

as he had taken the oath at the ninth sitting of the House. In 1896 he had attended 31 times out of 32; in the first session of 1897, eight out of eight; in the second session of 1897, 23 out of 24; in 1898, 27 out of 41; in 1899, 24 out of 47; in the first session of 1900, 5 out of 12; and in the second session, 24 out of 36. True, attendance was not the only qualification for membership; but Mr. Kidson had done good work, having taken a prominent part in debates and on committees. From the index to *Hansard* it would be noticed that in 1898 he had spoken on 27 subjects, and made 127 speeches. He was a hard worker, and no doubt his legal knowledge was of assistance to the House. In 1899, the hon. member had spoken on 26 subjects, making 45 speeches. In 1900, he had spoken on 24 subjects, making 52 speeches. It was not simply on account of his children that the hon. member went to England: he had other and urgent business to transact.

HON. W. G. BROOKMAN (Metropolitan-Suburban) supported the motion. All hon. members were liable to be called away on private or public business, and leave of absence should, when required, be granted.

Motion put and passed.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: 1, *Re* School of Mines on Eastern Goldfields; 2, Amendment of Regulations *re* importation of fruit; 3, *re* Case of James Gleeson.

REVENUE RECEIVED—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers): With the permission of the House, I should like to refer to the revenue for the month ending 30th June, 1901. The revenue for the month is £298,106 5s. 3d. The revenue for the corresponding month of 1900 was £310,949 7s. 5d.; showing a decrease in the revenue for this month of £12,843 2s. 2d. The revenue for quarter ending 30th June, 1901, was £796,089 9s. 1d., and for quarter ending 30th June, 1900, £795,860 3s. 7d., showing an increase of £229 5s. 6d. For the year ending 30th June, 1901, the income was £3,078,033 11s. 3d.; and

for the year ending 30th June, 1900, £2,875,395 8s. 5d., or an increase this year of £202,638 2s. 10d. The estimated revenue for the year ending 30th June, 1901, was £2,900,000, showing an excess of £178,033 11s. 3d.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5.28 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 10th July, 1901.

Question: School of Mines, Kalgoorlie—Question: Stocks (W.A.) and Investments—Question: Bunbury Harbour Works, Funds—Question: Experimental Farms—Question: Dam at 42-Mile—Question: Kurrawang Firewood Company, Concession—Question: Customs Duties, Uniform—Question: Live Stock and Frozen Meat, Inspectors—Revenue Received: Statement by the Treasurer—Railway Workers' Strike: Debate arrested, Speaker's Ruling—Address-in-reply; sixth day, conclusion—Railway Workers' Strike; Premier's request (urgency); Motion by Premier Debated, division, passed (2.30 a.m.)—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—SCHOOL OF MINES, KALGOORLIE.

MR. J. RESIDE, for Mr. W. D. Johnson, asked the Minister for Mines: Whether it was his intention to immediately establish a School of Mines in Kalgoorlie.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The matter was under the consideration of the Government.

QUESTION—STOCKS (W.A.) AND INVESTMENTS.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS asked the Colonial Treasurer: 1, If it is true that accumulated sinking funds have been invested in West Australian stocks. 2, If so, to what amount. 3, If the Colonial

Treasurer proposes making any arrangement for the redemption of such stocks. 4, If it is the intention of the Colonial Treasurer to invest accumulated sinking funds in West Australian stocks.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER replied:—1, Yes. 2, £183,928 7s. 3, Each Loan Act under which the stock is raised provides a sinking fund for the redemption of the stock, and the interest thereon which is received by the Trustees is charged to Revenue, and accumulates at compound interest. 4, The Trustees, who alone have control of these funds, are investing them in the purchase of Western Australian stock, and consider it one of the best investments they can make.

QUESTION—BUNBURY HARBOUR WORKS, FUNDS.

MR. T. HAYWARD asked the Premier: 1, Whether the unexpended balance of £30,008, from the vote of £40,000 for Bunbury Harbour Works is now available. 2, When the Government intend to commence the extension of the Bunbury Breakwater.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, On the 30th of June last there was an unexpended balance of £22,108 19s. 3d. on items for Bunbury Harbour Works, Nos. 215 and 216 of Loan Estimates, and this is now available. 2, The Government have not yet had an opportunity of considering the question of recommencing the works, but will do so and arrive at a conclusion as early as possible.

QUESTION—EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL asked the Premier, Whether the Government were considering the question of establishing experimental farms.

THE PREMIER replied: The matter had not yet been considered.

QUESTION—DAM AT 42-MILE.

MR. F. REID asked the Minister for Works: 1, What was the cost of the 42-Mile dam, with particulars as far as possible. 2, When the dam was constructed, and what revenue the Government have received from the dam up to the date when it was let to the Kurrawang Firewood Company, and what were the terms upon which it was let. 3, What

amount of money the Government have paid to the said company for water since that date.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:—1, The cost was £4,711, and the dam has a capacity of 3,734,700 gallons. 2, The dam was constructed in 1896 and was leased in December, 1899, and a copy of the lease was laid on the Table of the House on 30th May, 1900. The revenue received up to date of leasing was £963. 3, The Railway Department has paid for water delivered on their railway line the sum of £15,037 10s. The claim is being adjusted by a contra account.

QUESTION—KURRAWANG FIREWOOD COMPANY, CONCESSION.

MR. F. REID asked the Premier: 1, What are the original terms of the concession granted to the Kurrawang Firewood Company. 2, Whether the Kurrawang Firewood Company have overstepped the original concession by denuding the Bonnievale and Kunanalling districts of firewood and mining timber, which naturally belongs to the mines of the district named. 3, Whether the Minister will take the necessary steps to prevent the Kurrawang Firewood Company from depleting the country in the vicinity of Bonnievale and Kunanalling of their natural supply of firewood and mining timber.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, C. Jobson was granted permission on 13th September, 1899, to lay down a temporary tramway in the vicinity of Kalgoorlie, for conveyance of firewood only, during the pleasure of the hon. the Minister for Lands, at a rental of £1 per month, subject to existing rights under the Goldfields Act and Mineral Lands Act; no timber lease or concession being granted. 2, So soon as it was reported that the company was denuding the districts around Bonnievale and Kunanalling, State forests were declared around those places for the purpose of preventing the company from cutting timber thereon, and the boundaries of these State forests are now being surveyed. Permission may be given in writing by the Minister for Lands, or his agent, to mine owners and others to cut timber within a State forest, conditionally on the timber being used within the boundaries of such State forest. 3, Replied to by No. 2.

**QUESTION—CUSTOMS DUTIES,
UNIFORM.**

MR. M. H. JACOBY asked the Premier : As, on the imposition of uniform Customs duties by the Commonwealth, all State restriction of fruit, plants, and stock becomes inoperative, what steps the Government proposed to prevent the introduction of phylloxera on vines, and tick on cattle.

THE PREMIER replied: Representations would be made to the Commonwealth Government on the matter.

QUESTION—LIVE STOCK AND FROZEN MEAT, INSPECTORS.

MR. W. B. GORDON asked the Premier, Whether the Government intended to take the necessary action to appoint inspectors under Live Stock and Frozen Meat Act, section No. 2?

THE PREMIER replied: Any person could enforce the provisions of the Act, without the aid of an inspector.

**REVENUE RECEIVED—STATEMENT BY
THE TREASURER.**

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: The returns for the year have just been completed, and it may be interesting to hon. members to hear the figures. The revenue for the month of June amounted to £298,106 5s. 3d.; in the preceding year for the same month, £310,949 7s. 5d. The revenue for the quarter ending June 30th, 1901, was £796,089 9s. 1d.; for the same quarter in the preceding year, £795,860 3s. 7d. The revenue for the year ending June 30th, 1901, totalled £3,078,033 11s. 3d.; for the preceding year it was £2,875,395 18s. 5d., leaving an excess over the estimate, which was £2,900,000, of £178,033 11s. 3d.

**RAILWAY WORKERS' STRIKE—DEBATE
ARRESTED.**

SPEAKER'S RULING.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (Fremantle) I beg to move the suspension of the Standing Orders, to enable me to move the following resolution :

That this House, whilst recognising the propriety of the Government's demand that the differences between the Railway Department and the line repairers should be settled by arbitration, is of opinion that, owing to the long delays, caused by unavoidable political changes, which have occurred in dealing with

the men's claims, and to the general admission of the justice of their demand, arbitration should be waived in this instance; and recommends that the Government should accede to the request of the line repairers.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member, owing to the notice of motion given for to-morrow by the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason), cannot move the motion which he has just read, as it would be anticipating the motion of which notice has been given for debating the question to-morrow.

MR. DIAMOND: Then I move the adjournment of the House.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot move the adjournment of the House, now that we have proceeded to the business of the day.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

SIXTH DAY OF DEBATE—CONCLUSION.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

DR. M. O'CONNOR (Moore) : I do not propose to weary members, or to detain them more than a few minutes. I believe it is the usual custom for new members to explain why they take their particular seats; at least, it appears to be the custom. I should like to say that some few weeks ago I was elected as an independent member; and I remain an independent member. I intend to support the present Government so long as they are prepared to carry out a policy which I can approve. I am very pleased to see by His Excellency's Speech that the financial position is satisfactory, in spite of the prophecies made in certain of the election addresses which we heard some few weeks ago. It is very pleasing to all of us to find that the finances of the State are in a satisfactory condition. I am not in favour of indiscriminate borrowing, but I do favour borrowing by the Government for necessary works. If there are any works the construction of which will benefit the State, I am prepared to support the borrowing of money for these particular works. I am not, however, in favour of any extravagant expenditure. I was very pleased to note by the Premier's speech of the other day that he intends to have a competent and complete drafting staff. Judging by the Acts of Parliament passed during the last few years, one would be almost inclined to think that the drafting

staff of the past did not do their work properly, or else that the members of Parliament at that time did their very best to upset the work of those draftsmen. There have been several instances leading to that conclusion. Recently there was in particular a case in connection with the Municipal Act. We had on one section of that Act conflicting opinions from all the leading lawyers in Perth; and when the matter was referred to the Supreme Court, the Judges themselves could not give a definite opinion. They could express an opinion only as a mere matter of probability. I hope that future Bills passed by this House will be carefully gone into, and not rushed through in a few hours. In this connection I cannot help noticing—I am sorry the hon. member to whom I am about to refer is not here—a statement in the speech delivered by the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James). The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, he informed us, was not worth the paper it was written on. That appears to be the case. There is no doubt the hon. member is an authority on the subject. But I am surprised that the hon. member should come to the House and give us this piece of information. The hon. member was here last session; and it was his duty to see, or endeavour to see, that this Act should be applicable to such a case as has occurred at the present time. He also informed us that this Act was passed by the late Government, and that it was of no use on that account. The Act, he said, was practically worthless by reason of the fact that the Forrest Government had passed it. But I find, on looking into the debate on the measure, that there were three divisions; that in the case of two of these divisions the hon. member was where he generally was last session—absent; and that on the occasion of the third division he voted with the Forrest Government. I am sorry for the Commissioner of Railways, and I should like to offer him my sympathies in the present trouble. I greatly regret that at the beginning of his career as a Minister he should find himself in so difficult a position. But still, I cannot help sympathising with the men also. I believe it is admitted on all sides that the men have a fair case, and that they should be paid the extra money they ask

for. It is a matter of deep regret to me that the difficulty could not have been settled amicably. The question of the Midland Railway is one of great moment to the whole State; but though it is of very great concern to the country generally, it is of very particular concern to the district I represent: in fact the Midland Railway is the body and soul and everything else of the Moore electorate. I did not expect the Government to bring down a Bill to buy the Midland Railway this session: I could hardly look for that. I am led, however, by the speech the Premier delivered in the Queen's Hall, to hope that the Government will endeavour to satisfactorily negotiate with the company and come down next session with a Bill asking the approval of the House for the purchase of the railway. In this connection, I cannot help but notice the speech delivered by the Colonial Treasurer in Geraldton. It was one of those speeches which, like another speech delivered at a place called Tuckanarra, had better have been left unspoken.

A MEMBER: It was delivered at Tuckanarra.

DR. O'CONNOR: Tuckanarra. In that speech the Colonial Treasurer informed the gentlemen assembled round the table that the Midland Railway—it was an after-dinner speech—was worth £1,350,000.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I did not.

DR. O'CONNOR: Well, it was so reported in the papers.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Then, it is not correct.

DR. O'CONNOR: £1,500,000, then.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: No; I said nothing of the kind.

DR. O'CONNOR: It is reported in the Press.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: That may be so.

DR. O'CONNOR: It has not been contradicted by the Colonial Treasurer. However, if he thinks the Midland Railway is worth £1,350,000, he is the only person in Western Australia who values it at that.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear.

