

be remembered when their speeches are forgotten; and when we see the results of the railway policy of the Government, when we realise that this policy is bringing depression on the country, then the people of the country will bear in mind the action of those members who, against their own convictions in regard to railway management, were willing to support the Government for reasons other than those which should influence the votes of members on this occasion. The duty of the Opposition is clear: it is to test the feeling of the House on the question of railway administration; and we on this side of the House having pointed out the danger, then whatever evils follow, the responsibility will not rest with us. It will, however, be none the less a matter for very grave regret that the vital interests of the State should suffer, and that the Government by their policy should be wedded to the principle that the country exists for the benefit of the railways, and not the railways for the benefit of the country. I beg to move, as an amendment on the motion before the House:

That the last paragraph in the proposed Address-in-reply be struck out, and that the following words be inserted in lieu thereof:—"We desire, however, most respectfully to inform your Excellency that the railway policy and administration of your advisers does not command the confidence of a majority of the members of this House."

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): I second the amendment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): I desire to move the adjournment of the debate; to be resumed, if the House will allow us, to-morrow afternoon at 4:30 o'clock, when the first speaker on behalf of the Government will be the member for Pilbarra (Hon. W. Kingsmill). The mover of the amendment has made statements and dealt with figures which will need to be replied to in some detail, and the late Minister for Railways will deal with them to-morrow and go into the matter fully. For these reasons I ask that the debate be adjourned.

Motion (adjournment) put and passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 12 minutes past 8 o'clock until the next afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 23rd July, 1902.

Questions, Length of Notice.—The late Premier, Letter from Mrs. Leake—Question: Land Purchases, East Fremantle—Question: Railway Shelter Sheds—Question: Coolgardie-Esperance Railway Survey—Question: Agricultural Area, Chapman-Motion (postponement), Land Purchases Supply Bill, £1,000,000, second reading, etc.—Address-in-reply, third day, adjourned—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTIONS, LENGTH OF NOTICE.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jamieson) asked that in future 48 hours' notice be given of questions to Ministers, as it was not possible always, owing to pressure of work in the various departments, to obtain information in answer to questions within 24 hours; but whenever the information could be obtained within that time it would be supplied.

THE LATE PREMIER.

LETTER FROM MRS. LEAKE.

THE PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter:—

July, 21st.

Dear Sir,—Please convey to the Legislative Council my sincere thanks for their kind sympathy to myself and family, also my deep appreciation of the honour paid to my dear husband in placing on record his services to this State—Yours truly, LOUISE E. LEAKE.

QUESTION—LAND PURCHASES, EAST FREMANTLE.

HON. M. L. MOSS asked the Minister for Lands: If the Government are aware that the agent appointed by them in connection with the purchases of land at East Fremantle for railway or harbour works purposes has charged and been paid commission by the vendors of the properties.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: Yes; Mr. J. P. Learmonth, who has purchased the whole of the land, is under oath not to take, either directly or indirectly, any profit outside his commission of 5 per cent., and all commissions received by him from the vendors are to be credited against this sum.

QUESTION—RAILWAY SHELTER SHEDS.

HON. W. MALEY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, If the Government is aware that considerable loss is sustained by the agriculturists along the Great Southern Railway, owing to the entire absence of shed accommodation at many sidings. 2, If the Government intends to provide shelter sheds, immediately, at all sidings where agricultural produce is received.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. 2, The Government intends to provide shelter sheds where necessity and traffic warrant, as speedily as possible.

QUESTION—COOLGARDIE-ESPERANCE RAILWAY SURVEY.

HON. W. MALEY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How far the permanent survey of the Coolgardie-Esperance railway is completed from Coolgardie. 2, What is the estimate of cost of the complete permanent survey.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, The permanent survey has been completed as far as 30 miles from Coolgardie, and the trial traverse to Widgemooltha (50 miles south of Coolgardie). 2, From data available at present it is estimated that the permanent survey of the whole route, from Coolgardie to Esperance, will cost about £8,000.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL AREA, CHAPMAN.

HON. J. M. DREW asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How many acres of land within the Chapman Agricultural Area have been closed against selection and made temporary reserves. 2, For what purpose have these reserves been created. 3, If the Government recognises that the locking up of this land is a serious hindrance to settlement. 4, If the Government is aware that many intending settlers have expressed dissatisfaction at the extent of these reserves, and the method adopted in laying them out.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1 and 2, An area of 6,584 acres has been temporarily reserved. This land could not be thrown open with the first batch of lots for the reason that the statutory notice to the pastoral lessees,

from whom the land was resumed, had not expired on the date on which the lots were gazetted. 3 and 4, The Government has heard that some intending settlers were disappointed that this land was not thrown open at the same time as the original portion of the area. The temporary reservation is now being removed, and the lots gazetted as open on the 7th August.

MOTION (POSTPONEMENT), LAND PURCHASES.

Notice of the following motion had been previously given:—

That there be laid on the table of the House: 1, All papers in connection with the purchase of land, on behalf of the Government, at East Fremantle and Buckland Hill, for railway or harbour works purposes; also all documents relating to the employment of auctioneers and agents in respect of such purchases. 2, A return showing a list of the properties purchased or under offer, and the amounts of the purchase moneys in each instance.

HON. M. L. MOSS said: The Minister for Lands informs me that were I to move now the motion standing in my name, the Government would be hampered in their resumption of land required for the purposes of the railway deviation and harbour works contemplated. Having no desire to hinder the Government in any way, I ask leave to postpone this notice of motion until this day week.

Notice by leave postponed.

SUPPLY BILL (£1,000,000).**SECOND READING.**

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. Jameson), in moving the second reading, said: This is a purely formal measure for the supply of money to the Government during the next few months. The amount of the Bill is £1,000,000, which will, of course, be available only for purposes voted by the Assembly. The measure, being one of mere form, requires no farther introduction from me. I hope hon. members will feel no difficulty in passing the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

Bill passed through the remaining stages without debate.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THIRD DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous day.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (South) : I am sure we are all pleased at His Majesty's recovery from his recent illness. In common with all loyal subjects, we hope that the King is sufficiently restored to withstand the strain of the coronation ceremonies shortly to take place. As a goldfields representative, I can assure the House that the approaching departure of Sir Arthur Lawley is viewed with extreme regret by the mining community. It is recognised that the State loses a good friend in our departing Governor. Sir Arthur Lawley is most popular on the goldfields. He has gone farther out than any previous Governor. While, perhaps, that fact may be due in part to the circumstance that the country is now more opened up, still His Excellency has taken the trouble to visit outlying fields, and has in other ways shown great interest in the gold-mining industry. I trust—indeed I feel sure—that Sir Arthur Lawley will do well in the Transvaal. He is a man of great administrative ability, and doubtless his sojourn in the new colony will be as happy as his sojourn here has been. His Excellency has my good wishes in that behalf. I must refer, even though briefly, to the death of our late Premier. Mr. Leake was one of my closest friends. I met him early in my West Australian career, and to the day of his death I always found him a good friend. I do not think the deceased gentleman had a single enemy in the State. I think one and all of us will indorse the sentiments expressed by the leader of the House regarding the lamented death of Mr. Leake. Turning now to the railway muddle, I must say at the outset that I am strongly opposed to Mr. George's appointment. Seeing that appointment was made so shortly before the meeting of Parliament, I think the least the Government could have done was to wait a little longer and give the Legislature an opportunity of expressing its views on the business. I have had a good deal of railway experience. I was brought up in a railway firm, and I have been connected with the South Australian railways. My knowledge of railway matters enables me to say emphatically that appointments of this nature should

not be made hurriedly. At one time the South Australian railways were in much the same state of muddle and confusion as ours are at the present time. Then advertisements were inserted in the London newspapers, calling for applications for the management of the system, and the very best man obtainable was appointed. The position was conferred on Mr. J. H. Smith, who was made a Railway Commissioner.

HON. W. T. LOTON : Rather an uncommon name.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : Mr. Smith certainly put the railways on a good working basis. Mr. George, who has been appointed Railway Commissioner for this State, is not too well known. As regards Mr. George's fitness to control the railways, all I can say for him is that he is a fitter or an engineer.

HON. W. T. LOTON : He is a "smith," too.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : I have heard that he is a blacksmith ; and I am also told that he is a storekeeper and an accountant. Evidently, Mr. George is a man of many and varied capabilities. I think, however, that in filling such an important post the greatest care should have been exercised to appoint the very best man procurable. Undoubtedly, great dissatisfaction exists throughout the State with regard to the management of the Railway Department. That dissatisfaction exists not only among the railway servants, but also, and in no slight degree, among the business men who come in contact with the department. I certainly consider Parliament should have been given an opportunity of expressing its opinion before the appointment was made. Personal knowledge enables me to state that on the goldfields the appointment is most unpopular. Everyone is asking, "What job are the Government up to now?" The universal question on the goldfields is, "What is the reason of this hurried appointment, seeing that Parliament was about to be summoned?" From a perusal of last session's *Hansard*, and from my recollection of speeches delivered in another place, I should be inclined to say that of all men in Western Australia Mr. George is the most unfitted for the post of Commissioner of Railways. I

have before me a record of a debate which occurred in another place, and in the course of which Mr. W. J. George was actually accused of fraud—of defrauding the railways of revenue. Such charges being on record—[MEMBER: Were they proved?—the least the Government could do was to await the meeting of Parliament before making the appointment, so that if, in fact, an attempt had been made by Mr. George to defraud the Railway Department, Parliament might have an opportunity of pronouncing its views on the subject. Instead of that, however, we find Mr. George appointed and given a high salary without Parliament being consulted at all. Mr. George, in short, gets a very good billet without anybody's knowledge. I certainly think the matter has been altogether too hastily dealt with. I have met many people who consider Mr. George a good mechanical man; but good mechanical men are not wanted in the Railway Department. The man we have at the head of mechanical affairs is possessed of high ability.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: Question?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I know that our present Mechanical Engineer was one of the men chosen to examine and report on the South Australian Railways at a time when they were in a very bad state. The hon. member who interjects "question" only shows his own ignorance. Mr. Rotheram and Mr. Thow were selected to make an investigation, and I know that Mr. Rotheram's standing in his profession is the highest possible. I had good opportunity of knowledge in this matter, because I was at the time a mechanical draftsman in the South Australian Railway Department. The mechanical engineer has his own particular branch of work. If, for example, a marine engineer be employed to supervise the construction of locomotives, things will very soon be "in the soup." I do trust Mr. Moss will, to the utmost of his power, assist the House with his legal knowledge in devising some means of annulling Mr. George's appointment, for I cannot but regard that appointment as likely to prove disastrous to the railway system. That is my candid opinion. There is one aspect, particularly, in which the conduct of Mr. George does not appeal to me as a public man. At the

time of his appointment he was a member of Parliament.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Does that make the man any worse?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I am afraid so. (Laughter.) I think a member of Parliament who runs after the powers that be in order to get an appointment, shows the most despicable nature possible. I did not enter Parliament for the purpose of profit, and I am sure Mr. Burgess did not do so either.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That's so.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: We enter Parliament for the purpose of doing our best on behalf of the State. Such, I take it, is at any rate the general sentiment of members of Parliament. Evidently, however, the case is otherwise with Mr. George. His bitter personal attacks on certain members of the present Ministry show that he is not, or was not, by any means a friend of theirs. I do not care to make a direct assertion, but it does seem to me that there must have been a *quid pro quo* somewhere or other in connection with Mr. George's appointment.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is not the first time a member of Parliament has been appointed to a position.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I am prepared to say that the appointment has not been by any means an honourable one. That is my opinion of the matter. I am glad the whole question has been discussed. We have no evidence before the House that Mr. George is a great railway man, and I do not think that any one will admit that this country is in a position to try experiments. If the Government wished to give Mr. George an appointment for his past parliamentary services, why not make him inspector of bees for instance, because I understand he is a good authority on bees, or chief inspector of wood-chopping, as an honourable member suggests. I hope something will be done to annul this appointment. If after Parliament has perused the papers and considered the question from all points of view members think fit to approve of the appointment, well and good; but I think everybody considers this appointment should not have been made before Parliament met. A great deal has been said

about the latter portion of paragraph 9 of the Governor's Speech, which says:—

Adequate provision, however, will be made to leave with Parliament the full power of controlling rates and of dealing with all questions involving the interests of the railway servants of the State.

