complaints of trouble with the natives. They spear white men and others; hence the settlers require some consideration. A short time ago a case was heard at Wyndham, in which a native was prosecuted for the murder of a white man. At the preliminary hearing the native was convicted of murder, and a Judge was sent to try the case. Counsel was sent to defend the native, but unfortunately no counsel was sent for the prosecution; and on a question of law this native ultimately got off. The people of East Kimberley feel very keenly that this miscarriage of justice has let loose what to them is an apparent murderer; and they demand that for the future skilled prosecution shall be provided where skilled defence is provided. It is, as a rule, quite as difficult for the settlers to provide skilled prosecution as it is for the native to provide skilled defence. In fact, at the present time it is more difficult, as the Aborigines Board is prepared to provide skilled defence for natives. The settlers only ask for fair play; and I think that those who have to risk their lives in these far-back places are justified in asking for that. I am glad to note that the Government are prepared to adopt a progressive policy, and are not afraid to borrow a certain amount of

money for pushing on the works necessary for the development of the industries of this great State. It is quite possible that, owing to the deficit which has to be faced, it will be necessary for some new form of taxation to be imposed; but at the same time, the natural progress of this great State, combined with the economical working of the various departments, will do much to reduce that deficit, and will probably prevent any very severe increase of taxation. Although perhaps not agreeing with the Government on all the points of their policy, I trust they will receive that amount of support which will enable them to further the best interests of this great State, and to develop the latent wealth contained therein.

On motion of MR. GORDON, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned a 9-55 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 11th July, 1906.

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4-30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS ARBITRATION AWARD.

MR. H. BROWN: I beg to ask the question standing in my name; but