DR. O'CONNOR: I am prepared to accept the Colonial Treasurer's assurance; but still I think he should have contradicted the statement published in the

papers, as his colleagues did. I hope the next time the Colonial Treasurer takes a trip round the country he will make his speeches before instead of after dinner. I am glad to see that the Government intend to create a Civil Service Board. The present Civil Service Act I can only call an abortion. It is of no use whatever. It simply leaves the service in the same position as in the past. I hope that the proposed Board will consist of independent men, outside the official circles altogether. I trust that henceforth anyone who wants to enter the public service will have to get in by examination, and that the service will be thrown open to rich and poor alike. Entry into it should not remain, as it has been in the past, a matter of favouritism or nepotism. I am pleased to see that the Government intend to enlarge the lunatic asylum at Whitby. There is no question this should be attended to immediately. We have, for a number of years, had complaints with regard to the condition of the asylum, both from the late Dr. Barnett, and I believe from Dr. Hope, who has been in charge until within the last few weeks. The complaints are that the buildings are not large enough for the requirements of the institution, and that thus no classification whatever is possible in connection with it. There can be no question this is a matter requiring immediate attention, so that there may be proper classification of patients. At the present time, I believe chronic and incurable cases are mixed up with curable cases. The result is that the curable cases do not recover, and that the chronic and incurable cases get worse. The Premier informed us yesterday that the Government intended spending £25,000 on the Royal Visit. I am very pleased to know that they intend spending this sum; but I would have been very much more pleased to see it expended on something in the shape of a permanent memorial, which His Royal Highness might have had some pleasure in opening, and which would have enabled him to feel when he left this State, that his visit had done some good. At present the intention appears to be to spend the whole of the money on temporary, trumpery arches. Twenty-five thousand pounds seems to be an enormous sum to expend in this way.

I should have liked to see it devoted to the erection of a memorial which would have afforded some permanent enjoyment to the public. I notice a committee was appointed to consider the plans in connection with new Houses of Parliament, but I hope the members of this House do not intend to spend money on that object. There is no question that this Chamber, which was quite good enough when we were practically an independent colony, is quite good enough now when we are a mere State, and I hope this Parliament will not spend money on new Houses of Parliament; but if, as I believe, it is necessary to get some rooms for offices, those rooms should be erected over the refreshment room. I also noticed that recently a number of gentlemen waited upon the Colonial Treasurer (Hon. F. Illingworth) asking if he would give a sum of money towards the Children's Hospital. I am glad to say the hon. gentleman refused. There is no reason whatever why this Children's Hospital should be constructed at the present time. If erected, it can only be for those who are able to pay and those who cannot pay. As to those who can afford to pay, there are a number of private hospitals in Perth, and I do not think it right that the Government should give money to an irresponsible board to enable such board to compete with private hospitals. If people are not able to pay, all I can say is there are 15 or 16 beds in the Government Hospital, and there are hundreds of other beds as well which can be used, if they are required. I am glad the Government intend cutting this session as short as possible, for I do not think it advisable for them to stay here, but they should become thoroughly acquainted with their position, and as soon as they are they can come down to the House and submit their proposals to us. I must thank hon. members for the kindness with which they have listened to me.

MR. W. F. SAYER (Claremont): The member for the Moore (Dr. O'Connor) touched on a subject which is of interest to me, but except perhaps for an observation by the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James) the other evening I might not have taken any part in this debate. That observation, however, is one that I

cannot afford altogether to ignore. There is a paragraph in His Excellency's Speech in which we are promised an amendment of the Industrial Conciliation Act of last session; and in referring to that subject, in view of the lamentable strike which was then impending, the member for East Perth thought fit to allude to that Act as useless and waste paper, in which connection he was pleased to speak of Mr. Burt and myself as responsible for the drafting of that measure. I wish to say at once that in so far as the Conciliation Act of last session has been found wanting to avert the present strike, it is directly the consequence of the mutilation that Bill received at the hands of Parliament. The Bill as it left the hands of the draughtsmen was a consolidation of the Conciliation Acts of New Zealand as in force at that day; but when the Bill went into Committee in this House, an amendment was proposed by the then leader of the Opposition, now member for Cue (Hon. F. Illingworth), to which I will refer. The hon. member proposed this amendment:

All employees, other than clerical, of the Government in any capacity whatsoever, notwithstanding anything contained in any other Act of Parliament, shall be subject to and come under all the provisions of this Act in the same manner as though they were employed by private employers or public companies.

The member for Cue went on to say the object of the amendment was to place all employees of the Government other than clerical under the same provisions as would apply to the employees of private persons or companies. It was pointed out that clerical employees in the Government Departments could not suitably be brought under the operation of the Bill, and he therefore wished to give effect to that view by his amendment, which would exclude the clerical men.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Quote the place where I moved to put them in. I moved to put them all in.

MR. SAYER: The hon. gentleman will be able to refer to that.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Quote fairly.

MR. SAYER: I have quoted *verbatim et literatim*.

HON. W. H. JAMES: One part of it.

MR. SAYER: It is true the amendment was negatived; but although the

amendment was not carried, it was the first time the idea of the exclusion of the clerical worker had been brought into any proposed amendment, and that idea of the exclusion of the clerical worker found its way into the definition of "worker" which was ultimately adopted. The effect of this unfortunate amendment was that the West Australian Government Railway Association was unable to register as a union of workers under the Act, the result being the lamentable strike which has now come upon us. I have spoken thus far in defence of the draughtsmen of that measure. It is easy to visit the defects of legislation upon the draftsman, who is rarely here to answer for himself; but in my experience when we find defective legislation, it is often the result of hasty and ill-conceived amendments made in Parliament while the Bill is passing. The New Zealand Conciliation Act of last year, which consolidated all the legislation in force in that country, defined "worker" to mean:

Any person of any age or either sex employed by any employer to do any skilled or unskilled manual or clerical work for hire or reward in any industry.

This definition we desired to place in the Bill as the Bill was drafted; but without at this moment discussing the relations of the Government worker to the Bill, upon which I shall have perhaps something to say when the amending Bill comes before this House, I would like to state that, to my mind, the tribunal constituted by the Act is so admirably and excellently constituted — I am alluding to the Court of Arbitration — that any dispute might be confidently referred to it for settlement. I will pass now from that Bill in particular, and I must confess I am disappointed with the poverty of legislation that we are promised in the Speech. If it had been intended to sketch out the work of the present session only, we might perhaps have been satisfied for the time, but we find that allusions are made to amendments of the Constitution Act, which for obvious reasons cannot be undertaken during the present session. There can be no intention to introduce an amendment of the Constitution this session; and when I find allusions made to such amendment, I can only regard the forecast of legislation as not relating

to this session merely, but rather to the Parliament as a whole. In view of this I must confess to a feeling of disappointment that we have heard nothing of a Public Works Bill. The past experience of my life in the public service, coupled with many a consultation with the Engineer-in-Chief and others, has led me to recognise for years past the absolute need of a Bill relating to our public works. We have no legislation on the statute book bearing on the subject, and how those works are conducted without legislation I do not know. All I know is the urgent need of a Bill for public works. Then nothing is said as to bankruptcy reform. The administration of our bankruptcy law calls for the most immediate attention to my own knowledge. We have nothing said as to our antiquated statutes relating to convicted prisoners, which constitute the prison law even of to-day; and what perhaps is of even greater importance, more practical importance, not an allusion is made to the prison regulations that call for reform. It is nearly three years since a Royal Commission reported on this subject, upon the methods in use for the punishment of criminals, upon the classification of criminals, upon the remission of sentences, and other matters. It was the intention of the late Government to give immediate effect to the recommendations of that Royal Commission, and why the labours of that Commission are ignored and no effect is given to them passes my comprehension. We are promised an amendment of the Roads Act. I think I know in what direction. Doubtless there are some provisions of the Roads Act that need amendment.

MR. RASON: Many of them.

MR. SAYER: Many of them, but the subject is comparatively unimportant, and altogether unworthy of mention in the Speech. The flagrant defects of the Immigration Restriction Act are altogether unnoticed, for while we exclude, and rightly exclude, the indigent even of our own race, we find that the Immigration Restriction Act has no application at all to the Chinese.

HON. W. H. JAMES: A Bill is being drafted now.

MR. SAYER: I am very glad to hear it.

HON. W. H. JAMES: We do not tell all our intentions.

MR. SAYER: I think the question of such importance that it might have been referred to in the Speech, rather than a comparatively unimportant amendment of the Roads Act in some trifling particular. I say that while we are excluding the indigent of our own race, the Immigration Restriction Act has no application to the Chinese, who are altogether exempt from its provisions. I am delighted to hear that the Government intend to remedy this, and I wish I had known it before. We are promised a Bill to validate the Acts of last session. If such a measure is necessary, which I for one deny, it is scarcely a matter of policy to mention in the Governor's Speech. I for one must regret that any allusion was made to that matter, for if deemed necessary—and I have a suspicion that I can trace the hand of the member for East Perth in that part of the Speech—

HON. W. H. JAMES: You are entirely wrong.

MR. SAYER: At any rate, I regret that allusion. I find a trace of spleen there, a desire to cast a reflection and to discredit the late Administration. If the Premier really does think that a measure is needed to validate the legislation of last session—

HON. W. H. JAMES: Did not one of the newspapers say so?

MR. SAYER: If the Premier really has a doubt as to the validity of the Acts of last session, I can only say that doubt is not shared by the best legal minds in Australia; for when the doubt was mooted as to whether, with the introduction of triennial Parliaments, our then Parliament ended its existence that year or came to an end by effluxion of time, the then Premier (Sir John Forrest) submitted the question for the opinion of Sir Samuel Griffith and Sir Samuel Way; and the opinions of those great lawyers most abundantly and absolutely justified the action of the Parliament in continuing till it expired by effluxion of time.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Why did not you publish those opinions?

MR. SAYER: They were published.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Where are they?

MR. SAYER: They have been published, and the present Premier has

them. There is only one other matter to which I shall allude. There is a passage in the Governor's Speech which states that Ministers deemed it advisable to revoke the regulations which prohibited the importation of certain kinds of fruit from neighbouring States; by which is meant the revocation of the proclamation made in 1889, prohibiting the importation of apples, pears, and quinces. A great deal has been said outside this House on this subject, a great deal of a claptrap kind; but it would have been more ingenuous if the Premier had frankly stated that this prohibition would necessarily be repealed as a consequence of legislation by the Federal Parliament; that so soon as the Federal tariff comes into operation, trade in the States is absolutely free. As I say, it would have been more ingenuous and frank if the country had been told this proclamation must go, as a necessary consequence of federation.

MR. GORDON: There would be no policy in that.

MR. SAYER: We should then, perhaps, have been unable to give to the present Government the credit of having removed that prohibition; still, we ought to agree in welcoming the regulations which have been framed for the inspection of fruit and other precautionary measures against the introduction of disease, which, in the circumstances, is the only protection the Government can give to the fruitgrower in this country against the ravages of those pests which have caused such great injury in the fruit-growing industry of the Eastern States. There are other matters in the Speech with which I might deal, but the ground has now been so well covered that I shall not trespass farther on the time of the House.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth): It was not my intention to take a part in this debate, and I should not have done so but for the remarks which have just fallen from the member for Claremont (Mr. Sayer). It is easy to cut out a portion of a speech for the purpose of making a member appear ridiculous; but, if we desire to be honest in our quotation, we ought to give the full quotation, or a full reference to the facts in connection with the particular question. In the first place, the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, which was so per-

fect a Bill when presented, having been drafted by the hon member (Mr. Sayer), come down to this House without any definition of the word "worker." In the next place, this Bill was laid before the House in a form so perfect that, if altered at all, it would be destroyed; and we know now that the Bill was altered and was destroyed. The hon. member has told us that Bill was so altered by the member for Cue, meaning myself, that we have the present strike. That is a very grave accusation to make; and I want to call the attention of members to the report of my speech on the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill upon the second reading, as recorded in *Hansard* of last session at page 475:—

Now if unions are formed among the men in the Railway Department, how do the Government propose to deal with the workers in that department when any difficulty arises? The exclusion, I say, from the Bill of all Government departments, and especially of the Railway Department, is a very serious defect in the measure; and I hope the Attorney General will carry out the suggestion he made when I understood him to say he would be able to bring the Railway Department, at any rate, under the operation of the measure. It seems to me that may in some way be obtained; at any rate it may be done as it is done in Mr. Wise's measure, where "employer" is defined as including the Railway Commissioners in New South Wales, and where under the heading of "industry" are included the men working on the Government railways. Why should we not include all the Government servants? I do not know why; but, at any rate, the inclusion of the Railway Department is such a serious matter that I hope the Minister in charge of the Bill will give us some additions to this definition clause which will bring the workers on our railways within its scope.

That was my sentiment in that connection. Then speaking in Committee, I said:—

The principle under discussion was whether Government departments ought to be recognised, and it would be just as well to settle the question by a division at once. If the Opposition failed in getting recognition for all Government employees, the Committee would be free to deal with the railway aspect of the question farther on.