I think Parliament should have some say with regard to the Commissioner of Railways or the board of Commissioners, as the case may be, because the three men who are appointed may say to themselves, "We have absolute control for five years, and we will do as we like." Speaking from experience, when Mr. J. H. Smith was appointed Commissioner of Railways in South Australia, it was remarkable the number of Smiths who got billets. You could with safety approach an engine driver, or a porter, or any other employee by the name of Smith, and you would not be far wrong. Some controlling influence should be held by Parliament so that at any time, if thought proper, the Government could step in and remove them from their positions. I do not anticipate that such a thing will be necessary, but there should be that power. In Adelaide the Government took advantage of such a power, and we should have the same rule here. With regard to the railway servants, I think the Commissioners should have full control over them, also over the rates. The Commissioners will be responsible for the payment of the sinking fund and interest on the money expended on the railways, and the business men who are appointed as Commissioners should have the fullest possible control over the department. Regarding paragraph 10, I think one of the worst evils that could befall a country is to alter its constitution. I do not see any necessity for such a thing at the present time. This country is going ahead by leaps and bounds; population is flowing in on all sides. We find from Pilbarra in the North, or higher than that, from Nullagine, I think it is, people are finding gold, and the population is increasing largely. There is no need to alter the constitution of the country this session.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: Is there no necessity for redistribution?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I think some of the districts returning members to the Assembly should be amalgamated,

but I am against pocket boroughs, as they are called.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What about representing the industries?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: That is right enough; but because there are a thousand bullocks in one portion of the country the same voting power should not be given to that district as if there were a thousand men there. I find that Kimberley East has 171 voters, and Kimberley West 281 voters.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What is the wealth there?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Any amount of wealth.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That requires representing.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: We do not begrudge the people the wealth they have, but if there are only 171 voters in a constituency, I think it is hardly right that they should have a whole member to themselves. If you go to any portion of Perth you will find that two thousand or three thousand electors only have the same representation in Parliament as 171 up North. That is not fair, it is distinctly unfair. Consequently, I think if the populous districts of the State had more representation, and the less populous districts of the State less representation in Parliament, it would be all the better. I do not believe altogether in Parliament being elected on a population basis, but I think the boundaries of the Northern districts should be altered. I do not see any immediate need to hurry on an alteration of the constitution. As far as I am concerned I am willing to let the whole matter stand until next session. The country is on the up-grade; population is flowing in, and I anticipate seeing as many thousands as there are hundreds up North within the next two years. There is no necessity to alter the constitution at the present time; but the cry is a popular one, and those in favour of amendment are making an extreme use of the argument. In paragraph 13 mention is made of a harbour board. For my part I cannot see why a harbour board should not be established, and have control of all harbours, jetties, buoys, lighthouses, and everything appertaining to marine work.

HON. H. BRIGGS: The Federal Government have the control of the lighthouses.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : At any rate, a marine board could control harbours and jetties, and Parliament would always have a report about them. I would favour a marine board much on the same lines as that established in South Australia.

HON. M. L. MOSS : A marine board will soon come, under the Federal Legislature.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : This is a matter I shall be glad to allow Captain Laurie to have his say about, and I shall be pleased to follow him, as he knows more about marine matters than I do. However, I may say that the marine board in South Australia has worked very well indeed. I am glad to know that the railway line from Menzies to Leonora is finished. There is no doubt that the policy of the Government in pushing railways well into the interior, where the mines are situated, is a good one. I wish a scheme could be drawn up by which the railways could be worked less expensively. I do not think there should be such expensive station buildings as are now erected. On the Mundaring line one finds buildings which have cost fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds, where there are only a few people to go to the station. When railways are first built, temporary station buildings should be erected, and later, when population finds its way to these centres, then permanent buildings can be put up. I find that Goongarrie has a splendid station, much better than that at Boorabbin, only three or four hundred people a month passing through. At these places temporary accommodation should be erected for the people in the first place, and the more permanent buildings put up later on when the district is settled. There is no doubt that our railways are run very expensively in the back country, and I do not see the necessity for such heavy expenditure. Every station-master has a porter and probably a lamp-cleaner to assist him; three men to run a station which does not pay for itself. I suggest that the lines be blocked in a proper manner and through trains arranged, also that less expensive stations be erected.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : They are cutting down the expenditure all through.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : It should be cut down, and the Government ought to

cut down the rates. I think it will be admitted that the line to the eastern goldfields is overtaxed. I feel sure that as the north-eastern districts are opened up, the present line from here to Kalgoorlie will not be able to carry all the goods required to supply the fields. I would suggest to the Government that they bring in a Bill for the construction of the Coolgardie-Esperance railway; in which case goods coming from the Eastern States could be carried *via* Esperance.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : You will want to go to South Australia altogether, then.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : Oh, no. I would not part with my friend Mr. Burgess.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : I would not trust you.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : Along the Esperance route there is a flourishing goldfield.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : Not increasing.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : Yes.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : When?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : Since last year. The field is not going back; but the people cannot get their stuff cheap enough. They have over a hundred miles of sand to cover, and they cannot get their supplies to enable them to work the mines cheaply.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : It has been contended that there is wood enough along the Esperance route to pay for the railway.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : So there is. Before twelve months are over we shall have to look for firewood for the Kalgoorlie mines. Why not construct a line from Esperance and let some of the heavy jarrah come from Albany?

HON. R. G. BURGESS : There is no jarrah there.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : Well, karri. It is good timber, and there is plenty of it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : Karri is useless.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE : It is very good timber; and it could be put through the port of Esperance and sent up to Kalgoorlie cheaply. The mines along the route are languishing for a railway, which, if constructed, would make the field a paying one. The land between Esperance and Norseman is good for agricultural purposes; still I do not think the agricultural interests between

Norseman and Esperance will vie with the coastal districts. I think there is room for all. How much better it would be to put ten or fifteen thousand people between Esperance and Coolgardie, and let them grow cabbages and potatoes for the people. Anyone who has read the report of the Government Inspector sent down there, I mean Mr. White—

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I have read it.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I hope you were pleased with it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I have been there myself.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Inspector White says that the country is well suited for agriculture, and that there is sufficient land to grow foodstuffs to supply all the goldfields from Kalgoorlie onwards.

A MEMBER: What about the rainfall?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I have that too. I find that the average rainfall, during the last thirteen years to 1901, has been 23 inches between Norseman and Esperance. All the advantages which nature can give towards the making of a good agricultural district are given to Esperance and its neighbourhood. Then why not allow Esperance this line for the purpose of supplying the goldfields? The coastal farmers cannot, at the present time, supply the wants of the mining community. I say to them, "You cannot supply the goldfields."

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We can supply the whole country.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: You fail to do so, anyhow. We have to import goods through Fremantle. You compel us to carry our goods about 1,500 miles farther than is necessary. The Esperance railway will have plenty of traffic for years and years to come. Any public works for the benefit of Perth and Fremantle I shall gladly support. I recognise that Perth is the capital of the State, and therefore any public works for the advancement of Perth or its port, Fremantle, will have my ready support. For goodness' sake, however, give us goldfields residents some facilities for landing our goods at the place of consumption at the cheapest possible cost! We are undoubtedly entitled to the easiest possible communication with the coast. I am sure the farming interests will give due heed to the goldfields interests, and treat them in a fair and even a generous

manner. When a Bill for the Esperance line comes before the House, my friend Mr. Burges, I feel sure, will never vote against it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Won't I? I'll stay here for a week and speak against it.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: That railway will come, as sure as Mr. Burges is born.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Yes; but not just yet.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I can assure Mr. Burges that the case of the goldfields is a most deserving one.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Wait till you hear the other side of the story.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Returning to the general railway question, I have to point out that the increased rates constitute a most burdensome tax on the mining industry. Last year the goldfields treated 1,416,564 tons for a yield of 1,662,694 ounces of gold. This year the same yield from the same tonnage will cost an additional £40,000 to produce, in consequence of the increase in railway freights, which therefore, hon. members will surely recognise, constitute an undue tax on the gold-mining industry.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Better reduce existing rates than build another railway.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: The trouble is, Mr. Burges does not say whether he is in favour of that course or any other. At all events, I assure hon. members that the mining industry cannot stand these increased rates. A warning note was sounded but a few days ago, when a labour dispute arose at Kalgoorlie. For goodness' sake, let us do everything possible to prevent a strike! We want no strikes here. I went through the Broken Hill strike, which crippled South Australia for four years; in fact, I doubt whether that State has yet recovered from the disastrous effects of the disturbance. A warning note, I say, was sounded when recently, at Kalgoorlie, Labour said to Capital, "We are going to refer such and such a matter to arbitration." It is impossible to say whether the award of the Arbitration Court will be adhered to. The men concerned have to live, and I assure hon. members that a worker cannot support his wife and family on the goldfields for less than £3 a week. That amount is little enough, and the increased railway

rates, I have to point out, have made the position worse. The workers were already discontented, and the increased rates have made them more discontented. The tremendous freights imposed in connection with the working of our mines mean trouble ahead. It will be far better for the State as a whole to give the goldfields the Esperance line, so that goods may be landed in mining centres at the lowest possible cost. As sure as fate, the eastern goldfields line will have to be duplicated: it cannot cope with the goods traffic now. Any hon. member travelling between Coolgardie and Perth will observe that his train at every station crosses another train laden with goods.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That difficulty is easily enough arranged. I thought you knew something about railways?

HON. F. T. O. BRIMAGE: I only wish the hon. member would arrange the matter.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I would, if I were Commissioner.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: No doubt the trouble could be easily overcome by making the running time of the express between Perth and Kalgoorlie 17 or 18 hours, instead of 12 or 14. Let hon. members look at the cost of conveying 500 or 600 tons of goods from Fremantle to the fields. Let them heed the increase in the wages sheet occasioned by the stoppages at sidings, extending occasionally over two and even three hours. The road is continually blocked to goods trains by passenger traffic. Thus it comes about that cargoes cannot be got through. The only solution of the difficulty is either to duplicate the eastern goldfields line, or to build the Esperance railway. As regards the Esperance railway, you cannot grow "spuds" in Western Australia; and therefore—

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Well, now, where is Esperance Bay?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: We do not want to get our potatoes from Esperance; but we do want to get them cheaply from South Australia via Esperance. What necessity is there for bringing potatoes to the goldfields via Fremantle? What benefit do Fremantle and Perth derive from such a course? Absolutely none. The coastal farmers cannot grow enough flour for the goldfields. We are compelled to import flour, wheat, and fruit. The

coastal districts cannot grow enough fruit for the goldfields. Then why not give the mining community the benefit of the shorter route? The residents of the goldfields will eat all the fruit that can be grown in the coastal districts, and plenty more.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Will you guarantee that?

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Yes; we will guarantee that. I referred just now to the fuel difficulty on the goldfields. That difficulty is becoming more acute every day. At present we are denuding rising mining centres of their fuel, instead of running a railway south of Coolgardie and taking the timber off waste lands. Between Coolgardie and Norseman there is a splendid belt of timber, which, if the Esperance Bay to Coolgardie railway were built, would yield a plentiful supply of fuel for the Kalgoorlie mines, thus relieving the great pressure experienced at the present time. For the life of me I cannot see what harm the construction of that line would work to Perth and Fremantle. Before the matter is done with, we shall have even Mr. Moss's support for the project. The goldfields and the coastal districts are now on a friendly footing. The farmers wish us all the good we can get, and we reciprocate the feeling. The farmers can rely on goldfields members doing their best to see that all Western Australian produce is consumed before any produce is imported. I do earnestly entreat the agricultural members, however, to consider whether, if they want the State to go ahead rapidly—go ahead it will in any case, but if they want it to go ahead rapidly—they should not do their utmost to assist us in getting food to the mining centres as quickly and as cheaply as possible. The greater the facilities for the development of the mining industry, the more rapid will be the increase of population and the advance of the country. There lies the true means of making Western Australia even a far greater country than it is to-day. I appeal to country members. I know them, and they know me; and I assure them that the best of good feeling prevails on the goldfields towards the coastal districts. We would not do you any harm if we could. All we ask is that fair play be given us, so that we may develop our industry and work our mines to the best

advantage, and for the most profitable return to those who have invested in them.