What took place in connection with this clause was, that a motion was moved either by myself or Mr. Vosper to alter the term "worker," and insert such a definition as would bring the whole civil service under the Bill. That is what we fought for on the floor of the House

during some hours. The next thing done was that as the Government of the day had defeated us in regard to our desire to bring all the departments under the Bill, we tried to bring the Railway Department under the Bill, and we spoke for hours on that question, and fought for it in Committee by moving amendment after amendment. But what was said from the Government side of the House at that time? The contention was that it was ridiculous and absurd to say a clerk, a bookkeeper, or an accountant should be brought under the definition of "worker." Then to meet that objection we, who were then on the Opposition side, endeavoured to bring the whole of the department under the Bill by including all persons in the service within the definition of "worker;" but again objection was taken that clerks should not be within the definition. That being the position, I then did what I think every man ought to do when he cannot get all he wants—I tried to get something; therefore, I moved the amendment for excluding the word "clerk" from the definition, for the same reason that I was determined, if possible, to get something into the Bill. The hon. member (Mr. Sayer) now says the effect of the amendment then moved was that we have this unfortunate strike. I have to tell him that but for the amendment then proposed, we would have had not only the fettlers out on strike to-day, but the engine-drivers and cleaners out also. These men have protection under the Bill, and because of that protection we are enabled now to keep the railways running to some extent. It is grossly unfair for any member, knowing the facts as the member for Claremont must do, to make such a charge against me as the hon. member has made this evening. It is grossly unfair for him to charge me with destroying the Bill, when the Government which employed him at the time as their draftsman, and whose place it was to put the suggestions made by members in the House into proper legal form—because members are not here to draft Bills, but to suggest principles—it was for him to perform that duty, it was for the Government and their officers to put those principles into proper legal form. If the amendment I suggested was not in legal form, the then Attorney General ought

to have put it into form, and the draftsman employed by the Government should have seen it was put in form. We who were on the Opposition side struggled first to get all civil servants put under the Bill; the then Government opposed us in doing that; and as we failed in our object, we struggled farther to get all the Railway Department under the Bill. We failed in that, because it was said to be absurd to include clerks under the definition of "worker." The hon. member now tells the House that I altered the Bill in such a way as to exclude the word "clerk" from the particular clause, and in that way made the Bill useless.

MR. SAYER: The proposed amendment was not referred to the draftsman.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Whose fault is that? The Attorney General in charge of the Bill should have seen to it. I wanted to lay down a principle in regard to the very point the hon. member rose to support, namely that members of this House cannot be expected to draft Bills on the floor of the House. It is the duty of the Government to present their Bills in proper form, and that is the reason we (the Government) now want a drafting staff to carry out the suggestions which hon. members may make in this House. The same carelessness and the same injustice have been perpetrated on this question in the Press, because the writers looked up the last amendment carried, and assumed that it represented my view. It was not my view then, and it is not my view now. I said then what I say now, that if there is to be a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, the whole of the civil service ought to be brought within its scope. That was my opinion then. I may be wrong, but that is my opinion still. I then altered my motion, which was to include the whole of the Railway Department, in order to meet the wishes of hon. members then on the Government side; and after I had altered it, I lost it by one vote. The then Attorney General promised he would bring in a farther clause to include the railway men. What took place? The Attorney General brought in his clause; that is, when we had failed in our efforts to bring the whole of the civil service under the Bill, the Attorney General brought in a clause to include the railway men as they are in to-day.

Because we could not get all we wanted, we had to take what we could get; so I moved my amendment, and it was lost. What is now in the Act was put in by the Attorney General, I suppose at the suggestion of the hon. member opposite (Mr. Sayer). If it was not on his suggestion, then it is the fault of his own Attorney General.

MR. W. F. SAYER: It was the Legislative Council which put in the amendment.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I am aware of that. We passed the Bill through the Assembly on the promise of the Attorney General that he would make the amendment and pass it on to the Council, and that is how the amendment got into the Bill. That is the very amendment of which the hon. member says that its existence was due to "the member for Cue," whose motion was lost. My motion was lost by one vote; lost because the Government voted against it. Now as to that amendment, under pressure of the debate we received from the Attorney General a promise that he would put into the Bill as it went through the Upper House a clause to include the railway workers. And that was put in: that clause was inserted in consequence of the debate; it was put in by the Attorney General; and the member for Claremont (Mr. Sayer) was the legal adviser of the Attorney General on that very Bill. There are a few other points to which I would call attention while I am on my feet, although I did not intend to speak, and would not have done so but for what appears to me an injustice. I have to thank the hon. member—and I do so most cordially—for referring to this matter, because by doing so he has given me the opportunity I wanted, of contradicting statements which have been made in the Press. I thank the hon. member most heartily. If I have spoken warmly, it is because I feel warmly under the circumstances.

MR. DIAMOND: Oh, don't apologise.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I want also to refer to the remarks of the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty).

MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I am quite sure the hon. member had no intention of attacking the officers of my

department, nor indeed those of any other department; and I assured the Under-Treasurer and his officers, the very day after the remarks were made, that the member for North Fremantle did not intend to reflect on the officers of the Treasury. I would like to have his assurance that he did not, although for my part I am certain of it. He blamed the department for not issuing the returns for this month at an earlier date. I want to call the attention of the hon. member to the fact that under the Audit Act returns are not to be issued until after the tenth day in the month of July. Consequently, there was no fault on the part of the officers of my department. I have here a long minute on the subject from the Under-Treasurer, and in it he expresses himself as very much aggrieved; so I just wish to call attention to it.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Read it.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: No; I do not want to read it if the hon. member will give me the assurance I ask for, to satisfy my officers that he had no intention of casting reflections on them. I do not care what reflections are cast on the Treasurer, I do not mind what reflections are cast on me, but I do want to protect my officers.

MR. DOHERTY: I wish to explain that I did not refer to any officer of the department. I did not want this month's figures. I referred to the bulk figures of the total indebtedness of this State. I did not want the other accounts. I wish to add that I did not intend to reflect in any way on the Under-Treasurer, whom I consider one of the best officers in the Government service. SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I have gone into the matter on this occasion to satisfy a thoroughly conscientious and hard-working officer of the department. Speaking on the Address-in-reply, I again thank hon. members for the cordial way in which they have received the Governor's Speech. I have been looking very carefully to find the Opposition in this House. I have searched in the corner—it is not there; I have searched on the cross-benches—it is not there; I have searched on the back-benches of the Opposition, and it is not there; I have tried hard to find it on the

front Opposition benches, and I cannot find it there. In fact, I cannot find it at all.

MR. DIAMOND: I will tell you where it is.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: The leader of the Opposition assures us that this policy was his own policy.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: No; not mine personally.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I was not speaking of the hon. member personally, but speaking of the party with which he is associated. He said this policy was their policy. Now I would be inclined to say they stole it from the Opposition, for there is nothing in it that has not been advocated by us for years when we sat on the Opposition benches. If it is true, this policy is the policy of the Forrest Government or the Throssell Government, whichever may be referred to, then I have to say that we converted those hon. members to our views; otherwise I must say they stole our policy. They can have it which way they like. For certainly they opposed these measures when we were sitting in Opposition; and although they did, during the last election, make some pronouncement favourable to such legislation as the Speech proposes, yet that was only the result of constant agitation by this party when on the Opposition benches. It was a matter of some concern to me when I looked at the House and saw that we were in a minority. I find that the House is one of the most peculiar Houses that I have had the honour of sitting in. It is a House in which the Ministerial supporters, or, if you will, the supporters of Ministerial measures, are sitting in Opposition. They declare very kindly that they will support the measures which have been suggested by the Government; and I believe they are sincere in that declaration. I thank hon. members for the way in which they have received the Governor's Speech. We have tried to put into that Speech what we thought was best for the country; and I am glad to find that members opposite are pretty well agreed that the measures mentioned are the measures which are best for this State. If that be so, if we have now before the House a policy on which both the Government and the Opposition agree, then I think there will be no diffi-

culty in passing the legislation necessary to place the thoughts and ideas contained in the Governor's Speech on the statute book. For my part, I cordially welcome the assistance promised by hon. members sitting on the opposite side of the House towards the passing of the measures which the Government are proposing. Of course the Government are not all of one mind. Hon. members on this side are not all of one mind. [A MEMBER: Hear, hear.] I find that some of the strongest criticisms which have been passed on the policy of the Government, in addition to some very valuable suggestions, came from our friends on this side. I am glad also to have, at any rate for my own guidance, suggestions which have come from members on the other side. I hope that we shall be able to profit by those suggestions, and that they will lead during this session, not only to improvement in legislation—which perhaps will not be very extensive—but also to improvement in administration. I thank the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) for the friendly advice he gave in the course of his speech; and I thank other members for recommendations which I, as Treasurer, have noted. I think that while hon. members sitting on the opposite side of the House are kind enough and good enough to assist the Government, as at the present stage, they are doing valuable work. I have an opinion that it would be a good thing for us to devote our whole strength to helping one another to place the finances of this country on a good, sound footing. We have a big hill to climb, as I shall be able to show hon. members when I deal with the Loan Bill. What the country needs now is a cessation of distrust, opposition, and contention; it needs the greatest possible calm; it needs united effort to establish its finances, to complete the public works embarked on, and to effect improvement in administration and legislation. Personally, I thank hon. members for the kind way in which they have received the proposals in the Governor's Speech, and for the valuable hints given from all round the House. I know these suggestions will be of use to me as a Minister, and also to other Ministers. We are new to office; we know very little about the details of administration; but we are going to do

our best. And finally I wish to say that just as soon as you think you can do better, you may have this seat as far as I am concerned.

MR. DIAMOND: Thank you.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH (Wellington): Like the hon. member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), I think the Governor's Speech has emanated from a good many brains. I wish to put in my claim to be considered the originator of certain of the good points of the Speech; but I decline to father those points which I consider to be detrimental to the welfare of the State. I am glad of the reference to a Public Works Committee. The proposal to establish this should meet with the approval of both sides of the House. The Public Service Act should be brought into line with the Public Service Acts of the Eastern States, where civil servants get their advancement by examination. As regards the Roads Boards Act, I think that instead of its being amended, a new measure altogether should be introduced. In my travels through the south-western districts I heard great complaints as to the confusion occasioned by the various amendments of the Act; and I was requested to urge that a totally new Act should be brought in as soon as possible. I am pleased to see that the Industrial Arbitration Act is to be amended, and I trust that the House will pass such a measure as will render strikes and lock-outs impossible. I do not favour Conciliation Boards: we should have only an Arbitration Court. From experience I know that the more men and employers look at their respective sides of a question, the harder that question becomes to settle. I consider that the establishment of an Arbitration Court only will give the employer and employee a very much better chance of settling their disputes. I am pleased by the statement in His Excellency's Speech that economy is to be the first principle of the new Administration. Everyone must applaud such a policy. At the same time communication being so difficult both on the goldfields and in the south-western districts, it would in my opinion be a mistake on the part of Ministers to lock up the State Treasury altogether. Hon. members know that on the fields cartage costs from 1s. 6d. to 3s.

per ton per mile, and that in the south-west it is impossible to get about without roads and bridges. I consider that it would be wrong if Ministers, in order to secure an overflowing Treasury chest, should refuse to construct railways or roads or bridges. That would be a very great mistake.

MR. OATS: The Treasury chest is empty now.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: That may be so. For the goldfields a system of light railways might be introduced. By this means every mining centre of any importance whatever could be well served by lines costing not more than £1,000 to £1,200 per mile. Such railways might be built to any place offering a reasonable chance of traffic sufficient to pay working expenses and interest. If it were found that a line did not pay, it could be pulled up, at a cost not exceeding £50 per mile if the work is placed in proper hands. It is a shame, I consider, that places which under the altered circumstances created for them by a light line would have a fair chance of becoming flourishing mining centres or townships, should be deprived of this opportunity for a number of years when they could have it at so low a cost as £1,000 or £1,200 per mile. Where the Government make such a mistake in my opinion is by loading up their railways with unnecessary additions. I think the railway official goes to extremes in making his lines too costly. Under the system I will recommend, of course the railways would be shorn of all these decorative features with which the railway official loves to adorn his handiwork. I regret exceedingly there was no mention in the Speech of the appointment of a non-political head of the railways. It must be apparent, not only to this House but to everyone, that there exists in the Railway Department a lot of friction and discontent, and I consider the only way by which that can be overcome is to get the very best possible administrator for the work. No expense or no question as to salary within reason should be considered in obtaining the best man. I would not advocate three Commissioners, because there is a chance of one Commissioner shifting his responsibility on to the others. In England the general manager has sole control of every branch of the

business, and I do not see why that system should not obtain here. It is a great mistake for a State like this, with 180,000 people, to keep up too extensive a railway department such as obtains in this country. In reference to private enterprise I have very strong feelings. I consider that private enterprise has made Western Australia what it is to-day. After hearing the statement of the member for Cue (Hon. F. Illingworth), I may regard this as one of the leading States in the world, seeing that we have a revenue of over £3,000,000 for 182,000 people—something like £16 per head—and I say unhesitatingly that this is due to private enterprise. The goldfields should be considered the principal private enterprise in the State to-day, and no doubt that is the case, but there are other ventures in which private enterprise has been brought into use. There is the timber industry, and there are the warehouses and a number of other things, and last but not least the prospector is in my opinion as much a private venture as any of the others. The railways could be properly and profitably worked by private enterprise, if satisfactorily safeguarded in the interests of the State. Where a concession was asked for from this House of Parliament, provision could be made whereby, in the event of the venture proving a profitable one and it being thought advisable to take possession of it in the interests of the State, that venture could be taken over at a fixed rate, so that the State would not have to pay an exorbitant price for the goodwill. Broadly speaking, I am in favour of railways belonging solely and absolutely to the State. But there are instances in which, in the event of the State not feeling disposed or the Government thinking itself not warranted to take control of the railways, private enterprise should be allowed to step in, and two railways I may bring within this category are the Coolgardie-Esperance Bay railway and the Collie Coalfields railway. I believe that the Collie Coalfields railway would be better served by a private line than by a Government line, because under the Commonwealth Constitution, as far as I can read, the coal will have to be carried here, whether it comes from Newcastle or Victoria, at the same rate as that at which we carry our own coal. It

does not matter which way the line goes, if it be built by the State this Collie coal will not have the same show as it would have in the event of the line being built by private enterprise. The member for Mt. Burges (Mr. F. Reid) the other evening was referring to the Kurrawang tramway, and said he hoped the Government would see fit to shut it up. Being one of the originators of that tramway and having spent something like £53,000 in that venture, I personally would be very sorry if the Government thought themselves warranted in shutting this thing up. It would not only affect my company, but it would affect the mines very much more in the long-run. At the present time the mines pay, including shunting charges, 10s. a truck from Kurrawang to Golden Gate; 29s. a truck, including shunting, from Gloady's Siding to Golden Gate, or an increase of 19s. per truck, nearly 4s. per ton; from Borrabbin to Golden Gate they would have to pay, including shunting charges, 42s. 6d. a truck; and from Southern Cross they would have to pay, including shunting charges, 73s. 6d. a truck, or 1s. a truck more than we get for the delivery of wood in Kalgoorlie. That is for freight only. It does not matter whether a line is laid down by the company or by the Government, but if the wood is to be obtained, it will be taken from round about such centres as are thrown open, and I contend that as far as the Kurrawang tramway and the Kurrawang Tramway Co. are concerned, only that has been done. Reserves have been made, and the timber has been taken from without those reserves, that is to say the Kurrawang people were allowed to cut timber where there was no reserve. I regret exceedingly that no mention was made with reference to the drainage of the South-West. Promises have been given from time to time that a main drain would be cut to relieve the waters that should flow into the Mandurah Estuary and the Leischenault Estuary. I do not blame this Government, and of course it would be absurd to do so.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: It is in the Loan Bill.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: I am glad to hear it, and I hope the Government will make ample provision so that this drain will for ever relieve the farmers

who have taken up their land on the assurance—and in fact in some cases the drain has been shown on the plan—that the main drain will be made. For years, ever since I have been here, survey parties have off and on been surveying round about this area. Some thousands of pounds have been spent, but the farmer to-day is no nearer being relieved than he was eight years ago. I tried to go through this area some six weeks ago, and I was almost bogged, buggy and horses. Instead of this area, this magnificent soil, in my opinion, being a splendid asset, it is nothing but a quagmire, and instead of its being lined with homesteads and the land being cultivated, there is nothing but water all over the place, and it is difficult to get from one part to another.

A MEMBER: How many acres?

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: I should say it runs 30 miles by eight or 10. I regret the cavalier manner in which the Premier treated the question of fruit importation. No doubt the Premier has good reasons for removing the embargo on the importation of apples; but judging from the manner in which the question has been treated generally, members have not had that experience of the codlin moth which others have had, or they would not talk in such a light tone on the subject. I have had five years of it in Tasmania, and I can assure members that after paying expenses of looking after the orchard, I was out of pocket, and the only thing I could do with the orchard was to pull it up and burn it. It does not matter whether you work your orchard or not, you have to pay the State for inspection.

MR. MOORHEAD: Growers in Tasmania are exporting apples to London.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: That is so. It is contended, and fairly contended, that Tasmania can produce apples and export them; but if you go to Tasmania and see how the orchardist lives, you will ascertain that it is a bare existence, and that instead of a man getting 100 per cent. or 90 per cent. for his apples, which would be a fair thing, he gets from 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. I could give you an instance of a relation of mine in Victoria, who employs a man and two boys, one of the latter being 18 years of age and the other 20, to work that orchard,

and he took £80 a year in relation to the orchard worked by that man and two boys. Is that a fair thing? Instead of that, without the codlin moth he would easily have taken off £250.

MR. MOORHEAD: What about the consumer.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: I am not here to advocate that there should be exorbitant prices paid by the consumer, but whatever is done, let the codlin moth be kept out, and I think that with proper inspection the codlin moth can be kept out. I say farther, if it be found that the cost to the consumer is too great, let the State and not the consumer pay the cost of inspection. The House would have overlooked any departure from the lines laid down by the Ministers, that they are not going to expend any money unless Parliament sanctions it. With reference to the rabbits, it is such a very important question that the Government might have used one of those forms—I forget what it is called. [MEMBERS: Form "J."] I think they might have incurred expenditure to the extent of £20,000 or £30,000 to combat the pest.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The authorisation was passed four years ago, but the Minister neglected to carry out the work.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: Then he wants "a doing." I dare say many members have seen the devastation wrought by rabbits, and one cannot realise it unless he has seen it for himself. It will be found here, as in the Eastern States, that the occupier of the small holding will be able to deal with the rabbit question much better than the occupier of a large one, and I am of opinion you will find that instead of one fence being erected, you will have to erect two parallel fences about five chains apart, with a cross fence every 20 chains, and an inspector to ride up and down for 50 miles. It means a big expense; but £150,000 or £200,000 spent now will be better than a million or a million and a-half spent a few years hence. I wish the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James) were in his place at present, because I want to take him to task for arrogating to himself, as I think he did, the post of master of ceremonies in this House, by saying on which side members should sit and where they should not sit. I claim that I have

as much right as the member for East Perth to choose the side on which I shall sit, without his taking on himself to say I must go over there or stop here.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Rub it in.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: The Premier has said he will not and does not want our support.

THE PREMIER: When did I say that?

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: The other night. The Premier said he did not want my support. Now he has got to have my support, because I am going to support him as far as I can. (General laughter.)

MR. T. F. QUINLAN (Toodyay): Reference was made by the Colonial Treasurer to the fact, as stated by him, that he was unaware as to the position members occupied in this House; in other words, that he could only find a majority in front of the present Government, and failed to find an Opposition. I have no hesitation in saying I am an Oppositionist in the extreme; and while I have a friendly regard towards the members of the present Government, yet on political matters I am sure they will agree to differ with me. I intend to support them, although an Oppositionist, in anything I consider to be for the well-being of this country; but I at once declare that I resent the attitude the Premier took the other evening, when he addressed hon. members, alluding particularly to members on this (Opposition) side, by telling us he did not want our support, and that we had been blind followers of the past Government. Although the Premier made those references to this side of the House in particular, I remember that when he sat on this side as leader of the Opposition he professed to believe in the existence of a healthy Opposition. I hope he still retains that opinion, and he may then realise that it may be to the interest of the Government and to the best interest of the country that there should be a healthy Opposition. When the Premier had spoken in that manner regarding members on the Opposition side, he also said that if the Opposition would not move a vote of no-confidence in the Government, he would ask some member on his side to move a vote of confidence in himself. I now ask the Premier, in reply to his

challenge, to do so. Let him get someone to move that motion.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: He is not "game" enough.

MR. QUINLAN: I am prepared to give reasonable support to the present Government; I believe also we should give them a fair trial; and if they are found to be worthy of the confidence of the people, although I sit on the Opposition side, I shall endeavour to do as they professed to do in the past, that is I shall criticise their measures, and will also give them a fair support when I think it is due. I agree with the reference made in the Speech to the death of Her Majesty the Queen, and to the accession of King Edward VII.; and also I agree with the references made to the forthcoming visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall. I mention this for the reason that I have been said to be a pro-Boer. On what grounds that is said I cannot understand; for I am just as loyal as any member in this State or in Australasia to the throne and the person of the Sovereign, but I am not one who panders to any party or to any person. I believe in being loyal in every sense; but I must express my opinion with regard to the expenditure which is intended to be made of £25,000 in connection with celebrating the visit of their Royal Highnesses. I do not think we are justified, seeing that the Government contend they have an empty Treasury, in spending £25,000 on temporary structures, when the Government might have done something of a permanent nature to signalise this visit by erecting a hospital for children or a new asylum. As to wasting £25,000 on frivolity, I am not in accord with that. We have men in the railway department who are now asking for an increase of a shilling a day in wages; and we are told the Government have not the means to pay it, or that the men shall not get it. So far as my sympathies are concerned, they are with the men; and though I think the men are somewhat to blame for their attitude, that there is blame on both sides, yet I also think that if more tact had been used by the Government, they might have settled this difficulty some days ago. I am sorry indeed to have to refer to the loss we have sustained in the death of our late and esteemed friend, Mr. Alexander

Forrest. I shall also refer to one gentleman who was formerly a member of this House, who has not been mentioned in the whole of this debate; and it is just to him at least to express some slight recognition of the loss which has been sustained not only in this House, but throughout this State, by his untimely death. I refer to the late Mr. Vosper, who did more for the cause of Labour in this State than any other man has done; and yet not one member of this House has thought fit to express any reference to him. With regard to paragraph 8 in the Speech, I am in accord with the Government so far as that they propose a rearrangement of the public departments, and to ensure better administration. That has been needed at all times, not only during the period of responsible government, but long before that. No one is better acquainted than I am, for my age, in regard to the necessity for a better administration of the civil service in this country; and I hope the present Government will carry out their reforms by extending the hours of labour for civil servants to 5 o'clock in the day, instead of having an army of men coming out like a swarm of bees at 4 o'clock. I regret that it is apparently proposed by the Government to put a full stop to the policy of public works in this State; in other words, they do not propose the construction of any new works, but intend to carry out those that were commenced but left unfinished by the late Government. It is right, of course, that works which have been sanctioned by Parliament should be carried out. With reference to the railways, while I may congratulate the Minister for Works and the Commissioner of Railways, who are both personal friends, and for whom I have a great admiration, believing they are first-class men for the positions, yet I recognise that the day is coming when we should have the railways placed under the management of a Commissioner or Commissioners who shall be outside of political influence, because I believe we should in that way get better results, and there would not be that pressure brought to bear which we know has operated in the past, for putting persons into the service or promoting by favour. So long as the railways of a State are managed by any person who is elected by the

people, the same practice is likely to continue, no matter who that person may be. As to the new Minister for Lands (Hon. C. Sommers) taking his seat in the Upper House and being more in touch there with the majority of members representing the interests in land, I disagree with that; for however competent that gentleman may be as a business man, yet I say emphatically there is no truth whatever in the statement that members of the Upper House are more in touch with the interests connected with land than are members in this House. Therefore although I personally know the gentleman who occupies that position, yet I regret to say I know so much of him that I am convinced he is not the person who can properly represent land in this country.

MR. HOPKINS: You don't know him.

MR. QUINLAN: I do know him, and I know also that the new Ministry are composed of goldfields representatives to the extent of two-thirds. I also know the new Minister for Lands better than the member for Boulder knows him. With regard to the incursion of rabbits, I agree entirely with the action proposed by the Government, and I regard it somewhat as a reflection on myself and the late Government that they did not take steps to provide some remedy for keeping back the rabbits. I did urge it on the former Premier, Sir John Forrest, but he did not seem to realise the danger that threatened us. However, I wish to give my hearty support now to the measure proposed by the Government, especially if it takes the form recommended by the Rabbit Commission in their report. With regard to the introduction of apples, I represent a district which is probably the most prominent for the production of apples and products of that nature; and I am bound to do all that is possible to prevent the likelihood of the codlin moth being introduced into this State. As the Government have deemed fit to remove the prohibition and make new regulations for inspection, I hope they will see those regulations strictly carried out; because the danger is well known to all members present. I have visited Tasmania, and have there seen the great devastation which follows the introduction of this pest. It has been urged within the last few days that

there is not more danger of the admission of the codlin moth, when inspection is properly carried out, than there was in regard to the introduction of tick in cattle from one part of the State to another; but I say that while there is danger in both instances, yet in regard to removing the restrictions on cattle and taking the risk as to spreading the tick, we were serving an industry in our own State, and were justified in running some risk in order to supply the people with fresh meat which was so much needed. I am entirely in accord with the member for Claremont (Mr. Sayer) in regard to the better drafting of Bills which are to be brought before this House. The practice hitherto obtaining here does not do credit to the past administration; and the time has come when we should remedy that state of things. I am glad the Premier, who is a trained man in this regard, has seen fit to take some action. It is necessary that Bills should be better drafted, for they are often thrown before members at a day's notice, and most of us are not lawyers; so that it is very difficult at times to grasp the real meaning of the provisions contained in the clauses of a Bill. Altogether this is one of the most useful steps that can be taken, and I believe it is through the instrumentality of the member for Claremont that this change is being introduced.