HON. J. M. DREW (Central): I greatly regret that at the very opening of this session we should be met with occasion for expressing our deep sorrow at the loss of a Premier of the State who, at the close of the last session, was in the full bloom of vigorous health. I refer to the death of Mr. Leake. In every part of Western Australia that gentleman's death has been felt as a national calamity. As a lawyer Mr. Leake occupied a foremost place in his profession. As a politician he would, I venture to believe, in course of time have risen to eminence among Australian statesmen; and I think every person, no matter what his political opinions may be, will admit that, as a man, Mr. Leake was esteemed and admired throughout the country. The death of the Premier who has administered the affairs of the State for the past year necessitates the curtailment of my speech. There is an old Latin adage which reminds us that of the dead we must speak nothing but what is good. In the circumstances I draw a veil over Mr. Leake's political shortcomings and look only at the best and brightest side of his political character. As for the new Premier, Mr. James has been associated with the political life of Western Australia ever since the advent of Responsible Government, and he has been identified with much of the progressive legislation which has found a place on the statute book. Since his introduction to Western Australian political life, our new Premier has proved himself a true and consistent friend of liberalism. A perusal of the Governor's Speech shows that document to have, in many respects, the true statesman-like ring. The keynote of the Speech is, "We want no centralisation." Of all districts of this State the province which I represent has suffered most from the effects of the policy of centralisation pursued in the past; and, therefore, the keynote of the Speech, as I interpret it, will be most welcome to every resident of the district which I have the honour to represent. I want no centralisation. The policy of previous administrators has been to make all roads lead to the port of Fremantle. What do we find as a result of that policy? That at the

present time Geraldton is utterly deprived of the Lawlers and East Murchison gold-fields trade. Although the distance from Geraldton to Lawlers is only 366 miles, yet Fremantle, distant 632 miles from the latter place, has gained the whole of the trade of the Lawlers district. Although Geraldton is 266 miles closer to Lawlers than is Fremantle, yet Fremantle has secured all the trade which legitimately belongs to Geraldton. At the present time Geraldton produce is being conveyed to Lawlers *via* Fremantle and Leonora, a distance of 906 miles; it is being conveyed to Menzies, a distance of 820 miles from the Geraldton district, although we have Lawlers only 366 miles away, and Menzies only 430. I am glad to think that we are likely to have a change of policy in regard to centralisation. From His Excellency's Speech I see that an amendment of the Constitution is contemplated, and I take it from what I have read that the change is in the direction of a reduction of the number of members of both Houses. When we recollect that it is only two years ago that the membership of this House was increased from 20 to 30 members, and that of the Assembly from 44 to 50 members, the question arises, what has occurred in the meantime to justify this step on the part of the Government.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: The establishment of the Federal Parliament.

HON. J. M. DREW: Has our population decreased since the former amendment of the Constitution Act? I have gone into this matter, and I find that not only has the population not decreased, but that it has increased to the tune of at least 20,000 souls. Has our wealth depreciated? It cannot be said that the wealth of Western Australia has depreciated since the amendment of the Constitution was passed. The wealth of Western Australia has increased enormously since the Bill, giving an increase of membership to both houses of Parliament, was passed by the Legislature. What then is the reason for this intended reduction? There is an excuse given, and it is that we have Federation now, and there is no occasion in consequence to have such a large number of members in the local Legislature. I for one refuse to accept that dictum. I have not such an over-

weening confidence in the Federal Legislature that I will aid and abet in an attempt to weaken the local Legislature, which, before long, must require all the power they can obtain to combat the encroachments of the Federal Parliament. State rights will require all the protection we can give, even if we have Federation; and that protection cannot be afforded if a large number of Parliamentary watchdogs are led to the slaughter. There is a movement throughout Australia to prevent the rights of the States being engulfed in the vortex of the Federal Parliament. It will be a sad day for Western Australia if we part with any vestige of our privileges, or if we consent to hand any portion of our privileges over to a Parliament which sits two thousand miles away; and which knows little and cares less for the wants and requirements of this State. There is, it is said, no necessity for so many members of Parliament, because the Federal Administration has taken over so many matters that formerly engaged the attention of the Western Australian Legislature. When we consider the matter, we find the only important departments the Federal Government have taken over are the Post and Telegraphs, Customs, and the Military: these are the most important departments. The State Legislatures have no power to engage in any legislation affecting these particular departments; but they still have power, and still exercise power, over every other branch of administration in connection with politics. They still have power to make laws affecting society; they still have power to make laws affecting industries and developing the industries of the State; and I think now, more than ever, we require a strong, an able, and a numerous body of men to represent us in the Legislature of this State. Another argument is used. It is that it will be a large saving to the State if the local Parliament be reduced in membership. Now I think it is proposed to reduce the membership in both Houses by something like 13 members, which would mean a saving to the State of £2,600. As against that we would lose the ability and experience and the intelligence of 13 members of Parliament. I think the ability and experience of 13 members of Parliament would be

worth more to this State than the paltry £2,600. The Upper House of Western Australia is severely discounted in some quarters, and I have heard many arguments against it. But I have studied the matter, and have come to the conclusion that the Upper House of Western Australia is the most liberal Upper House to be found not only in Australia, but in the world. Take the Australian States. What is the condition of things in New South Wales? The Legislative Council is a nominee body, the members being nominated for life. In Queensland the Legislative Council is also a nominee body, the members being nominated for life. In New Zealand, the great home of democracy, what is the condition of affairs in regard to the Upper House? In New Zealand also the Upper House is a nominated body, nominated for seven years. But in Western Australia the Upper House is, as we all know, elected by the people on a very narrow franchise. Every man who pays ten shillings a week in rent can have a voice in the election of members to the Legislative Council. In Victoria no person can come forward as a candidate for the Legislative Council unless he possesses a property qualification to the extent of one thousand pounds. In Victoria there are only 2,000 people out of 130,000 eligible for election to the Legislative Council. There are 128,000 people disqualified from taking a seat in the Legislative Council for that State. But in Western Australia every man, no matter whether he is possessed of a single penny or not, if he be chosen by the electors to come forward, so long as he has reached 30 years of age, can stand for the position of a member of the Legislative Council of this State. Therefore, the people who attempt to belittle the Legislative Council of this State show their ignorance of the condition of affairs, because our Legislative Council is far in advance of any other. I will refer to another matter which is not alluded to in the Speech, and it is in regard to the sliding scale. It is always said that the farmers of Western Australia wish to retain the sliding scale.

HON. M. L. MOSS: It is referred to in the Speech, I think.

HON. J. M. DREW: Well, I did not see it. I think I have the interest of the

farmers of Western Australia at heart, but I, for one, am not in favour of the retention of the sliding scale. Some time since I decided to address my constituents in a farming community, and I was asked the question, "What are your opinions in regard to the sliding scale?" I said, "I am not in favour of the retention of the sliding scale in its entirety." And the reply I received was, "You had better not come to our town then, or you will get a warm reception of a kind you will not like." I asked the farmer, "Are you in favour of a duty on onions?" "No," he said, "I am not: there are very few onions produced in the State. Most of the onions in Western Australia are imported. We do not want the duty. It could be removed." I said, "What about potatoes?" "Oh, there are very few potatoes brought here. I should take off the duty now; anyhow we can always get three shillings per cwt. for local potatoes above the imported; there is no objection; you could take that duty off straight away." I said, "What about butter?" He said, "No butter is produced in Western Australia at all, except for three months of the year: we buy imported butter on our farms for nine months of the year."

HON. R. G. BURGESS: They are lazy men.

HON. J. M. DREW: Then there are lazy men throughout Western Australia, because 242,000 lbs. of butter were imported into Western Australia last year. I said, "There is bacon," and he replied, "We are not afraid to enter into competition with the bacon."

HON. M. L. MOSS: Was he a farmer?

HON. J. M. DREW: Yes; he was a farmer, and he said that he did not think that two hundredweight of cheese was produced in Western Australia. I said, "These are some of the articles on the sliding scale," and he replied, "I am astonished, because I understood, and the impression prevails, that the principal articles on the sliding scale are wheat, chaff, and flour." Many of the farming community are under a wrong impression; they think that the sliding scale applies to wheat, chaff, and articles of that kind. With regard to the railway freights, although it may have been necessary to make some increase in the freights owing to an approaching deficit, I fail to see

that an increase to the extent of £200,000 a year was warranted.

HON. M. L. MOSS: There is a surplus.

HON. J. M. DREW: There was a deficit up to the 30th June, and it amounted to £76,000, yet the Government increased the rates by £200,000 a year. No doubt the leader of the Government in this House will be able to explain the reason for so large an augmentation of the revenue. No doubt the railways are not paying, but I am inclined to think this in a large degree is due to mismanagement. I will explain the condition of things in regard to Geraldton. We have a small railway workshop there, but most of the work goes to Fremantle. If an engine requires repairs, even to a small extent, it has to be hauled to Fremantle.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Quite right.

HON. J. M. DREW: The hon. member says "quite right." I am going to tell the country the expense of this haulage. For the haulage of a locomotive from Walkaway to Midland Junction, the Midland Railway Company have to be paid £92.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: That is wrong.

HON. J. M. DREW: It is not wrong.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I mean that it is wrong to have to pay it.

HON. J. M. DREW: If an engine goes under steam, half that amount has to be paid—£46 to the Midland Company. In numerous cases, in two cases out of three, engines that require repairs have to go over the Midland line, and I dare say the Midland Company receive the amounts I have mentioned; at any rate, under the regulations they can claim the amount. It would be a saving to the State if workshops were erected in Geraldton on a much larger scale than those that exist. It would be a saving to the State to give Geraldton a legitimate share of the railway work of Western Australia. If the Government do this, there will be no necessity for large central shops. If workshops were erected at Albany, at Kalgoorlie, and other centres, there would be no reason to remove the present workshops from Fremantle.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That settles it.

HON. J. M. DREW: In regard to Mr. George's appointment, I thoroughly believe that nothing but good can result

to the State from placing the railways outside political control. But as regards the appointment itself, I think the person to be chosen for such a responsible position should be a man of honesty, tact, and efficiency. I believe Mr. George to be a thoroughly honest man, from what I know of him and from what I heard of him, but I think he is sadly deficient in tact, if we are to take his public life as a criterion. A man deficient in ordinary discretion is totally unsuited to occupy such a position. As to Mr. George's efficiency I am not in a position to speak. I believe he is a man endowed with a large degree of genius even, and a man who, in most positions where tact was not required, would prove successful. But I cannot conceive that in his present position, which requires the exercise of discretion—and indeed, from all I can learn, a high degree of discretion—he can prove a success. Whatever view hon. members may entertain as to the wisdom of appointing a Railway Commissioner, they must, if they have studied the question, condemn the action of the present Government, or of any Government, in making such an appointment, which is in direct opposition to the settled policy of the country, without previous consultation with the Parliament of the day. I find this appointment was made on the 27th June, or the agreement between the Government and Mr. George was signed on the 27th June. Not the past Government are responsible, but the Government in power at the present time. The agreement, I repeat, was signed on the 27th June, after the death of Mr. Leake. There was no obligation on the present Government to sign the agreement; but they did sign it; and I regard their action in doing so as a deliberate attempt to deprive Parliament of the right to express an opinion on the appointment. Such action I consider deserving of the strongest condemnation on the part of the representatives of the people. The last paragraph in His Excellency's speech is one of the most important so far as my province is concerned:—

The growing and well-founded complaints against private railways for their indifference to and neglect of the reasonable needs of those who are developing the wealth of the State in the districts through which such lines are

constructed, are occupying the attention of my Ministers, and it is hoped that before the session closes a Bill will be submitted by means of which the State shall secure that these railways shall adequately serve those interests for which alone these lines were authorised.

During last session a joint committee of both Houses was appointed to investigate matters in connection with the administration of the Midland Railway Company of this State. I had the honour to be a member of that committee, which examined no less than 17 witnesses. In the course of the investigations there were some astounding revelations. We discovered that the Midland Railway Company was then using, and had for some years previously been using, a daily average of no less than 100 Government trucks free of charge. The company had not paid a single penny to the Government of this State for the use of those trucks. One witness, indeed, stated that as many as 145 Government trucks had been used daily, without any payment being made. In this connection we had furnished to us certain returns covering a period of one month, and these returns went to show that the Government of this State were losing the daily hire of 55 trucks. The return stated the number of Government trucks in use on the Midland line at 55; but I believe a large number of Government trucks had been withdrawn from the Midland line after the committee commenced its investigations. It appears that the Government were losing £715 per month in the shape of hire of trucks supplied to the Midland Railway Company. This represents a total loss of £8,580 per year. During last session there was much discussion as to the favours granted to the Kurrawang Syndicate; but I think the largest concession obtained by that syndicate fades into insignificance in the light of this exposure. The joint committee discovered also that the Midland Railway Company had had the free use of 80 Government tarpaulins for years past. Not a penny has been paid for the use of those tarpaulins. The committee discovered, farther, that the Government had paid at one end for the loading of trucks travelling over the Midland line and at the other end for unloading, and that no demand had ever been made against the Midland Company

in this respect. The committee discovered also that excessive fares had been charged by the Midland Company for years past, and that most excessive freights had been imposed. The authorised rate for sandalwood carried over the Midland line from Mingenew to Geraldton is 13s. 4d. per ton, whereas the freight actually charged was 32s. 8d. per ton. Another discovery made by the committee was that the Midland Company were paying out of their assets the interest on the money guaranteed by the State. Whenever the company sold land, the proceeds, instead of being handed over to the Government, were pocketed by the company; and the Government strangely enough appear to have approved and sanctioned the company's action in that respect. The committee likewise discovered that a provision of the Midland Company's agreement, binding them to settle 5,000 immigrants of European extraction on their land within a period of seven years from the date of the commencement of their contract, has never been carried out. The committee made certain strong recommendations for the better management of the Midland Railway. Parliament approved of those recommendations, and the fact of that approval amounted to an instruction to the Government to give them effect. Up to the present time, however, the great majority of the recommendations have not been carried out; and it will be the duty of the leader of this House to explain why the recommendations of the joint committee, after having been unanimously approved by both Houses of Parliament, have been left unregarded by the late Minister for Railways, Mr. Kingsmill. It was Mr. Kingsmill's undoubted duty to instruct the Midland Railway Company to obey the recommendations of the joint committee. Whether or not Mr. Kingsmill performed his duty in this respect, however, the fact remains that a large number of these recommendations—and amongst that number some of the most important—have been disregarded. Indeed, the Government have continued to assist the Midland Railway Company in every possible way. What is the position of affairs now? The Government are building a railway to Nannine, and they are having the whole of the sleepers and

material required for that line conveyed over the Midland railway, thus swelling the company's balance sheet. The result of this will be that if ever the Midland line is to be purchased, the people of this State will have to pay an enormously enhanced price. Such will be the result of the continuation by this administration of the policy of spoon-feeding adopted by past Governments. There is a port at Geraldton; there is a port at Fremantle; and there is also a port at Bunbury, near which the timber is produced. Why then should not the sleepers be shipped to Geraldton?

MEMBER: That would mean loading and unloading the sleepers three times.

HON. J. M. DREW: They have to be loaded and unloaded twice in any case; so why should not they be shipped to Geraldton? I trust the representative of the Government in this Chamber will be able to explain the matter satisfactorily, not only to hon. members, but also to the general community. In view of the poverty of the accommodation which the company are affording the public, the Government cannot do better than subsidise a weekly steamer between Fremantle and Geraldton. Even £5,000 per annum spent in the form of such subsidy would be money well spent. The miners from the fields would travel by the steamer, which indeed would be well patronised by the whole of the public; because no one, while good steamer accommodation was provided, would patronise the Midland line. The running of such a steamer would help to decrease largely the price which the Midland Railway Company ask for the property. I am sure it would mean a reduction of at least £200,000 if the line were to be purchased at the end of three years. As regards the contract between the Midland Company and the Government, I hope hon. members of both Houses will insist that the terms of that contract shall be fulfilled. There must be no farther paltering with this corporation. The sands have run down in the glass for the Midland Railway Company. It is our duty to insist on the execution of the contract between the company and the State to the fullest extent. During last session a Bill authorising the appointment of a fourth Judge was passed. The measure was very necessary in the interests of the

State at large. Up to the present time, however, only one circuit court has been established, that at Kalgoorlie. Several months have elapsed since the passing of the measure, and thus there has been ample time, in my opinion, to establish courts at Geraldton, Cue, and Albany. No steps at all, however, appear to have been taken in the direction indicated, and the country has a right to know why. It is not necessary for me to say more on that point. I now wish to offer a few observations concerning the department over which the leader of the House presides, and I say at the outset that no department of the State is in such an evident condition of disorganisation. In my opinion the Lands Department requires a thorough overhaul and a strict investigation from top to bottom. Selectors from one end of my district to the other are put to the greatest inconvenience in consequence of the dilatoriness of the Lands officials. A man writes to the department, gets a postcard in return, and that is the end of the matter. A man applies for a block of land, again gets a postcard, and has to wait weeks, and even months, before being notified of the department's approval. I know that in some instances the period of waiting has extended over as much as two years. In my opinion the Lands Department in a State like ours should be the most progressive of all. I regard its present condition as a scandal to the community. Of course, in making these remarks I do not wish to cast any reflection on the Minister for Lands: I am attacking only the departmental officials. As an instance of their incompetency and bad administration, I may mention a case tried in the Supreme Court recently, *W. and S. Burges v. The Minister for Lands*. This was a claim for damages. It appears that Messrs. W. and S. Burges were the holders of a pastoral lease in the Victoria district, and that a man selected a grazing lease on their area. According to the law Messrs. Burges had the prior right of selecting that grazing lease. They had a right to the first opportunity of selecting the grazing lease, but the Lands Department gave them no opportunity to select it. A ballot was held among something like 11 applicants, and one of the 11 applicants got the

land; Burges Bros., the lessees, being ignored in the matter. These gentlemen consequently took action against the department. In the first instance, they represented their grievance and offered to accept £400 in settlement of their claim—a very fair offer, I consider, in the circumstances. But no; the Lands Department would not settle; they intended to fight the matter to a finish. They would hear of no settlement; they would go to law. Well, they went to law; but they refrained from making any attempt to defend themselves at law, calling no witnesses whatever. What was the result? The State of Western Australia was cast in damages to the amount of £965 and costs. The men who did not own the land, who had only a prior right of purchase in respect of it, got from the State of Western Australia £965 and costs, solely by reason of the incompetency and inefficiency of the Lands Department officials. During the following week a Mr. Hope, a North-West pearler, also sued the department, getting a verdict for £400 and costs. Thus there were two successful claimants against the department in a fortnight. I have not read the papers very carefully since that date, and am, therefore, not in a position to say whether there are other similar cases. I am safe in stating, however, that the State of Western Australia has suffered to the extent of not less than £2,000 in the two cases named. In my opinion, the Lands Department is about 73 years behind the time. I was about to say it is 100 years behind the time; but if I said that, I should be carrying my argument back to a period when this country was peopled exclusively by savages. I think it would be to the best interests of the State if a select committee were appointed to investigate the administration and conduct of this important State department. An agricultural area was recently thrown open to selection in our district, the Chapman area. Particulars were advertised in the newspapers, and a lecturer was sent to the Murchison goldfields to induce the miners to take up land. Several miners did journey down to the coast, and then travelled 20 miles to inspect the locality. Some of them said, "Yes; we will take this block." "Oh," was the reply, "that is a temporary reserve."

"Well, then," said the miners, "we will take that block." "Oh," came the reply again, "that also is a temporary reserve." It appears the whole of the area was surrounded by temporary reserves; just like a Boer line of fortifications intended to repel some enemy. I have seen the map, and I have seen the land marked off. I could not understand until to-day why this land was thrown open in such circumstances. But the Minister for Lands has explained that it was not possible to throw open the whole of the land until the 6th August. It would have been better not to have thrown open any of the land until the whole area was available for sale, because the miners have returned thoroughly disgusted. They said: "Evidently the Lands Department had taken us for 'mugs.' We came here to take up first-class land and they offer us second-class land. We are not taking any, but we are returning to the fields, and we shall be able to give the people on the fields a very good advertisement of your district." There is one matter on which I sincerely congratulate the Minister for Lands, and that is the appointment of Mr. Crawford as land agent in the Geraldton district. The Minister deserves credit for this appointment. For years we have been asking for a land agent, but have been unable to get one, although all other districts had got their agents. Mr. Crawford will, I am certain, give every satisfaction, although up to the time I left Geraldton he had no official status, he had no power to take applications and he had not been gazetted, but I understand he has been gazetted recently. Some time since it was stated that Mr. Ranford would be appointed head of the land settlement in the State. We have heard nothing of it since, but I hope the Minister will carry out the intention, and that before long Mr. Ranford will be appointed the head of the land settlement so as to farther the interests of land settlement in Western Australia. The Land Purchase Act was passed in 1896, but up to the present time the people in my district have not received one penny of benefit from that Act. Right through all the other districts of the State purchases have been made from time to time, but in my district there have been none, although a number have been recom-

mended. Large purchases have already been made in the State, and almost every month some purchase is made either in the York or Northam district, or somewhere down the South-West.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How much has been purchased altogether?

HON. J. M. DREW: I hope to know before long, and then I will supply the hon. member with the information.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I know all about it. I can give it to you.

HON. J. M. DREW: This is a great injustice to my district, and I hope the Minister for Lands will take note of this complaint. The same thing has occurred in regard to the Agricultural Bank. Ever since that bank was established the total amount lent my district is as follows:—Greenough, £150, and it is the best agricultural district for its size in Western Australia; Geraldton, £400; the Irwin, another great agricultural district, £400.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is all locked up.