MR. GEORGE: Another leaf out of the book of the old Government!

MR. QUINLAN: Reference is also made to a Public Service Board. I remember at the time when the existing Act was before the House as a Bill, it was characterised by Mr. Moorhead, the member for some part of the Murchison, as a farce. And it has proved to be a farce. I trust that in the new measure to be introduced provision will be made for a board independent of and outside members altogether, and to be paid men. Farther, no one in any way connected with the civil service should be appointed to that board. While I must pay the respect that is due to the Under-Secretaries who are supposed to administer the departments at the present time—I know them all, and I have the greatest confidence in them—still I consider their training is not such as to qualify them for the proper administration of the civil service. Those gentlemen have

been trained in a particular line which has not given them the commercial experience necessary for the successful administration of the service. Go to any private firm, or to any man who has to earn his living out of the people he employs, and you will find that his methods are very different from those, for instance, adopted in making appointments to the public service. At the present time, if you are a person of influence and want to get some one into the Government service, you can get him in: it does not matter whether he has brains or not, he is bound to "get there." Poor persons have no chance whatever: there never has been an opportunity given to the poorer classes of the community to enter the Government service.

A MEMBER: The new Ministry are altering all that.

MR. QUINLAN: The new Ministry have done nothing yet, and I have grave doubts as to their doing all they promise. As for plural voting and redistribution of seats, I agree with these proposals; but I feel pretty certain the redistribution of seats is not a matter likely to be taken in hand. No one knows this better than the members of the present Government. They are not going to introduce all those things which the Address-in-reply contains. The abolition of plural voting and the redistribution of seats constitute one of the matters that cannot be dealt with this session; and I question very much whether the Government intend to deal with it this session. I have said both these matters have my approval; but, at the same time, the Government will not get redistribution of seats on the terms they propose. There are other interests in the country to be considered besides those of the mining industry, I may remind Ministers; and although the population may not be the same in every district of the State, still we must have regard to the question of the permanency of the various populations. We have had proof of the shifting nature of the goldfields communities in the past. We know there was once a place called Kanowna where they had some 10,000 people—for just about a week or two; but most of those 10,000 people had gone somewhere else in the following week or two. In view of such cases as this, the Government will not, I

hope, fail to realise, if they do attempt to introduce a redistribution of seats measure, that there are in this community interests which existed before ever gold-mining was dreamt of, before the goldfields were ever thought of. As to the Electoral Act, I wish to refer to a case lately before the court—that of the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Johnson). I hope we shall not have a repetition of that kind of thing. It is disastrous that the law in this respect should be so vague as to allow a man to be pestered in such a way, to be worried by any person, be he what he will. And this is quite apart from any consideration of expense. I hope a continuance of this kind of thing will not be tolerated when the measure comes before this House. As for the Midland Railway Company's lands, I join in the opinion of all other members—I have not heard an expression of opinion to the contrary—that the sooner these lands are acquired by the State the better for all concerned. But I will go even farther. I shall be prepared to support a measure for the purchase of that land by the State, even if we have to pay one hundred or two hundred thousand pounds more than it is worth, in order to secure the land and terminate the concession. In connection with this matter, I have to express my regret that my friend the Colonial Treasurer on a certain occasion seems to have forgotten himself. Had he been one of those who imbibe anything in the way of whisky or champagne, I might have forgiven him; but as I know that he drinks nothing stronger than sodawater, I cannot pardon his giving the country away by saying that the value of the Midland concession is £1,350,000, or uttering words to that effect.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I never said anything of the kind.

MR. QUINLAN: It was so reported.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I never said anything of the sort.

MR. QUINLAN: I am not a land agent, and I do not want to make anything out of the purchase of the Midland Company's concession; but I want the country to make something out of it. I do want the country to acquire that concession at a reasonable cost, so that there may be some profit in the transaction. We have it from the late Government

that negotiations have been in progress for some time and that the Midland Company have offered their concession for £1,250,000. We have also heard that negotiations are still going on, and that now the question of a sale at £1,100,000 is between the two parties—or, at any rate, was between them when the late Government was in office. Knowing these facts, are we justified in supporting a Government who send forth a Cabinet Minister to declare that the State will go as far as £1,350,000, at which price we should not obtain value?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I never said that.

MR. QUINLAN: I will forgive the hon. gentleman because he is only new. But don't let it occur again.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: It did not occur then.

MR. QUINLAN: That's all very well. Sodawater, go up top.

MR. HOPKINS: You have his absolution: you are all right now.

MR. QUINLAN: I hope, too, that the Government will see fit to make a special provision for the better auditing of our railway concerns. I am entirely opposed to the present methods, and I hope and trust that the Premier will make a note of this; for I believe that with closer supervision we should get better value for our money, and altogether a better system will prevail. Of course, this is only the opinion of an humble outsider; but I have had some training in business, and I venture to say that if I had the control of that department a very considerable number of those officers who are now occupied in tying red-tape round bundles of papers would be dispensed with. I went down to the Perth railway station recently at 8 o'clock in the morning, and had to wait an hour to get my business attended to—it was to load some horses—notwithstanding the fact that I had given notice the day before that I would require a truck. I went there and found the officials standing about doing nothing. The railways are over-manned: the employees are falling over one another in the department. I say, get rid of all these ceremonial functions, of all this red-tape about papers having to be signed and forms to be filled up. Do as you would if you

had a commercial training, and dispense with half the officers.

A MEMBER: Start at the top.

MR. QUINLAN: Yes; start at the top, and cut down some of those big fat salaries: never mind the working class. I desire to draw the attention of the Government to one matter which I say ought to be dealt with, for which special provision ought to be made in the future. In the past it has not been the custom to do what I am about to suggest; but I think the suggestion is a good one. In my opinion, at any rate, it is a first-class one. The suggestion is that so soon as the way is clear the Government should adopt a new method in respect of revenue. Instead of treating the proceeds of the sale of land as revenue, those moneys should be devoted to their sole proper purpose—they should pass through the channels of the Agricultural Bank. We should never part with the capital or assets of the country; and we are doing this in improperly using moneys which are the proceeds of the sale of our capital, that is to say our land. We have hitherto called that money revenue, and used it as such.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Hear, hear. We argued for that years ago.

MR. QUINLAN: I never heard it mentioned before.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: Oh, yes.

MR. QUINLAN: Well, the present Colonial Treasurer did mention a few years ago that the proceeds of land sales should be kept separate; he mentioned that these moneys should not be used as revenue. In that I entirely concur. For take the case of a person who has 100 acres of freehold property, or say 1,000 acres of freehold, and he says to himself, "To provide for my family I will sell 10 acres (or 100 acres) per annum" (as the case may be): at the end of 10 years that man's capital has been dispersed—his assets are gone.

MR. HOPKINS: It is not so with the State; the State still has its powers of taxation.

MR. QUINLAN: Don't be so bold, even if you are "Boulder." I know something about land business. If, as we suppose, the man part with 10 acres or 100 acres yearly, as the case may be, for 10 years, at the end of the 10 years he will have no capital left; and the man

and his wife and family must starve. The case is similar with the State; it is the same with the State as with a private individual. You should never part with your assets: always have them in land or in money. Therefore, I say, let the proceeds from the sale of Crown lands pass through the Agricultural Bank. Then you will have the means of providing funds for that bank, and, I may observe, will not find it necessary to borrow money from the Savings Bank.

MR. HOPKINS: Your arguments are all right enough, but the cases are not similar.

MR. QUINLAN: The member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) referred to the expenditure on the coast, and remarked how great it was compared with that on the goldfields. Well, I could scarcely think he was in earnest in making that statement, and I hope he will pardon me if I contradict it—which I do now, respectfully.

MR. HASTIE: There has been a very liberal expenditure on the coast.

MR. QUINLAN: I beg to give that assertion a most emphatic denial. Money has been spent on the goldfields by thousands; it has been lavished there.

MR. HASTIE: Where?

MR. QUINLAN: I know where it is; I have been there. They do not need to go down the mines for money. I know the miner has been taking money from the State and spending it on the goldfields. And yet representatives of the mining community come here and tell us that nothing has been spent on the goldfields, and that everything has been spent on the coast. Now, the least I can say is that our friends from the fields show black ingratitude in making such a statement. I rose, not with the intention of delaying the House for an hour or more, but because I felt that I would be justified in saying a few words, seeing that I have been waiting some days for the younger members to get up and relieve their chests. I have only one other point to make. I do trust that this will be the last occasion on which we shall hear anything of the "old Government." That expression is not appropriate now. It has been continually said since the Address-in-reply was moved in this House, that we on this side are the old Government. I ask hon. members to dismiss that idea

from their minds at once. I was not one of the old Government.

A MEMBER: The "brutal majority."

MR. QUINLAN: I never got any thousands a year for my services; I gave my services, as I give them now, as my friends here also give theirs, voluntarily and freely. Therefore, we on this side do not want to be designated as the old Government. I was never in the old Cabinet; but I say to hon. members opposite, "If you do not behave yourselves, we shall be over there before long."

At 6-27 o'clock, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

RAILWAY WORKERS' STRIKE.

REQUEST BY THE PREMIER.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): Before the debate is resumed on the motion before the House, I desire as a matter of urgency to suggest that the debate on the Address-in-reply should be concluded as quickly as possible, with the intention that I may move to suspend the Standing Orders and submit to the House a motion dealing with the question of the strike. I desire to say I regret exceedingly, owing to the procedure, that we were unable to discuss the matter this afternoon; and matters have reached such a climax that I deem it in the interests of the country to be my duty to ask the House to consider this matter before everything else. Consequently I make this announcement to the House, that if hon. members insist on speaking they should cut their remarks as short as possible, so that I may ask the opinion of the House on the question of this unfortunate matter.

MR. C. HARPER: It comes rather hard on us, I think, that the Premier should ask us to curtail whatever we may have to say on this subject, in the interests of the Government, because we have not put the Government in the position they are in.

THE PREMIER: May I rise in explanation? I am perfectly willing, if the rules of the House will allow it, that the debate on the Address-in-reply be adjourned in order that this matter be considered; but I understand that on account of the

Standing Orders, such course cannot be taken. I certainly agree to it, if the Speaker thinks it can be done.

THE SPEAKER: The Standing Orders provide that no business, except formal matters, can be transacted until the Address-in-reply has been agreed to.

MR. HARPER: I should be glad if the debate could be postponed; but the ruling of the Speaker is that we cannot do it under the Standing Orders of the House.

THE SPEAKER: I may say that the Address-in-reply not being concluded, many important matters are hung up.

MR. HARPER: We do not take the responsibility of that. We have a right to express our ideas, our wishes and thoughts on the Address-in-reply; and as we shall have no other opportunity of doing so, therefore I do not think it is right we should curtail our remarks because of the difficulty the Government are in.

THE PREMIER: The Government are in no difficulty. The country is in the difficulty.

MR. F. CONNOR: Through the Government.

ADDRESS—DEBATE RESUMED.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): I proceed now to speak on the Address-in-reply. From the various speeches which have fallen from the Ministerial benches, in fact from all the members on the Ministerial side, it appears to me the Ministry do not quite know how they got into the difficulty.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. HARPER: They do not quite know how it is they should be on the Treasury benches, and I thought I might enlighten members on that point. When the last Parliament was over, in fact before, many of us on the Government side of the House were more or less discontented with the action of the late Premier; and as this feeling had existed for at least twelve months, I had no hesitation in expressing myself in that direction in the House. I even went so far as to vote against the Ministry on one occasion on a motion of want of confidence. I felt, and a great many in the country felt with me, that to a great extent the country was made to suffer for the ambition of politicians. I made up my mind as far as I could that I should

prevent that party, or the remains of that party, from taking office again. What the hon. members opposite seem to be rather puzzled about is why the discontented supporters of the policy of the old party should not have joined the then Opposition. I think it is a very great difference between expressing one's disapproval of one man and approval of another. I disapproved of many of the actions of the late Premier, and I also disapproved of a great deal of the policy of the late Opposition. I did not feel justified because of the opposition of one or two men on my side that I should join the other side. Therefore I maintained my position as belonging to what I consider to a large extent the party representing the solid interests of the country—the older solid interests—and I have seen no reason to alter my opinion. I asked myself this question: What have the Ministry done while in Opposition to gain the confidence of the agricultural community? As far as the present Premier goes, he has often treated us with some interesting, well I will not say "interesting," but encouraging platitudes; but, as far as doing anything for the agricultural interests, I am at a loss to find anything. I regret, too, that the Minister without a portfolio, the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James), as far as I know and as far as I have been able to glean, has looked on the agricultural industry generally with a considerable amount of contempt. He was the gentleman who, at the first Federal Convention, appeared as if he was going to be the champion of the agricultural interests of the country, and he made a warm and earnest speech in support of the interests of that particular class of the community. Subsequently he changed his views altogether, and when the agricultural community, or some of the agriculturists took him to task, and accused him of turning on them, he made use of that memorable phrase that if the agriculturist did not agree with his views he had the soul of a potato and the stomach of a pig. I may say also that, so far as I know and have been able to glean, the agricultural community have very little confidence in the Colonial Treasurer (Hon. F. Mlingworth). He has, on several occasions, been conspicuous for indiscreet utterances;

and one of the things he said the other day—I do not know whether with the idea of encouraging the agricultural community—was that if he could buy the Midland concessions, he would sell the land at a higher price than had been charged to anyone else in the country. That does not look as if we should have much hope of getting on the land. The various members on the Government side of the House who touched upon matters pertaining to agriculture have given us more or less vague ideas of what they would do to assist the agricultural industry; for it is generally agreed that something should be done for agriculture. The member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner) suggested that the Government should ascertain from the farmers what labour they wanted, and how long they could keep it employed; and that the Government should then import such labour from abroad. That does not appear to me to be very practical: I do not think it likely to be ever carried out. The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) also had a little to say, and suggested that the farmer should do something in the way of starting another business: that, not having enough to do at his own business, he should become a vendor of his goods.