HON. J. M. DREW: Look at the contrast: Northam, £41,925; Williams, £27,676. Mr. Paterson, the manager of the bank, had to appear before a select committee, and he was asked for the reason why so small an amount had been lent in my district. The reason he gave was that the people of the district had been born tired: they were not worth twopence. No doubt there is a fair proportion of people in my district, as in every other district in Western Australia, who were either born tired or became tired very soon after birth; but I think Mr. Paterson's condemnation altogether too sweeping. At that time Mr. Paterson had not visited the district, but obtained his information second-hand. Still, I believe he spoke conscientiously when he gave his opinion, although he was sadly mistaken. Since then Mr. Paterson has visited the district, and I hope the district and Province will receive better treatment in the future. I sincerely agree with Sir Edward Witte-noon that a much larger roads vote for the State is needed. The roads are the great feeders to our railways, and are very strong incentives to agricultural settlement. They encourage people to go on the soil, because the farmers can get their produce to market; and the fact of being able to get produce to market acts

very beneficially to every consumer in the community. I also agree with Sir Edward Wittenoom in his suggestion in regard to subsidising steamers to bring stock from the North-West. For many years past the pastoralists of Western Australia to a large extent have been neglected. Their interests have not been considered to any great extent. They have suffered in many ways, from the resumption of their leases and under the Land Act. Therefore, I think the pastoralists should receive some compensation. The suggestion that swift steamers should be subsidised is likely to benefit the pastoralists and the consumers, as it will tend to cheapen the price of meat. I should also support a railway from Port Hedland to the Pilbarra goldfield, if ever it comes forward, as the Pilbarra is a very wealthy goldfield, only awaiting development and suitable railway communication. In conclusion, I hope both branches of the Legislature will settle down to work, and that there will not be a repetition of what occurred last session, when we had something like eight months of political stagnation. Many useful Bills came forward last session, but they never reached the final stage: they were suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between heaven and earth. A great deal of time was wasted in mutual recrimination. I hope nothing of the kind will occur this session, but that all will do what they can for the best interests of the State.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (East): I join with others in expressing my pleasure at the recovery of the King. Great disappointment was caused, particularly to the young people of the country, for everything had been arranged for their benefit. There was a general holiday in view, and no one dreamt that anything was going to happen to mar the rejoicings. I hope the King will soon be in perfect health, and that the coronation will take place without anything happening to mar the proceedings on the 9th August. Everyone in this country regrets the loss which has been sustained by the death of Mr. Leake, who had given up so much time to politics. He was wanted here; there was plenty of work for him to do. He was an able legislator, and could ill be spared. For the next twenty years he would have been able to carry out good work. I will pass on to

paragraph 7 of the Speech, which refers to the influx of immigration and the satisfactory condition of the finances of this country. If it had not been for the sliding scale there would have been a deficit of £70,000. That is known to everybody. The farmers do not want the sliding scale at all; they could do without it to-morrow; but the country wants the sliding scale. We cannot do without it; our finances would be in a very bad state to-day if it were not for the sliding scale. Who can deny that there would not have been a deficit? We know what revenue is derived from the sliding scale, and we know what the balance is now; therefore it is easily seen there would have been a deficit of £70,000. Those who advocate the abolition of the sliding scale will perhaps be able to say how the money is to be made up.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: What are you going to do when it works out?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We hope to have a larger population. The goldfields are increasing their yield of gold, and we hope to be producing our foodstuffs and other things by that time. Everyone who goes through the country knows that the agricultural and the horticultural interests are increasing throughout the State, and when these are established the country will be better able to bear the taxation. We want to do all we can to develop the country; but without money what can be done? What can a man do in a private concern without money? We do not want the country to stand still. Mr. Wright, in his speech, said he had been about the country; but he must have had his eyes shut or his eyes half-open, or else he did not want to see what was going on. Let the hon. member go to the Southern districts, and he will see good country. I will tell the leader of the House, who is an energetic man, and, as Mr. Whitcombe said when he was here, has the making of a good Minister for Lands in him, that there is good land in this country. But the Minister cannot grasp everything at once: he has only been in office a few months. I am sorry the Minister had not a better opinion of the country at first; but latterly he has travelled about a good deal, and perhaps he has changed his opinion. From a conversation I have had with the

Minister, I think he has a better opinion of the country now than he had previously. Who can say that we do not want more capital? There are many small places where railways are required to open up the country. An agricultural district is useless without a railway, and many people who are situated twenty or thirty miles from a railway cannot do much good.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: What about roads?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The hon. member knows nothing about it, or he would not talk rubbish. Let a man cart produce twenty or thirty miles on a road; let the hon. member try it, and he will know what it is like. I do not think the hon. member knows much about it. He may know something about mines, and he has talked about the railways, but I do not think he knows much about them; as to agriculture, he does not know much about that. The matter of the advances referred to in the Auditor General's special report is of the utmost importance, and should receive the serious consideration of everyone who has the welfare of the country at heart. For if the State finances are not managed in a more economical manner than obtains at present, we shall soon be in a mess, unless a number of new Coolgardies and Kalgoorlies are discovered. Hon. members may look on a matter of £2,600 as of but slight importance; but forty or fifty of such transactions will speedily involve a very large sum. It must be borne in mind that the sliding scale is subject to an annual reduction of 20 per cent., so that in four years it will have disappeared altogether. Then, where are we to raise the necessary funds in the absence of a much greater increase of prosperity than can be foreseen at the present time? Just now, indeed, matters are progressing most satisfactorily; but there can be no doubt that progressively with the disappearance of the sliding scale we shall have to impose new forms of taxation in order to maintain the revenue and carry on the public works policy which the necessities of the State demand. No sane man will maintain that the finances of the country can be satisfactorily managed without the assistance of the sliding scale for the next three or four years. Indeed, if the expenditure is to continue at the

same rate as during last month, we shall need a much higher sliding scale than we have.

HON. W. T. LORON: We shall want a scale that slides upwards instead of downwards.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I have not much to say concerning the appointment of Mr. George. If that gentleman were paid £1,500 a year merely as a travelling inspector of rolling-stock, the chances are that he would save the State the amount of his salary ten times over. The greatest muddle on earth exists in our Railway Department at the present day. I shall not take up the time of the House by dilating on the matter, but shall merely give an instance of what has been going on for years past. One applies for trucks, and gets open trucks without sheets. Then one applies for sheets. After waiting for days and days, possibly one gets some covered trucks, which are shortly afterwards followed by sheets. And so the thing goes on, month after month and year after year. The delay in the supply of trucks is particularly annoying. People living at a distance of four or five miles from a railway station are in many instances compelled to keep a boy for the express purpose of going to see whether the trucks ordered have arrived. This kind of thing wants mending or ending. Three or four persons may have ordered trucks and may be looking for them at the same time, and when the trucks do arrive there is a scramble for them. If this is railway management, I should like to know what constitutes railway mismanagement? If one writes to the department asking that the trucks should be accompanied by a statement of whom they are intended for, one gets no reply. The scrambling system even leads to free fights. I am speaking of what I know, because I have been present when fights have occurred. One morning I saw a man mounted on a loaded truck engaged in pitching the contents on the ground, so that he might put his own stuff on board. He was throwing his neighbour's produce on the ground, in the wet. There is gross mismanagement also in connection with the transmission of orders for trucks from the various sidings. I may tell the House what goes on at Spencer's Brook; not to air a grievance of my own, but merely to show, from per-

sonal knowledge, the kind of management obtaining. Trucks may be applied for at seven o'clock in the morning, but the order is not telephoned to headquarters until four in the afternoon. Indeed, one must order trucks a week beforehand, otherwise one's produce gets spoiled by waiting at the station. Is this kind of thing to be tolerated by a community with progressive ideas? The mismanagement of the Railway Department is not merely scandalous, it is downright sickening. An educated blackfellow or Chinaman could do better by a long way. No notice whatever is taken of complaints. As regards the appointment of two additional Commissioners, their salaries will represent nothing but a waste of money if political control is to continue. As for Mr. George, from what I know of him I feel assured that unless his appointment results in a vast improvement within three or four months, he is not the man to retain his position. He would throw up the appointment. Indeed, no man with a conscience would continue to draw a salary for managing the railways if the present state of disorganisation remained, with the system under his control.

HON. M. L. MOSS: Oh, but Mr. George has a five-years engagement.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The man would have to be made of iron to retain his position under such circumstances. It is all very well to talk about the responsibility of Parliament in connection with the railways: I maintain the responsibility rests with Ministers. What sense is there in paying Ministerial salaries if Parliament as a whole is to remain answerable in regard to matters of administration? Ministers are paid to assume responsibility, and therefore I say, let them bear it. If they refuse, put them out in favour of men who will do their duty. I am surprised at the attitude taken by certain hon. members towards the promised Redistribution of Seats Bill. *Hunsard* shows these members as taking a very different stand last session. When the matter of constitutional reform was, a few months ago, brought up in this Chamber—where, by the way, it ought not to have been brought up—I spoke against the proposal. I approved, however, and I said at the time that I approved of a reduction in the number

of members. Even now I would favour a reasonable, fair reduction in the membership of both Houses, although I might lose my seat in consequence of such reduction. In this as in all public matters, we must look to the benefit of the country and not to our personal interests. The policy announced by the present Premier, Mr. Walter James, is not, however, one which I can for a moment support. That policy practically amounts to a proposal to abolish this House; so that every man who thinks he ought to have a say in the government of the country would have to look for a seat in the other place. A Legislative Council constituted on the lines laid down by Mr. James in his election speech would be the merest farce, would be no legislative body at all. I have, therefore, changed my mind as regards reduction of members, for the present at any rate; and I shall give my vote in favour of maintaining the two Houses as they are. Government expenditure may be heavy, but hon. members must bear in mind that money must be found for public works, so that the population now in the State may be retained. [MEMBER: Cut down *Hunsard*.] Cutting down *Hunsard* is nothing. We must cut down idle public officers, men who appear to be kept on only to make work for themselves. Some of the reports laid on the table of the House disclose a perfectly scandalous state of things, and make it perfectly plain that the revenues of the State are being absolutely wasted. Paragraph 12 of the Speech promises us some great improvements in our educational system. In this connection I have to say—and I know what I state to be perfectly true—that the country people are not fairly dealt by in the matter of schools. Any sort of teacher seems to be thought good enough for a country school, or for a school on the goldfields. It is not fair that people struggling against the disadvantages inseparable from residence in outlying districts should be farther penalised by being refused due educational facilities for their children. How can we expect settlement of our vacant lands to continue if we refuse settlers good teachers for their children? Every man of pluck and energy and spirit will wish to give his children the benefit of a good education—the very best education he can

afford. I know of instances of utterly incompetent teachers being sent to country schools: I am prepared to mention names, if necessary. The Minister for Education is not a member of this House, but I shall draw attention to the matter nevertheless. It is a disgrace that unqualified teachers should be appointed to country schools: it is a crying injustice to the country people that men who have not passed the necessary examinations should be given charge of the education of country children. The cry, "Settle the people on the land," is all moonshine while settlers are so unfairly treated. The residents of outlying districts pay their fair share of taxation, and are entitled to fair treatment in the matter of the education of their children. I say positively that some of the teachers put in charge of country schools would not be tolerated in a city or a town. The administration of the Education Department certainly is not in accordance with the public promises of Ministers. I rejoice to learn from paragraph 14 of the Speech that the Northam-Goomalling railway is at last completed. I believe I could have built the line myself with a few score of men in the time it has taken.

HON. M. L. MOSS: What has the line cost?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It ought to have cost next to nothing. The disgracefully high cost is not the fault of the country or of the line itself; and why, I ask, should the work be saddled with such a heavy capital charge? In the case of the York-Greenhills line, £20,000 was voted and £50,000 was spent. Are the Greenhills settlers answerable for the outrageous cost of that railway? I myself voted for the construction of the line, but under the belief that the cost would be £20,000, as stated. Ministers should be brought to book for sanctioning such outrageous extravagance.

At 6-28, the PRESIDENT left the Chair.
At 7-30, Chair resumed.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (continuing): I hope the extravagant course mentioned by Mr. Moss will not be carried out. I now come to the Coolgardie Water Scheme, and I could speak on this subject all night, but it would do no good. I am sorry to see the scandalous things which have taken place in this country

over this water scheme. I will not mention names, but my opinion is that, if the reports are true and the statements can be verified and evidence obtained, there was nothing less than a conspiracy to defraud the revenue of the country. Enormous sums have been charged to the Coolgardie Water Scheme which ought never to have been heard of. Thousands of pounds have been lost through the neglect of those in charge of the work. According to the report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into this matter, those in charge not only departed from the ideas of the Engineer-in-Chief, but they departed from the advice tendered by the expert engineers in London, the most eminent men in the Empire. A sum of £50,000 was lost in one item. There is no doubt that we may attribute blame to the Engineer-in-Chief; but he trusted to the officers in his department. He had too much work to do, and therefore I do not know how he can be blamed. The experience we had of the late Mr. O'Connor is that he was a man worthy of our trust—we have that from those who knew him—and I do not think he was in any way to blame. I do not see how the Ministers who at times presided over the department can be exonerated from blame. Surely if we have a Minister who is paid £1,000 a year, he should take some responsibility. I know pretty well for a fact that in reference to the strike which took place on the pipe line—it was a strike for sixpence a day as far as Southern Cross, and a shilling a day beyond that place—the heads of the department took it upon themselves to grant the advance. If a Minister did his duty, and knew that the head of a department took such an important matter, involving the expenditure of £60,000, on his shoulders, the Minister ought to have suspended that officer or have censured him, and informed him that if such a thing occurred again he would be suspended. If a matter like this comes before a Minister and no notice is taken of it, then the Minister is to blame. A great deal of trouble and loss is incurred through the neglect of the Minister controlling the department.

HON. M. L. MOSS: How can a Minister guard against what is referred to on page 14 of the report?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I was not referring to that: I was referring to the raising of the wages, and I said that if a Minister knew that the head of a department had increased wages without referring the matter to the Minister, and no notice was taken of it, the Minister was to blame. It is no use getting away from these things. It is unreasonable to think that the head of a department should involve the country in an expenditure of fifty or sixty thousand pounds. I do not think I should take up the time of the House farther on this matter: no doubt questions will be asked and answered about it, and the matter will be thoroughly discussed in both Houses. When it comes forward members will be able to speak on the different aspects of the question. With regard to the remarks of Mr. Moss about the family of the late Engineer-in-Chief, I think if Mr. O'Connor had done nothing more than build the Fremantle harbour, in face of the adverse opinion given by Sir John Coode, the family of the late Engineer-in-Chief are entitled to some consideration. That work alone, if the late Mr. O'Connor had never done anything else, would entitle his family to liberal treatment at the hands of the State; for it is a monument of skill and capacity. I am not an expert in engineering matters, of course; but, like any other layman who has had his eyes open during the past few years, I know that the shipping at Fremantle could not have been coped with in the absence of the harbour improvements designed and carried out by the late Engineer-in-Chief. The muddle would have put in the shade even that existing in the Railway Department at the present time. No one ought to demur to provision being made for the family of that man; who never saved a penny while, as Mr. Moss has told us, he might have made a fortune had he chosen to speculate in land. We all regret the man has departed from amongst us. I do not believe there is in this State another capable of dealing with the requirements of this great and growing community in the way of public works. I have already referred to the sliding scale. I have nothing to say on the subject, except that my reason for supporting its retention is not that the farmer stands in need of it. A shortage

of farm produce in the other States will always mean a rise in prices here. I have spoken in the past against federation; and if the subject came up for consideration again, I would stand here for ever and oppose the surrender of this State's independence. I call federation a blot, and I consider that every public man who advocated federation has blotted his record. How has the performance accorded with the promise? Very few people at the present day would speak or vote for the giving away of our revenue to be squandered in places two thousand miles distant. We are taxed more heavily in consequence of federation. Many able men in the Eastern States have declared the federal taxation to be too heavy; and we here are bound to be affected in our turn. The federal expenditure comes first: any deficiency must be made up by direct local taxation. That is the most serious aspect of federation. However, it is over and done. I should be glad to see this State stand up for its rights against the Federal Government in the same way as Queensland has done. Queensland has given the Federal Parliament plainly to understand that her interests must not be trifled with. We know how the Federal members are carrying on, voting themselves increases of salary—

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: There's no "get out"; you must put up with it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Let the people show they will not tolerate the wasting of their money. Western Australia has not felt the pinch as yet, but Queensland and South Australia have felt it. Are we to hinder the progress of our country by remaining silent?

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY: The trouble is not in federation, but in the members returned.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The goldfields people brought the trouble on us. The hon. member who advocated the construction of the Esperance railway stated that the revenue derived from the goldfields was being frittered away. I venture to say we should never have heard anything of the supposed need for a line to Esperance but for the blunders made by Mr. Kingsmill, the present Colonial Secretary, when administering the Railway Department. A great deal of noise is being made about the appoint-

ment of Mr. George; but what is that in comparison with the raising of the railway rates, which has caused so much discontent among the goldfields people? The increase in rates ought not to be necessary; the State should not need additional sources of revenue while the sliding scale is in operation. The present Government, or the late Government—it is all one—promised reduction of taxation and economy in expenditure and all that sort of thing; but administrative expenses continue to increase and increase, nevertheless. I do not know whether the hon. member who advocated here to-night the construction of the Esperance railway is versed in matters of finance: he may, possibly, not have examined the financial aspect of his proposal. If we borrow another two or three millions sterling to build the Esperance railway—

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Nine hundred thousand pounds.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Oh, yes; we know all about that estimate. Another million can safely be allowed; and then there is the harbour to be made, as well. To build that railway we should have to borrow two or three millions. Next, we should have to raise the rates on both the eastern goldfields and the Esperance lines in order to meet our increased interest bill; and so the ultimate condition of the goldfields would nowise be improved. Federation, we were led to believe, would cheapen all things; but I venture to say that, with their experience of the Federal Tariff, but few goldfields residents would vote for federation if the question came up for reconsideration. To return to the Esperance railway, there is but little warrant at or about Esperance for a railway, even if the State could afford to build one. But, I repeat, the State cannot afford to incur the cost. Far better build a line in the richer northern districts, to which population would immediately be attracted. No object is to be served by laying down lines where they will not attract settlers. The Norseman goldfield is hardly holding its own. Mr. Brimage gave us no figures in support—

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: Oh, yes; I did.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I have studied the official figures relating to the Norse-

man field, and they reminded me of a certain banking institution's report, which congratulated the shareholders on the fact that things were no worse than they had been a couple of years back. The very same remark might be made concerning the Norseman field.

HON. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: What about the depression?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I had not intended to say anything about the Esperance railway; but the hon. member has, in a way, challenged me to deal with the matter. For what purpose is the railway intended? Let the hon. member bear the Coolgardie Water Scheme in mind. Why, the whole State has been mortgaged for the benefit of the goldfields! The hon. member should seriously consider that fact.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: The State will get all its money back, presently.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I can only trust the event will justify that prophecy. But does the hon. member interjecting know the cost of upkeep of the work, and does he appreciate the observations in the Royal Commission's report on the probable life of the pipes? Like everyone else, I hope and believe the scheme will pay, but certainly it will never pay as well as originally anticipated. One cannot, of course, believe all the reports he hears; but it is rumoured that the Minister in whose department the scheme falls has caused inquiries to be made on the Coolgardie goldfields as to the quantity of water likely to be required by the mines, and that hardly a single mine is prepared to guarantee that it will use the water. What has been the experience of the Eastern States in connection with water trusts? What about the water trust at Cue?

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: Oh, that's all right!

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Nothing of the kind. Can the hon. member instance a single water trust which is earning interest? No. They are all burdens on the State. I know that from the *Australasian*, which I read regularly. The hon. member comes from Victoria, and should therefore be aware of these facts, which indeed are matters of common knowledge. Water trusts are scarcely ever financially sound. Whether or not the Coolgardie Water Scheme will prove a

financial success is a matter of doubt, though there can be no question that the work will be highly useful and beneficial even if it should turn out a failure commercially. We must not be too confident of financial success. Let us bear in mind the remarks of the Royal Commission on the manner in which the direction that the pipes should be covered in as soon as jointed has been observed. The fact is, some of the pipes were left exposed for as much as eight months after they had been jointed, the engineers meanwhile turning their whole attention to the caulking-machine. The life of the pipes has undoubtedly been shortened by the neglect. Farther, pumping stations have been altered backwards and forwards, and many other improper things have been done, all tending directly to increase the cost of the work. Hon. members must not forget that the scheme is solely for the benefit of the goldfields. Why, we gave the goldfields railways before they had proved themselves goldfields at all! This country, through the able and energetic man then at the head of its affairs, did everything possible for the advancement of the gold-mining industry. Sir John Forrest's foresight and push and ability drove the goldfields and indeed the whole State years and years ahead, so to speak. The right hon. gentleman and his able band of Ministers were the soul of the army of progress. They resembled Lord Roberts, who saved Britain's South African empire; not General Buller, who is a miserable crawler, and who, had he remained in supreme command, would have let South Africa pass from the British flag. Sir John Forrest was the soul and the head of everything. The scheme represents an utterly gigantic undertaking for so small a community as ours, and still the goldfields clamour for additional public works. The whole country, I repeat, has been mortgaged to secure the speediest possible advancement and development of the goldfields. Gold-mining, I admit, is our chief industry, and has brought prosperity and even wealth to the farmers and to the country generally: we all own that. But why, when we have given them everything they have asked so far, everything we are in justice bound to give them, should the goldfields press unreasonable demands? In speaking thus, I am not fighting for

my own advantage. If I thought of myself, I should not be here at all, for I can gain far more by attending solely to my own business than by doing the country's work. I lose ten times what I get by coming here. However, there are men who take a delight in endeavouring to farther the interests of their country, and gladly devote their time and energy to the task. As the representative of an agricultural district, I, at any rate, have never grudged a penny of the huge amount spent on the Coolgardie Water Scheme and on goldfields railways. But surely anyone owning a grain of common-sense must recognise that, although the country is prosperous, we cannot build unnecessary railways. And the Esperance railway is unnecessary. The Norseman field does not warrant the construction of a line, and I am glad to think I once gave a vote in opposition to the project. Every farmer cannot have a railway to his door, and every miner cannot have a line to his camp so soon as he gets a colour. We are informed that portion of the surplus is to be devoted to the construction of a line to serve the far northern fields. Then, what ground for complaint has the mining industry?

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: The mining industry found the surplus.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But who put the mining industry in the way of finding the surplus? The small band of settlers in this State who never begrudged the goldfields a single penny. The credit of the long-settled portions of the State, based on the energy and industry of those who were born here and grew up here, gave the goldfields their railways. We are glad to meet the thousands of people who come here from other States; we welcome them and wish to see them settled, because we want a large population; but these people must wait for railway facilities. They cannot have this railway until the finances of the country justify it. There is the Transcontinental line. The hon. member did not mention that at all. I suppose if he got that and the Esperance railway, he would then clamour to join South Australia. We cannot help these petty jealousies, although we are people of one nation. I do not know if a Transcontinental railway would pay. The Hon. S. J. Haynes says it will not pay. Of

course it cannot. Have members taken the trouble to consider, or can anyone tell us, how many people travel to and from England *via* Brindisi for the saving of seven days, and there are a greater number of people travelling in that direction than there would be here. A business man told me the number the other day, and I was quite astonished. Only about one hundred people travel by that route in a month.

HON. G. RANDELL: They go by way of Genoa and Marseilles also.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That may be so, but would any man travel with his wife and family across this continent unless suffering severely from sea sickness, or for some important reason? Would a man travel over this dry country of ours to save a little bit of a sea journey? It is most unpleasant to travel through our long dry country. We know what the goldfields country is like; and the Transcontinental railway would pass through country similar to that all the way to Port Augusta. People would not travel by rail. We know that the construction of the Transcontinental railway would raise the price of land: people are speculating in land already in anticipation of the line. I know a man, I will not mention his name, who has given £15 a foot for land at East Fremantle in anticipation of this railway. That man is advocating its construction for self-interest. There is self-interest in all these matters. We look at the projects and think they are all right; but they are not right always. I do not wish to throw cold water on the Esperance railway, but at the present time it is not advisable to bring the matter forward. I wish to make a few remarks on the Midland railway. This is a subject we have heard a good deal about, and it has been suggested that the owners of private lines should be made to stick to their contracts; but it is hard to find where the agreements are. It is all very well to say that we can compel the Midland Company to do this thing or to do that; it is hard to make them carry out their agreement; and another thing, where are these agreements, where are the papers?

HON. J. M. DREW: They were laid on the table of the House.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The chairman of the select committee (Mr. R. S.