MR. OATS: And have no middleman.

MR. HOPKINS: You are making a mistake, I think.

MR. HARPER: I do not think so. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), however, gave us some very interesting statements as to what he would do in the way of developing agriculture. For one thing, he would recommend that higher wages be paid. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I am glad to hear that. I shall presently return to his remarks. The member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson), who, I am sorry to see, is not present—[A MEMBER: He is here!—I am glad to hear it—he delivered a homily as to why we agricultural members should be sitting on this (Opposition) side of the House. Of course, one does not take much notice of such utterances from new members, because they are generally made by new members. But he pointed out, although he made a slight mistake in so doing, that he was the only member on that (Government) side of the House representing an agricultural community. There is an old saying which he evidently

did not remember at the time, that "one swallow does not make a summer." One agricultural member on the Government side of the House may, by-and-by, have much more difficulty in justifying his support of the Government than he has in blaming us for not being on his side. Amongst these various views of members on the Government side, there is not the faintest hope foreshadowed of any assistance whatever to the important industry of agriculture. The miner, the artisan, and the town labourer desire to do—what? To assist agriculture. The way in which they propose to do it is to raise the price of labour in the towns and in the mines, and to reduce the value of it in the country. That is what they desire, from start to finish.

MR. HOPKINS: To break up the rings is what we want to do.

MR. HARPER: "A fair day's pay for a fair day's work;" that is what the member for Subiaco said was the desire of his party. That is a very good thing, so long as men can get it all round. (MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.) The principle of unionism, as far as I have been able to glean, is that a man shall not use more than half his capacity in the day, and that he shall get a full day's pay for that. (SEVERAL MEMBERS: Oh!) I am glad to hear the objection; because if the hon. members interjecting know anything of the laws and rules of unionism, they know that, wherever you can ascertain them, the principle to which I have referred will be found.

(A MEMBER: What is your authority?) I will give you my authority. By what is called the London rule, a bricklayer at some kinds of work can lay 1,200 bricks a day; but at ordinary work he can easily lay, on the average, 750. The union rules, however, step in and absolutely fix the day's work as not to exceed 500. A similar fact was realised two or three years ago, during the engineering strike in England. It came out most distinctly when the master machinists had to put boys and other unskilled labour on work which had previously been done by union men. They found that in the case of the drilling machine, while the union would not allow men to bore more than, I think, 10 feet in a day with one machine, boys and unskilled labourers could do double that amount of work.

That is the principle of unionism. I do not say it is not right; I think it is a very good principle; but I say it should be applied all round.

MR. DAGLISH: What is your authority for that statement?

MR. HARPER: I thought the hon. member and his party knew so much about unionism that they would have all those rules at their fingers' ends.

MR. DAGLISH: That is not one of our rules, you know.

MR. HARPER: The member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins) has given notice of a motion for a select committee to inquire how people can be supplied with an abundance of meat at a reasonable price. I think the hon. member has the distinction of representing a city in which, a year or so ago—at any rate, this has been stated publicly, and never denied—a baker started to reduce the price of bread to 6d., and he had notice that he would not be allowed to do so, and that he must put it up to 8d. But I want to know why the hon. member did not add some other things to the programme of the select committee of inquiry. For instance, they might inquire why we cannot get a full supply of bread at the cheapest possible rate.

MR. HOPKINS: We will deal with that later on.

MR. HARPER: And whisky.

MR. HOPKINS: We do not want that: that is a luxury.

MR. HARPER: I believe bread, meat, and whisky are the three principal things required in the hon. member's city.

MR. HOPKINS: It has altered since you left.

MR. HARPER: I dare say; but the hon. member has many friends in that city who are interested in the sale of bread and whisky; and it is only fair that the general community should have an opportunity of pointing out how these products might be reduced in price.

MR. HOPKINS: Well, move for a select committee to inquire into it.

MR. HARPER: If the hon. member will add those articles to his motion I shall be most happy to assist him. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) made one statement which I think is rather startling. He said with regard to the fruit industry that in his locality, I understood, he often saw children evi-

dently suffering from the lack of fruit acids; and for that reason he would be quite prepared to see any amount of injury done to any industry: that was the most important thing required, at all events as far as his observation went.

MR. DAGLISH: That is not correct.

MR. HARPER: I can refer to *Hansard*, which will bear me out, that the hon. member would be prepared to sacrifice any industry which stood in the way of building up a strong human being. I think those were something like the words he used; and he specified the necessity of fruit acids for children. Well, from that one might suppose that the apple was the only production of nature which had in it any fruit acid. However, to show how deeply the hon. member studies these matters, I wish to put before the House what the industry really is which he said he would be prepared to sacrifice. Years ago, when this matter of fruit came up, many of us realised that this country had not a great many opportunities for developing an export trade; that we had not the vast prairie areas which many countries possess, or large fertile plains for wheat growing; and that we should therefore have to make the best of what we had. And we realised that, if an export fruit business could be established and maintained, there was a splendid opening. I think it was about 1889 that the regulations, which have lately been so much under discussion, were recommended, and passed by the Government of the day; and I wish to point out the reasons why many of us urged that this was a matter of great moment, and why, up till to-day, we maintain the same contention. We took the example of California, as being one of the leading gold countries in the world, and the leading fruit-producing country. [A MEMBER: Afterwards.] I find that the total gold yield of California, in its best year, which was 1852, was 17 millions sterling. That fell in 1892 to two and a-half millions; it rose to three and a-quarter millions in 1897, and has been declining ever since.

MR. OATS: At first, it was alluvial—surface gold.

MR. DOHERTY: It was gold, all the same.

MR. HARPER: The fruit exported by California, exclusive of local consumption and fruits used in making wine and

brandy, had a value in 1891 of 3 millions sterling. In 1900, the export, exclusive of the local requirements of 1½ millions of people, was 8 millions sterling. So here we have one of the leading gold countries of the world, at one time exporting gold to the value of 17 millions a year; but its gold production has fallen, and the fruit has overtaken it long ago. Take the last ten years as a standard.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Have they any prohibitive regulations?

MR. HARPER: Yes; ours are taken from theirs. They are almost the same. California's gold production for the ten years ending 1899 was, in round numbers, 28 millions sterling. The fruit export in the same time was 52 millions. The yield of gold includes everything, and represents the total production; but my figures in regard to fruit exclude that consumed locally and used for wine and brandy. The total production of gold in California has been 274 millions sterling. I have not the total export of fruit; but if it has not overtaken the gold export, it very soon will. The production of gold is diminishing; but that of fruit is increasing, and will probably continue as long as the earth endures. That is the point I have always maintained: we should work with all our energy to take advantage of the brilliant future which can be secured for the fruit industry. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Long after our friends here have passed from view or have embraced some other scope for their energies, the producer on the soil, if protected, will have established a large industry in which tens of thousands of people will be employed, when the goldfields will have lapsed. Incidentally, I would suggest that if the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) asked a medical gentleman, that gentleman would tell him perhaps that for one child who suffers from the lack of fruit, twenty or thirty suffer from too much.

MR. DAGLISH: I went to a member on the other side.

MR. HARPER: Perhaps the hon. member did not go to the right one.

MR. D. J. DOHERTY: He did not go with a fee in his hand.

MR. OATS: No.

MR. HARPER: The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) said to his own (Government) side that he was much

disappointed the Government had done nothing to knock out the food duties. He wanted the price of food to be lower.

MR. OATS: I should think so.

MR. HARPER: He wants wages raised, the time of labour shortened, and food cheaper. That may sound very well from one point of view, but those members who represent labour should not represent it in one section only, but if they would represent the spirit of labour, it should be all labour. They expect the country man to produce their food at far below a living wage. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] They ask that the town man or mining man shall work his eight hours and shall not use his full capacity, but that the agricultural labourer shall work the whole day, his 12 or 14 hours, and get a minimum return.

A MEMBER (Opposition): I do not.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: That is the result of the policy you advocate.

MR. HARPER: I am not accusing them individually, but it is the spirit of the age. Let members take the policy desired—a rise of wages, shortened hours, and cheapened food. Let any of them ask himself what prospects there are for a young man; what are the openings for him?

A MEMBER: He might mine.

MR. HARPER: Yes; he might, but I understand the mines are already supplied with all the labour they need, and that there are many men without employment. It appears to me there will be only a few industries left, if that policy be carried out; namely the mining, the timber industry, Government railways, and the unemployed. These are the four industries left.

MR. HOPKINS: What about the middle-man?

MR. HARPER: As for a man going on the land, it is absolutely absurd. It would be a good thing if all those members who talk so much about agriculture and know so little of it, did 12 months' work on a farm, and then they would know something about it.

MR. HOPKINS: They would get better results. My experience was on a farm, not in an orchard.

MR. JACOBY: It was too hard work for you.

MR. HARPER: With regard to mining, I would like to point out that,

as I have already said, the mines, apparently, have as much labour as they require. I do not know what developments may take place, but from what we are told we cannot get many more people into the mines unless you extend your railways.

MR. HOPKINS: There are the preferential rates.

MR. HARPER: I will touch on preferential rates, but here is the point. It is well known in transport science that, if you raise rates, you stop traffic.

MR. HOPKINS: Reduce the number of trains.

MR. HARPER: Would you be able to extend the railways if they were not paying sufficient to meet the upkeep? Because whether you run trains or not the staff has to be kept. If the hon. member studies railways a bit more, as well as farming, he will know more about the subject.

MR. DOHERTY: He might be a porter on the railways.

ANOTHER MEMBER: A sub-porter.

MR. HARPER: What I have said with regard to the policy of making labour easier in towns and reducing its value on the land is not peculiar to West Australia, but the system exists all the world over, and that is the cause of men leaving the land. That exists not only here but everywhere else, and it is due to the organisation of labour. People do not seem to realise that, if you pay high wages now, you are raising the cost of living. You must do so. For instance, the price of a building in London to-day is just double what it was fifteen years ago. The same thing applies here; I do not know to what extent, but it must be so. Every time you raise the price of a brick, you increase the price of a building, and at the same time you are reducing the value of the man on the land, who consequently says, "I cannot live in competition with those men."

MR. HOPKINS: They would have to make bricks.

MR. HARPER: Yes; make bricks. Men leave the land and then people in the city say "Why do they not go on the land and work?" but they take good care not to go on the land themselves.

MR. DAGLISH: That is why California is so costly.

MR. HARPER: California is in a different position. The people there found that wheat did not pay, and they turned to fruit. My friend says this fruit industry is not worth considering. Hon. members talk about supply and demand, but that is the very thing unionism condemns and will have nothing to do with. There is an old British saying that competition is the soul of trade; but that is entirely exploded. There must be no competition. If you inquire into the spread of unionism, you will find it has extended to one of the most powerful organisations in the world, namely the shipping industry, for I understand that the large steamship companies of the world are uniting in their system of trade, and it is a simple thing, when you come to look at it. It does not matter what the product is, if they see that one country is making a good deal of profit on the article which they carry, they raise the prices, not because they cannot carry cheaper, but they say, "Now we are united, we fix the price, and no one will carry for less: you cannot get it carried for less." Therefore the whole thing works in a circle in that way. Every attempt made to lighten labour has had its effect upon the cost of living, and it does not matter what you do you cannot get away from that fact. One member said something about rings just now. These combinations are rings when they consist of capitalists, but I contend that the greatest ring of all is the ring of unionists, and members who represent labour cannot with any degree of logic condemn that of which they have set the example. I do not blame them, but that is the principle. The principle is that of a combination of men to get the utmost they can, and to sell what they produce at the highest price; and what I assert is that they must not blame other people for doing the same thing. Let me suggest to my Labour friends over there to try to form a union amongst the men who do not employ labour but carry out the whole of the work themselves. Why not get these men to unite and say, "The value of our labour is as much as the value of that of men in the towns."

MR. GEORGE: Why should they not?

MR. HARPER: I shall be glad to assist the hon. member all I can to do that; and the result would be that men would say, "The value of the product of our labour

will necessitate perhaps doubling the price of flour and very many other things, and we shall call upon you to organise and prevent anyone selling under those values."

MR. HOPKINS: That is only a supposition.

MR. HARPER: That would be a fair way of meeting the difficulty, if the spirit of unionism and the protection of labour are to go all round.

MR. DGLISH: You want to abolish that, and get your good prices.

MR. HARPER: I am speaking of the man who works on the land and does not make four or five shillings a day.

MR. DGLISH: He sells to the middleman.

MR. HARPER: Then you could extend the influence of unionism and say, "You can sell direct to us." That will give you a fine market, and if you guarantee to double his profit, so that he shall get a fair wage, it will be the best possible means of putting men on the land, and keeping them there. People are always talking about putting men on the land; but where are you to get the men from, and how are you going to keep them there? There is one simple means of doing it, and that is by ensuring that a man gets a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. And it should be within the power of this House to suggest a means by which this could be done.

A MEMBER: Teach them their business.

MR. HARPER: There is another point. Perhaps it is rather trite, but to me it appears very important. The whole of the labour people and a great many others in this State lately gave a vote in favour of free-trade. I do not know whether members grasp what that means in the long run. The realisation of free-trade, which is obviously coming about, means that in the course of a few years the Chinaman will be able to undersell Newcastle coal in Sydney, and machinery of any kind also. I dare say some hon. members will scoff at this, but perhaps they do not read. Only just before — [MR. HOPKINS: We are not afraid of the inferior nations, anyway] — the outbreak of the rebellion in China the Chinese Government were making their own engines — [MR. HOPKINS: Importing them, you mean] — for their rail-

ways at 25 per cent. less cost than they could import them for from the cheapest manufacturers in Europe and America. An enormously wealthy syndicate has now acquired some of the richest coal and iron mines in the world close by the Yang-tsi-Kiang River, and has established enormous ironworks there. This syndicate will be in a position to dominate the whole of the Eastern part of the world with its output. There is no place in the world where you can get material more cheaply, and hon. members know that in no part of the world can you get cheaper labour than in China. Nowhere will you find more industrious people. The syndicate I speak of is a rather remarkable one. There appears to have been a concession granted by the Chinese Government on a very interesting basis. The Government, I understand, are paying the manager of this enormous concern at the rate of £12,000 a year.

MR. HOPKINS: Good gracious! I shall go there.

MR. HARPER: All the heads of the branches are engaged, the various works are all plotted out, and the necessary buildings are in course of erection. The heads, like the manager, are paid very high salaries. The engagements of the manager and the heads are for a limited number of years—ten or twelve years. By that time the Chinaman reckons he will know all about the business, and then he will pension off the whole of the managing staff: that is provided for in their agreements. The man with £12,000 a year will retire on a pension of £5,000 a year, and so on right along. Now what will be the position of your miner in Newcastle or your iron-founder in and about Sydney, when the influence of that is brought home to him?

MR. HOPKINS: The person who would be most interested in a discussion of that is Mr. George Reid.

MR. HARPER: The hon. and brilliant member for Boulder may scoff, but—

MR. HOPKINS: It is a Commonwealth question: it does not come within the sphere of local politics.

MR. HARPER: The Japanese also are advancing, and even more rapidly. They are now building their own battle-ships, and arming them too. Unless

we are prepared to prohibit—[MR. MOORHEAD: Apples]—goods from these countries, they will take our trade; and you know exactly what will happen then. Just wait for the first man to be discharged from an iron-foundry or a coal-mine because of cheaper material brought in from elsewhere, and you will very soon see plenty of protectionists in Australia. I shall revert for one moment to the question of apples. I am glad to see the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) reminded me of something in regard to it. I will read him a letter on this subject received by a resident of this city from an experienced man, but I dare say the hon. member will remain quite sceptical—he says the fruit industry is nothing. Now, I venture to say that if a process of nature or something else brought about a reduction of 25 or 30 per cent. in legal fees, we should hear something from the legal members.

MR. MOORHEAD: I should not personally object.

MR. HARPER: I am also afraid that there would be a little bit of a row if any process of law or nature brought about a loss, say, of 25 per cent., a loss as low as 25 per cent. and as high as 40 or 50 per cent., on the product of the mines after the gold had been produced. Hon. members from the fields think it is nothing because it is a poor agriculturist's loss; but if the loss affects their own pockets, it is another thing altogether. However, I will just read one or two extracts from—

MR. HASTIE: Take it as read.

MR. HARPER: This is from a fruit-grower in Mount Gambier, where, as I dare say hon. members know, plenty of apples are grown. Writing to a friend in this State he says:—

I notice by the papers that your Government are going to allow apples to be imported into Western Australia, and that the growers are afraid of codlin moth being introduced. Well, I hope for the sake of your orchardists you do not get this fearful pest into your gardens; as we have had all our gardens here visited with it this year, and you, knowing the quantity of apples we used to be blessed with, will be surprised to know that one cannot get an apple fit to eat here now.

MR. HOPKINS: He did not look after his orchard.

MR. OATS: What we want to know is, how can we get apples?

MR. HARPER: Here is an extract from another letter, received from Tasmania. Perhaps certain phrases in this letter will delight some hon. members; but I will read it to show that I am fair:—

If I were a public man in Western Australia I would advocate with all my strength the removal of this cruel embargo, and at the same time take every possible precaution, short of prohibition, to prevent the introduction of codlin moth and other pests.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: What about the restrictions in the new regulations?

MR. HARPER: I will touch on that. The point I take is that I have no objection, looking at it from an agriculturist's point of view, to competition in the sale of apples: I never have had. But as regards any competition which is to cause a loss of from 25 to 50 per cent. and even 60 per cent. in the product of a man's labour, I say it is ridiculous to ask him to encounter it.

MR. HOPKINS: That is only suppositions.

MR. HARPER: The hon. member speaks from his ignorance.

MR. HOPKINS: You are an authority on ignorance. You are an authority on everything.

MR. HARPER: I hope the hon. member will urge the appointing of a select committee which will take evidence and otherwise weigh the matter. It is no use my making these statements: I do not wish to be taken as an authority. I have had no experience of the codlin moth, and I hope that I never shall have any. All I wish to urge is that there is extreme danger of its being introduced, and in support of that view there is this piece of evidence: this is the only country in the world free from it. Get over that as you can.

MR. JACOBY: Why not keep it clean?

MR. HARPER: If you find you can keep it out, I shall be quite in accord with any methods which may be adopted. I say we do not fear competition. What we look at is export. Under these regulations, if they are faithfully carried out—I hope they will be—

MR. HOPKINS: You are an authority on everything.

MR. HARPER: The member for Boulder speaks with a good deal of

ignorance. These regulations have been enforced in respect of all other fruits since 1889, and thousands and thousands of cases of fruit have been brought in under these regulations. The hon. member is absorbed in much higher studies, and of course does not know anything about these things. However, when he does make an assertion it is just as well for him to know what he is talking about.

MR. HOPKINS: I do know what I am talking about.

MR. HARPER: It is not a matter of regulations: it is a matter of administration—that is the whole thing. These things are most difficult to detect, and we know that when you do get a disease into a country it is a little hard to get it out. The point I wish to urge is that this House and this Parliament should make provision, not only by regulations but by being prepared to vote money, should this disease or any other dangerous disease break out here. Money should be provided in such case to stamp out disease at once and compensate the loser. I think that is only fair. If a man suffers for the good of his country, surely he ought to be aided. But that, unfortunately, is not provided for at present. If fruit-growers are willing to accept the position of letting fruit come in under very careful supervision, and if the Government will provide for compensation in the case of an outbreak, I do not think we can do anything better. There is very little doubt that in a very few years the consumers in this country, provided you keep out these pests, will have the best and cheapest supply of fruit in Australasia. Is not that worth waiting for?

MR. HASTIE: How many years?

MR. HARPER: How can I say?

A MEMBER (Opposition): Five years?

MR. HARPER: Hens lay eggs, but they do not all hatch; and so with trees, you may plant them, but you cannot ensure that in every case they will bear. If you look at any country in the temperate latitudes of the whole world, you find that the production of fruit has very soon overtaken the local demand. I would point again to the example of California to show that here we have the possibility of an enormous trade, which may last for generations and generations; and I say it would be criminal to sacrifice that possibility for the sake of the

immediate appetites of those who, perhaps greedily, think they desire something very urgently. I wish to point out that there are many of us from the backwoods who went for many, many a long year without ever seeing an apple; and I do not know that we suffered very much from the deprivation. So I look with not very much sympathy on those who make this outcry. There is another point in it, and that is, if people would not offer such high prices for whisky and other things, and show that they very urgently want them and must have them, why they would get them much cheaper. Anyone who has travelled in the Mediterranean knows that it is a principle of trade there for the vendor to try to get as much as he can. He has no standard rate or price: he starts by asking ten times as much as he will take; that is the custom of his trade. Now, it happens that in this State the retail trade has fallen into the hands of people from the Mediterranean, and they practise just the same system here. If my friend, the gentleman representing Boulder, were to make a resolution to say to the vendors of whisky and cigars —

MR. HOPKINS: We do not buy those things.

A MEMBER: What do you do, then?

MR. HARPER: If he were to say to the vendors of whisky and cigars, that he would not pay the present price of one shilling, then he would very soon get his whisky and his cigars for sixpence. It is just the same with any other luxury.

MR. HASTIE: You would advocate low wages and cheap whisky, then?

MR. HARPER: There is one little extract which I am afraid will interfere perhaps with the good feeling of my friends on the Labour bench; but I am only going to give it now to show what the agricultural community, those who work without any limit of time, receive from the actions or from the position taken up by organised labour. Organised labour says, "We do not care a fig for the country: Labour is the only thing."

MR. HASTIE: Not so.

MR. HARPER: Not so? I was waiting for that. We have it on the records of this House, and I will read it to you. This is the view expressed by the late president of the Trades and Labour

Council. Perhaps the members on the Labour bench will repudiate him; but he says this:—

You will understand that the policy of organised labour in this colony, as in all others, is that every other consideration can stand down. We look at the question from our own points of view as to how it affects us.

MR. HASTIE: Who said so?

MR. HARPER: I believe it was Mr. Diver. Hon. members may look up the report of the select committee on the Commonwealth Bill, and they will find this matter was inquired into; but I understand the Labour members here will repudiate that statement.

MR. HASTIE: Certainly.

MR. HARPER: I understand also that the leaders of Labour outside Parliament repudiate the Labour members who are in Parliament. (General laughter.)

MR. DAGLISH: You go up top, this time.

MR. HARPER: Hon. members are certainly deserving of some sympathy in this House, for the action they took on the question of the strike; and I applaud them for it.

MR. DAGLISH: Your applause will ruin us.

MR. HARPER: The action they took in regard to this unfortunate strike, I am afraid, unless they do something very revolutionary soon, will cause them to be classed as simply ordinary members of Parliament, like the rest of us. However, I hope these members will go on in their good course, because we were not taught to expect such from the actions of the Labour members in Eastern Australia. I only hope the wisdom with which the Labour members here started as legislators will continue. I will not detain hon. members longer. I hope I have not wearied them.

LABOUR MEMBERS: Go on.

MR. HARPER: I will conclude by asking the Premier to accept the position. He said he would not retain his seat as a compliment, that he would find out some way of testing the matter, and I think he suggested that a motion might be moved expressing confidence in the Ministry; but I suggest that is not a wise thing. It might not be very dramatic in its results, because if such a thing were proposed I should advise members on the Opposition side to leave the Chamber, and the

Government would have it all to themselves in the division. I ask the Premier to accept the assurance of the Opposition side that we wish to give him a fair trial.

THE PREMIER: I accept it willingly.

MR. HARPER: Supposing the members on this side had been on the Treasury benches during the present strike, would the Government have had the support that the Opposition are giving here, judging by the past action of those now on the Government side? I say not; therefore the country has had an enormous gain in putting the present Government into a position of responsibility, where they will learn what responsibility means. The occupants of the Treasury benches have been a long time wishing to get to the Treasury benches; and now they have got there, I do hope the Premier will restrain his team a little.

MR. HOPKINS: Go slow.

MR. HARPER: The hon. member (Mr. Hopkins) no doubt thought I was going to say something about him. I think the position taken up by the hon. member for Boulder has been that of bludgeon carrier to the Ministry. He ought to be sure of rising out of his latitude here. I was going to refer to the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James), who is a keen partisan, although he repudiates party government, or used to. He seldom gets up without rating somebody. It would be wise if he were kept in leash by the Premier. If he does that, and the members on the Government side work together, they may keep their seats a little longer. I must thank hon. members for the patient hearing they have given me, and I hope I have not trespassed too long. (General applause.)