Haynes) found that he could not lay his hands on the reports or the correspondence. At any rate that was the information which we received, and the select committee even advised that some department should collect all the correspondence in the future. I know, as a positive fact, that one member knew a good deal about the agreement with the Midland Company. Mr. Hackett asked Mr. Haynes if the committee had called Sir John Forrest, and Mr. Haynes replied that Sir John was not called. Mr. Hackett then said, "I think he could have told you a good deal about the company." We do not want actions: there are too many actions about mining matters. An action was commenced the other day for £2,000,000. The speculating people will take you down as quick as they can. We have men in the State to-day who can buy and sell the Government when they like. They have done it, and they can do it again. The ablest men do not get into power.

HON. J. M. DREW: What about the Midland Railway?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: My idea is that the sooner we come to some agreement with that company, the better for the general good of the country. About 18 months ago I took a trip to Moora, and I had to go about 35 miles east; I went over enough good country on that ride to establish another York and another Northam. I was astonished at the number of good patches of country and the good belt of land which I passed through. Anyone knows that there is good country between Moora and Gingin. It is country that is worth settling on, and no one knows better about that than Mr. Loton. But it is impossible for settlement to take place when you consider the price the Midland Company want for the land. Still we should do what we can to settle people on the land. We have proved, in the purchase of the Great Southern railway, that good land is at once taken up. Along the Great Southern line land has been taken up recently more than anywhere else. People come here from the other States and go on to this land; and if we have plenty of good land to give to people we need not be afraid. No one need be afraid of growing wheat, because there is always a market for it. The whole of the stock in

France is stall-fed. The more we induce people to go on the land, the better chance there is of reducing prices to the consumers. It is a disgrace to this State to have all the country along the Midland line locked up. It is the fault of the Forrest Government to some extent, but they had to do this, for the financial people in the old country club together.

HON. J. M. DREW: Why not enforce the agreement?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I would enforce the agreement to-morrow, but where is the agreement? We cannot find it. When an agreement is made with certain people and then some of the conditions are struck out, if you go to court you will have to "pay the piper." The agreement with the Midland Company was drawn up by the present Judge Hensman, and it is a very good agreement; but the ablest men in the world cannot draw up agreements which will stand. We are told that a coach and four can be driven through any Act of Parliament; and I say, any agreement that a lawyer draws up you can drive a coach and sixteen through. We must open up the country; we have got settlers coming here, and we must give them land so as to keep them, because if people go away they will do us harm. I told the Minister for Lands, when he was first appointed, that the lands of the country must be cheapened, and he then said there was no good land here. To-night the Minister has told me that since travelling through the country he has seen a lot of good land, and has more faith in the country than he had before. I am glad we have made a convert of such an able man. Although I have no fancy for continual tinkering with the land regulations, yet I must give the Minister for Lands a few hints: as to whether he takes notice of them or not, I am indifferent. On the subject of land, my knowledge is second to that of no man in this State. I care not how long it may take me to lay my views before the House; if necessary, I shall keep hon. members here until to-morrow morning. I know I am a nuisance to the Minister, for he has told me so frequently. The hon. gentleman may not believe in what I say, but some part of it will stick to him: he cannot rub it off if I rub it in. Can anyone tell

me what sense or reason there is in making a man pay as much for heavily timbered land in the South-Western District as for the comparatively clear land of the Eastern District? Why, a man can make as much headway in a year on the latter as in a lifetime almost on the former! That is a positive and undeniable fact, and yet the price of South-Western land is fixed as high by the Government as that of land anywhere else. It is said we have had good Ministers for Lands in the past. True, we did have one good man, but he developed too great a fondness for admiring Perth Water from his office windows. An hon. member who spoke just now remarked that the gentleman who preceded him in the office of Minister for Lands had the advantage of knowing practically the whole of the country. If that Minister of wide knowledge had been permitted to retain office we should, I think, have had more money spent on agricultural railways. Is all the land on the Blackwood to be left idle for ever? I know some hon. members are afraid to borrow; and I, too, am at times afraid. But I am not afraid when I have confidence in the country on which the money is to be spent, when I know that country will return the outlay tenfold. But before anything else we must turn our attention to removing the anomalies which at present disfigure the land regulations. Let us not have regulations fixing the same price for land which can be burned off in a night and then rolled down almost like mallee, and land so heavily timbered and overgrown as to require almost a lifetime to clear properly. The South-Western District wants dairies, and with dairies you must have agriculture. The Minister for Lands holding office last year induced Parliament to spend a lot of money in bringing over stock from the Eastern States. I said a good deal, in that connection, concerning a gentleman then in this House. He is not here now, however; so I must let the matter pass. The present Minister for Lands is not concerned in the affair: he is not such a fool as to meddle with it. After the stock arrived here, what happened? Nothing. Then people began to grumble, and the Lands officials sent the stock to agricultural shows by way of advertisement. But they ought to have taken the stock to the South, the home of the dairying industry in this State.

Those who see that country in ten years' time, say, will see vast improvements: the country will pay, and pay well, in time. In the end, the imported stock was not made use of at all, but was sold. Is that the way to use the money of the State for the advancement of dairying and agriculture? Is that good administration? No. I consider the transaction a blot on our Lands Department, and I am thankful that the Minister responsible for the blunder is no longer in control. I rejoice that we have a better man in charge of the Lands Department. To my mind, it would have been better to take those cattle to the South and give them away.

HON. B. C. O'BRIEN: They were sold.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: But they ought not to have been sold; they ought rather to have been given away, so that good stock might be produced in the South. Agricultural members are everlastingly being twitted with the statement that the country produces no butter, and that the price of meat is far too high. The agricultural community is doing everything possible to clear the lands and render them arable. Of what earthly use to anyone is country which remains idle? The Government at the present day hold lands capable of carrying an immense population, and bound to carry an immense population if only the land regulations are sensibly amended. The Minister should wipe clean out almost every regulation to-day existing. Let him come with me whenever he can spare the time, and I shall show him what the country is like, and how the existing land regulations retard settlement. The prescribed area of 160 acres is utterly insufficient, except in the case of orchard land. I asked a man the other day, "Can you live on 160 acres?" The reply was, "No. I have a long way more than that, and I want it all." We have to remember the best of the agricultural land has been picked, just as the best blocks of a city or the best areas of a goldfield are picked. Ministers urge people to settle on the land, and promise them all possible encouragement and assistance. But the land regulations do not allow an area adequate for the making of a home. Take the experience of another State, New South Wales. A large and representative conference of

farmers there advised the Government that an area of 320 acres was not enough for a man to make a home on, and recommended larger sections. If 320 acres is not enough in New South Wales, then double or treble that area is not more than sufficient here. Many of the farmers attending that conference, I should mention, were men of wealth, men who could, if they liked, move from place to place, taking their thousands with them. One hundred and sixty acres may, perhaps, be sufficient where the land is really good. The whole subject of land settlement and land regulations ought to receive the careful and systematic attention of the Minister. It is useless to draft schemes and regulations that look pretty on paper but are evil in practice. I have often urged these considerations on Sir John Forrest's attention. Can it be maintained that 160 acres of average land is sufficient?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I would give each settler 500 acres.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I have frequently known people to take up 200 acres, find the area insufficient, and go 20 or 30 miles away to find more land. The regulations are paltry in spirit; they may be called liberal, but they are nothing of the kind. I have made these statements before, and I reiterate them to show the necessity for alteration. Let us do away altogether with the 160 acres provision. The Hon. George Throssell laughed at me when I spoke to him about big areas. There is a thing he once did to me and made a boast of. I took up some land on what is known, after the hon. gentleman, as the Throssell Area. On hearing of this, he said, "I'll stop Burgess: he is not going to take up the whole country." I made no use of the land for a long time, and it went wild. Mr. Throssell asked me to give some of it back, and I did so; and the very land I surrendered has passed into the hands of Afghans. The land that great Minister took from me went to Afghans! Mr. Throssell is one of my constituents, but if my stating these facts were to cost me my seat to-morrow, if it were to cost me my last penny, I would still state them. If he were here now, I would state them to him, though, I suppose, he would only laugh at me. What I have said may, perhaps, not

appear in *Hansard*; but Mr. Throssell will get word of it: somebody will tell him. Some hon. members may not see anything in what I have stated with a view to showing the absurdity of the 160 acres regulation, but those who know the subject will recognise the force of what I have urged. I have pointed out before that a man taking up land under residential conditions can get only 1,000 acres. Many men who go on the land are fools: they spend first all their own money and then their creditors', and after that they go bankrupt. What is the position thereupon? Under the land regulations one cannot, except with the consent of the Minister, get a transfer of the bankrupt's land. That is an absurdity, as I pointed out to the Hon. George Throssell when on a train journey with him about a week ago. I told him that if I could not get any more land from the Government, still I could get plenty from people who, having taken up country, were only too anxious to dispose of it again. When a man gets really too much land, tax him! That is the remedy. If the man is taxed, he will soon get rid of his surplus land. Let us do our utmost to get the country settled. The reproaches of the goldfields people will then be speedily silenced. We have the country; all we stand in need of is people to take it up. I have worked on the land all my life, and I have proved the country I live in. I have seen many parts of Western Australia where farmers are making fortunes, and where I could make a fortune now. To pass laws with the object of preventing the taking up of land, laws which tend to retard settlement, is absurd. Such laws spring from sheer narrow-mindedness. Let us do all in our power to get the land under cultivation, and if a man holds too much country, let us tax him. That is the right course to adopt. I have taken up a good deal of the time of the House, but only from a strong sense of my duty in this matter. I know the Minister for Lands has gained some information from my remarks. I do not ask him blindly to accept my views, but any good he may see in them he is welcome to profit by. I regret to be compelled to weary hon. members. I have even mislaid my notes, and therefore—

HON. M. L. MOSS: Your memory stands you in good stead.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: I am afraid it is getting worn out; but I must go on a little longer, notwithstanding. I have some remarks to offer on the Land Purchase Act. That measure is not referred to in His Excellency's Speech, but I must deal with it because this is the only opportunity afforded to members of bringing up any and every matter deemed worthy of attention. Certain subjects not dealt with in the Speech certainly ought to have received notice in it. I was one of a deputation which recently waited on the Minister for Lands for the purpose of drawing attention to his department's methods in connection with repurchased estates. The officers whose duty it is to cut up these estates are no doubt good surveyors, but they need the assistance of practical men in subdividing to the best advantage. The officers need to be shown how to cut up estates into workable sections, such as will suit intending settlers. It is not necessary to cut the water off, or to cut the poison patches out. It is far better for the surveyors to get a little local advice. I know a very good man, who is not in the department now, but I remember on one occasion riding by some land which he was surveying, and I asked him what the land was worth, and he said £2 an acre. I laughed and went on, and that man admits to-day that he was mistaken when he gave that estimate. I cannot make a survey, but I have had some experience, and I can give people advice. All these matters want looking to. I mean to push the farming industry all I can. It is my duty to do it; I am elected to do it, and my heart is in the industry. There is another matter which is not mentioned in the Governor's Speech, to which I wish to refer. I allude to the guano question, about which a select committee was appointed last session. I asked to-night what the Government were going to do about it, and I am glad they are not going to do anything. I have thought this question out. This guano is a good fertiliser, and it is very valuable to the State, but we can never get enough of that. If there is a good season, farmers cannot get sufficient guano. This year I wrote to two or three places, and all I could get from an agent in

Fremantle was a ton of fertilising manure. Subsequently I got a few tons, but it is always the case, when you want it you cannot get it. Last season farmers could not get sufficient guano. It would be a disgrace to the country to let the guano be exported, even if we lose something by it. It will be to our advantage in the end to keep it, because we want all we can get, and ten times more. We could use all the guano the islands can produce in the Avon Valley alone.

HON. J. M. DREW : How much do you use of it ?

HON. R. G. BURGESS : I will tell the hon. member : my son and myself have used thirty tons of superphosphate, which is equal to fifty tons of guano, this year. We used forty-two tons of guano from the Abrolhos Islands on two farms alone. I have got land enough to put in another sixty tons if I could get it and decent labour. The hon. member does not look to the good of the country : he only looks to the present. The country must be settled, but there must not be any pettifogging business over the improvements. There are many other matters which I could refer to. There is the rabbit question ; no mention is made of that in the Speech. I know the Government are doing a good deal. I know this is going to be an expensive job, and I hope the Government will look ahead. As soon as they have the fence up, I hope they will have boundary riders going along to keep it in order. I would like to see some reports made as to where the rabbits are found, or what the inspectors are doing. The Royal Commission which sat in connection with the rabbit question suggested that there should be a yearly report. I do not know if that report has been made and whether it has been laid on the table of the House.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS : Next week.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : I am glad the Minister for Lands is looking after this matter. If the rabbits are coming here, I hope they will die on the road. It has been said that some of the rabbits have been poisoned when passing through the poison country ; but I say, they will eat all the poison and then come on and eat everything else. This is a matter on which I could speak at length, but I will not take up the time of the House.

If I had made proper notes I could have spoken better perhaps, but I have spoken from experience gained in my own work ; and if what I have said is of any service to those administering the affairs of the country, I am only too glad to give it. If I have helped on the settlement of the country, I am glad without farther reward.

HON. E. McLARTY (South-West) : After the lengthy speech to which we have just listened, it is not necessary for me to take up the time of the House for many minutes. I am not going to refer to a great deal that has been spoken by other members. With regard to paragraphs 1, 5, and 7, the expressions which have already fallen from members have my entire concurrence. Passing on to 8, dealing with the appointment of the Commissioner of Railways, I desire to speak on this matter, because the Commissioner (Mr. George) has been attacked this afternoon almost in an unjustifiable manner. And I feel that having been associated with that gentleman for a number of years, I should hardly be doing my duty if I sat still and did not say a word. In the first place, I may say that I entirely disapprove of the action of the Government just on the eve of Parliament assembling in making the appointment. It would have been well to have waited to see if Parliament approved of such a sweeping alteration being made in the administration of the railways. As far as the gentleman appointed to the position is concerned, it has been my pleasure to be acquainted with him ever since he came to this country ; and I was sorry to hear one member say that this gentleman had been accused of dishonesty, because I do not think that can be verified.

HON. J. M. DREW : Oh, no.

HON. E. McLARTY : Whether Mr. George will be a success or not, it will be no fault on his part if he does not do justice to the position in which he has been placed. Mr. George is a gentleman of great energy and with a great deal of ability, and I feel he will leave no stone unturned in regard to the working of the railways of the country. I will express the opinion that Mr. George, after he has had a fair trial, will bring a great many things to light and make a great many improvements. I know he is a very just

man, and will deal with the six thousand men employed on the railways justly and fairly. Mr. George has a fairly wide and general experience of railway matters, and he will bring that knowledge to bear in connection with the railways of the country, and do his best to earn the fifteen hundred a year that the country is paying him. I regret that members who do not approve of the appointment should make aspersions on Mr. George's character, which I feel it my duty to defend. To pass on to paragraph 12 of the Speech, which deals with the establishment of technical schools in populous centres, that is a matter I am glad the Government have introduced into the Speech.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Will they carry it out?

HON. E. McLARTY: I hope they may, because my experience is that the boys and girls of the country, who receive a very fair education, are kept at school from the time they can walk until they are grown up, and they know very little about the industries by means of which they are to make their living. It is very much to the point that girls should be brought up to attend to their domestic duties, that the performance of these should be a part of their education. The step proposed is, therefore, one in the right direction; and I hope the Government will speedily give their proposals practical effect. I am glad to learn that the Goomalling railway, the construction of which has taken about two years, whilst five or six months should have amply sufficed, is at last completed. This business supports a contention I have often urged, and which I still urge, that it is a great mistake for the Government to carry out works departmentally. I hope the day-labour system will be discontinued for ever. I am satisfied that we have wasted more money by the system of departmental labour than would pay interest on the cost of the whole of our railways. This consideration is quite apart from the dragging-out of the period during which the people have to wait for works which are urgently required, and ought, therefore, to be carried out as expeditiously as possible. I had a conversation with the late Engineer-in-Chief very shortly before

his death on this subject. I expressed to him my entire disapproval of the system of departmental day-labour. Mr. O'Connor said that he quite agreed with me, and that it was not by his wish railways were being constructed departmentally, his opinion being that all such works should be let by contract. Reference has been made to a Redistribution of Seats Bill. I quite agree with the remark which has fallen from Mr. Drew that there is no pressing necessity for the passing of such a measure. Since the population is increasing at a great rate—people are simply pouring into this State—the Government would act wisely in letting the matter rest, at all events a little longer. If a Redistribution of Seats Bill be brought in and passed now, the result will probably be to disfranchise some districts, which in the course of another twelve months will, by reason of possibly larger populations, have an undeniable claim to re-enfranchisement. One electorate in particular has been referred to as consisting of a ridiculously small number of voters; but that electorate contains a town with a population of about 2,000 engaged in the pearling industry. No doubt a large proportion of the population is coloured. I refer to Broome, which is situated in the West Kimberley electorate. I have, of course, excluded from the number, 2,000, the inhabitants of the township of Derby. Broome alone, I repeat, has a population of about 2,000; and I fail to see why the representative of such vast interests as exist in the West Kimberley electorate should not be regarded as a representative of the whole State, as well as of his own particular electorate. No man enters Parliament with a narrow view that he is returned to represent one district alone. Members look to the interests of the whole country. If matters of necessity and advantage to the goldfields are brought forward in this House, the representative of such an electorate as West Kimberley would certainly deem it his duty to advance such matters in the same way as if they were designed to benefit his own constituency. I entirely disapprove, therefore, of the popular cry for doing away with certain small constituencies and effecting a redistribution of seats on the population basis. I think it would be manifestly unfair to districts

where people have suffered all sorts of hardship, and have even risked their lives, with a view to establishing or extending industries. Such people should not be deprived of direct representation. I see no benefit to be gained by disfranchising them. The knowledge and experience possessed by representatives of outlying constituencies must prove of advantage to the whole State. I am indeed pleased to learn from the Speech that the Coolgardie Water Scheme is proving a complete success. Ever since I have had the honour of being in this House, I have been a staunch supporter of that scheme. I have always maintained that it was a necessary work—indeed, that its construction was inevitable. I have seen no reason to alter that opinion. I feel satisfied that the demand for water on the goldfields will be sufficient, and that the convenience resulting from the operation of the scheme in the working of the mines alone will amply justify its construction. There is now no doubt that Sir John Forrest was wrong in fixing the price of the water at 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons; and the present Government are fully justified in raising the price to such an amount as will produce interest on capital and sinking fund which will repay the cost of construction within a reasonable period. I should like to say a few words with reference to what I may term our new Government. I am proud to remember that the new Premier is a son of the soil. Though I have not been in every respect an admirer of Mr. James's political views, I do hope that now he has attained the proud position of Premier he will get a fair "show," a chance to prove what is in him and what he is willing to do. I trust Mr. James will cultivate a backbone, and give up some of the fads which he has been too much in the habit of pressing on the attention of Parliament. Feeble as my support may be, I intend to give it heartily to Mr. James and his Government. Undoubtedly, the country has, during the last year or two, suffered severely from the continuous game of "ins and outs," as it is called. We want a stable Administration, which will be in a position to undertake progressive works. I repeat, now that Mr. James holds the Premiership, Parliament and the general public should give him and his Ministry

a chance to show what they can do. I agree also with the remarks made by my friend Mr. Burges regarding the indebtedness of this country to the wife and family of the late Engineer-in-Chief. The great works carried to successful completion by Mr. O'Connor warrant the granting of practical recognition to his family. There is no doubt that had Mr. O'Connor not been a scrupulously honourable man he might have made ample provision for his family, and indeed left them in an independent position; whereas I am sorry to learn that the case is quite the reverse. The Government and the Parliament of this State will be only doing their duty in practically recognising the great services Mr. O'Connor has rendered the State, by making provision for the deceased gentleman's family. I remark the absence in the Speech of that record of useful and extensive works, either carried out, proceeding, or in contemplation, which we were so accustomed to in the old days. Very few works of importance are mentioned in the Speech; but I trust, nevertheless, the Government will not fail to construct certain great and necessary works still remaining to be done. We hear much of the scarcity of fuel on the goldfields, and in view of that I am disposed to think it will be imperatively necessary in the near future to undertake the construction of a railway from Collie to the goldfields. Such a railway will relieve the eastern goldfields line to a considerable degree, besides supplying much-needed fuel. Farther, the line will greatly advance the development of the coalfields, and also open up an enormous extent of country which is now closed to the agriculturist by reason of its remoteness from the market. I believe the Collie-goldfields line will very soon be indispensable, and I hope the Government will see their way to consider its construction. I shall not detain the House longer.

On motion by HON. R. LAURIE, debate adjourned until the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8:58 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 23rd July, 1902.

Spear-Parker Inquiry, Notice of Motion—Question:
Government Stores, Valuation—Address-in-reply,
third day—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

SPEAR-PARKER INQUIRY—NOTICE OF MOTION.

MR. NANSON (Murchison) gave notice of motion to disapprove of the proposed inquiry by a Royal Commission instead of inquiry before the Supreme Court, in regard to allegations made in the *Spectator* newspaper, concerning Mr. Justice Parker; and the hon. member asked that the Government should suspend the appointment of such Commission until the House had had opportunity of debating and voting on the motion.

THE PREMIER said the Government would proceed with the appointment of a Commission when the debate on the Address-in-reply was concluded.

QUESTION—GOVERNMENT STORES, VALUATION.

HON. F. H. PIESSE asked the Treasurer: 1, Whether any percentage has been added to the cost of the Government Stores when issued, to cover any probable loss in connection with cost of issue and distribution. 2, If so, what amount.

THE TREASURER replied: 1, Yes; on actual cost into Store, to cover expense of handling out of Store. 2, One per cent. on permanent way material; five per cent. on broken packages issued to locomotive shops—on loan account only. Five per cent. on material for Commonwealth Departments; 9d. a ton on coal.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

THIRD DAY OF DEBATE—AMENDMENT.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): It is perhaps natural that I should, with a certain degree of caution, approach a reply to the speech delivered last night by the leader of the

Opposition (Mr. Nanson), a speech which I may say at once somewhat surprised me by its mildness, more especially after the furious tirade which has been poured forth during the last few months on public platforms, and in that Press which is so ably represented by the hon. member. I propose, if the House will bear with me, to deal first with one or two points raised by the hon. member in the early part of his speech; and without farther preliminary I will now give the answer which he wishes to have regarding the abnormal expenditure during the last month of the last financial year. First, I may say it is well known to members who have been in the habit of studying the finances of any department in this State, that the expenditure for the month of June, which is, as it were, the month during which the annual cleaning up of accounts is undertaken, is invariably heavy. But that, I am perfectly free to admit, does not fully account for the expenditure during last June; and it is to the desire of the new Government to start the railway accounts for this year with what I may term a clean sheet that we may trace the abnormal expenditure for that month. I have here a report on the matter from the new Commissioner of Railways, Mr. George, to whose energy and whose foresight, combined with the energy and foresight of the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Gardiner, much credit is due for the discovery to which I am about to refer. As a fact, I may say the credit for that discovery is altogether due to those gentlemen. Some time in June—I think about the 15th—I was furnished with an estimate of the expenditure for that month, which had been prepared in the department, and which showed that the expenditure would be, approximately, £120,651 19s. 7d. Afterwards vouchers came in which raised that estimate to £170,551 19s. 7d. I think it was after the present Treasurer took office that, upon looking into the stores account, there was discovered a very large outstanding balance, part of which was due to be debited to the Railway Department, while the remainder—of course, a much smaller amount—was due to be debited to other departments. The total amount, I understand from the Treasurer, who no doubt will correct me if I am wrong, was