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): Speaking from the cool shades of Opposition for the first time in my experience of parliamentary life, I do not feel a little bit in the cold. I rather appreciate the position of being here to reply, and hand back, to some of the gentlemen sitting on the Treasury benches, some of the nice things which they have said of the members who sat on the Government benches during the last few years. I hope as this session progresses that my good-natured and honourable friend—perhaps we shall be able to say right hon.

friend soon—I mean the leader of the Government, will not object if it be necessary that the tactics employed by himself and his lieutenants when sitting on the Opposition benches shall be used against him. I will try as far as I can personally, and I will try to influence the members of the party, to keep away from such tactics as far as they can; but it seems to me it may be necessary to fight the Government with their own weapons. In that case I hope the Government will take it with as good grace as was displayed by those who sat on the Government benches, but who now are sitting in Opposition. I hope as the session proceeds we shall not be harassed in the House—I am not speaking of the Government side of the House or of the Opposition, but of the House as a whole—I hope we shall not be harassed by those continual no-confidence motions which were the order of the day as long as my friends now in the Government occupied these Opposition benches.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. F. CONNOR: I hope that no-confidence motions are things of the past, until the time comes when it is necessary that we with one genuine motion may say to the members on the Government side, "You are not the people the country want there." Until then, I for one shall try to get as far as I can away from the arena of party politics, and give the gentlemen on the Treasury benches a chance to carry on what is in the best interests of the country. Before proceeding to address myself to the general matter of the Address-in-reply, I want to introduce to members a subject which is of great importance, and which has caused a very great amount of attention not only in this State but in the other States. I cannot call it the bad treatment or good treatment, but I will introduce it by saying the treatment of the aborigines, the native blacks of Western Australia. I promise to be as brief as possible on this matter, but I could not allow the Address-in-reply to pass without introducing the matter here. I fail to see why, in the face of what has appeared in the Press of this and of the other States, that some mention was not made by the members on the Government side of this question. I believe it is somewhat outside the province of the House to take

this matter directly in hand, but it is also a subject that the Government have to take into consideration. Although the Commonwealth Parliament has the complete control, or to a large extent has the control, over the native question in this State, there is still the subject as it affects the people who live in the country, not the blacks; I mean the carrying out of the law as against the blacks; and I think it is the duty of the House to see that matter is righted. The question of the settlers in the Far North of this State is one that has been debated before in this House. When people go out into the back districts of this country or any country, it is the first duty of the Government to protect them as well as lies in their power. If, when people go out to these places, they commit any misdemeanour or wrong against the laws of the country, they are held responsible, and are made subservient to the laws; but we must also take the other side and protect the man who goes out and opens up the country, who brings his family up in these outside places of the State. The law should protect him, and I am going to bring it before the House that the law up to the present time has not done so, and there are ulterior motives why the law has not protected them. Settlers going to the north of this State, as we know they have to do, undergo great hardships; they have to open up the country by putting capital into it, and they have to take their lives in their hands in the North. They have to protect themselves when attacked, and very often they are: they also have to protect their property. Are we to encourage the Press or a section of the people to attack the settlers, or are our laws to say to these people, "You shall not protect yourselves, your property, and your character; you shall not have any protection from us whatever;" because that is the position at the present time. I do not know how this trouble has come about, but I believe it has been initiated by people who entered this country some time ago and were not successful, people with brains but who were not successful financially. These people have made up their minds that settlers in the North must suffer; they want a certain amount of revenge on the people who have been successful because

they themselves have not been successful. The persons I refer to have written to the Press, and the Press have published their letters, and the law says that what the Press publishes you cannot make the Press responsible for. Is that right? I believe in the freedom of the Press by all means, but do not license them to take away characters, do not license them to kill people morally. There must be some alteration in the libel laws of this State before this question is finally settled. I come from that part of the country, the Far North, the black north as it is called, why I do not know, for it is brighter country to live in than down South, and it is a better country, although it is a little hotter in the summer time. It is almost impossible for white people to live there on account of the depredations of the blacks, and because there is at present only one means of making a living there, the country not being far enough advanced for agriculture. It is still a pastoral country. I am sure that in the future, and I hope in the near future, we shall see a large population established there, engaged not only in agriculture, but in other industries which I know the country is capable of supporting. But the only white people who can at present exist there are a few gold-miners and pastoralists, and it is at present almost impossible for a man to live there as a pastoralist, because he has to go perhaps 50 or 60 miles out into the country, far from where anyone lives. He gets together a little herd of cattle; probably he and his family do all the work; and then the blacks come round him and commence to kill his cattle, and in many cases kill the settler himself. Now I ask, supposing a white man deliberately murdered a blackfellow, and went to the authorities and said, "I did it," would he be held responsible? I say he would. Supposing a white man murdered a white man, would he, if he came in and said "I did it," be held responsible? Undoubtedly he would. But the contrary is the case, as far as my knowledge goes, when a blackfellow kills a white man; and I may instance a case not many months ago, in which a blackfellow killed a man named Stanley, and came into the police station and said, "I killed that man: there are his horses: go and take

them." And the horses were seized and sold by the Government of South Australia, and there was no action taken against that blackfellow: he is still at large at the present time. If this state of affairs is going to last, let the Government say to those settlers, "We will not protect you." Let them know it. [A MEMBER: Hear, hear.] In my opinion, the great trouble in this matter is the fact that the natives, as soon as they are half civilised, become more dangerous. They are not so dangerous while they are not civilised, while they will not come near the white people. But when they come into the settlements and learn something of the manners and customs of the white man, they come to understand the use of firearms and many other things. Then, when they go out back; and get into communication with the other and wilder blacks, when the natives mix with one another and learn enough about the habits of the white people, that is the time the danger is most acute. I have to offer some few suggestions as to what is to be done for the future. There are four or five remedies suggested, and some of them have been discussed here: they are not altogether new to this House. One suggestion is to declare a reserve upon which there could be put all the aborigines, say, in East or West or the two Kimberleys. The Minister for Works (Mr. Kingsmill) laughs; but I want his opinion; I want an expression of opinion from the House. If I can only extract from him his opinion of what it is best to do, then I shall be satisfied.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think that plan is the best.

MR. F. CONNOR: Well, I am only repeating suggestions which have been before this House. This question must absolutely be dealt with, whether by the Commonwealth or by the State Parliament. It demands to be dealt with immediately. Another suggestion is to have a permanent police patrol camp—a properly-equipped camp, and a proper staff. Perhaps only two constables would be required, and a certain number of blackboys to make sure that you capture the ringleaders; because, in all these troubles in the North, it is a question of a few and not of the general body of natives. Those ringleaders are not, and

have not been up to the present time, arrested; and if they were arrested, I think it would make the position not nearly so bad as it is at present. That is the second suggestion; a police patrol camp, with a sufficient number of men well equipped with horses and gear, so as to make sure of catching the ringleaders. [A MEMBER: The same as in Queensland?] Well, I should not go so far as in Queensland. I am not an apostle of the rifle and revolver. I am to this extent: when I go out into the back country, I have the right to protect myself, which right I would exercise every time against any man, white or black, if it were necessary. The Right Hon. Sir John Forrest, when this question was being discussed here some years ago, suggested that an island should be made available, where all these natives could be kept and probably be made of some use, and be fed at the expense of the Government. I am afraid that would be impossible to carry out, and I only mention it as another suggestion which has been put before this House. My own opinion is, that of the three proposals the best is to have a proper police patrol, and to have the ringleaders captured and put in gaol and kept there, so that they cannot possibly continue their depredations. This may sound rather strange to hon. members; but I have almost a commission from nearly every settler in the Far North of Australia—that is, in East Kimberley—to say that, if there be not an inquiry made into the treatment of the blacks by the people there, to satisfy the public, to refute what has appeared in the Press of this State, the settlers will offer to the Government, or to whomsoever will take them, all the blacks in their employment, that they will not employ a native on any of their stations. If that be done, what will happen? Are the Government prepared to take over and feed 400 or 500 of the natives who are now fed, clothed, and housed by the settlers in that district? That is probably a more serious problem than some hon. members will care to face. These settlers say: "We are maligned; there are lies told about us; we are accused of cruelty and barbarity, and of starving and not clothing our natives." Well, I give a complete and absolute denial to any and all of those charges; because the facts come under my personal

observation and I have a right to speak. I say that in the East Kimberley District, so often referred to by the Press of this State, the blacks are better provided for, better fed, and better treated than is the case with any other black race anywhere else in the world. It is a large order to say so; but I challenge any person to refute my statement. My friends (Labour members) sitting on that bench over there, smile. Recently I heard them interjecting, in reference to the question of the blacks. If they knew the facts as well as I do, they would not, if they were fair, interject; they would not state indirectly, or insinuate, that any ill-treatment of those blacks had taken place. I am not referring to the whole of Western Australia, because I can speak of my own knowledge only of what I have seen and of what I know. I am not referring to any part of Western Australia except the Kimberleys. I am perhaps speaking rather heatedly on this question, but I feel rather heated; I think I have reason so to feel, and I will show hon. members why. A letter headed "The Durack Murder" appeared in a paper called the *West Australian*, which I will read:—

To the Editor. Sir,—I see the police are out after the murderers of Mr. Durack, and I trust the assassins will be captured and dealt with as they deserve. At the same time, I hope it will be remembered that we are in a British community, and that humanity and, above all, justice will go hand in hand with the vindication of the law. There is a rumour, however, that the police will be given a free hand to take vengeance on the black people of the district. If this be not so, I hope it will be contradicted. But the more serious matter is this. Unwilling as one is to speak ill of the dead, yet it must be mentioned that it is freely stated that the murdered victim of the blacks' murderous passion was notorious as a slayer of blacks, and is even said to have boasted that the number of notches on his rifle indicated a black man's or a black woman's death. In short, it is asserted that the act of the blacks was one of revenge on their finding themselves unable to obtain redress from the law. Is this so? I trust a searching inquiry will be made into the matter, and, if there has been such terrible wrong-doing in the past, that it will be now fully brought to light. Yours, etc., JUSTICE.—Perth, March 11.

Now, I knew the murdered gentleman, and I can call him a gentleman. [MR. DOHERTY: Hear, hear.] He was known as a gentleman before he came to this State. He was the first man who ever

opened up the East Kimberley District, the pioneer of that district, of the best part of Western Australia; yet the Press published this. Very well. I do not object to the Press publishing it; Mrs. Durack does not object to the Press publishing it, if its truth can be proved. But we want them to prove it. We asked for the name of the writer of this letter. The editor of the *West Australian* says "I will not give it." I will read the correspondence. I will insist on this House seeing this out; because I think it is scandalous and a dreadful thing. What will be the result of this libel? When I speak of the Press, I do not mean the gutter Press. I do not care about it, nor will I take from it extracts; but I want to know why a responsible paper, the leading newspaper in this State, should publish such a letter as that, and refuse to give the name of the writer. I want to know why the proprietary do it, or why the law permits them to do it. What will be the effect of this letter on the children of the murdered man?

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

ANOTHER MEMBER: They will be branded.

MR. F. CONNOR: They are respectable children: they are at school now in Perth. It is only a day or two ago since this blackboy, this "Banjo," who shot their father, met the children in the streets of Perth, and said to the little boys, "I killed your father: the Government cannot touch me." Will hon. members try to realise the seriousness of this question, and put it to themselves? Suppose such a thing should happen to one of their own children, if they have any. I think it is a scandalous disgrace that such a state of affairs should be allowed; and I hope the House will take it into their hands, and vindicate these people whom the law, up to the present, has refused to vindicate. I read a letter published in the *West Australian*. We shall see what the authorities in England say about the same thing. I hope the Premier will not object to my quoting some legal works. I do not wish to pose as an amateur lawyer; I am an amateur politician, and not a lawyer any more than I am a statesman, but this is from "Folkard on the Law of Slander and Libel"; and legal members will

understand he is an authority on these matters :—

The law of England, with a view to preserve the peace and happiness of families, which may be invaded and embittered by contemptuous reflections on the dead, has assigned a punishment for such libels as traduce the memory of the deceased, and have thus an obvious tendency to excite the resentment of the living. This principle, however, is never carried so far as to trespass on the utility of history and the salutary freedom of the Press therein. The court will always take into consideration the mind with which such publications are made, and discriminate the historian from the slanderer.

This is the principal point :

An indictment lies for a libel reflecting upon the memory of a person who is dead, if it be published with the malevolent purpose to injure his family and posterity, and to expose them to contempt and disgrace ; for the chief cause of punishing offences of this nature is their tendency to a breach of the peace ; and therefore although the party be dead at the time of publishing this libel, yet (according to Lord Coke) it stirs up others of the same family, blood, or society, to revenge, and to break the peace.

It is very clear that the law of England says there is punishment for an offence such as I am trying to bring home to some person : I will show who that person is before I finish. Following on that, Messrs. Moss and Barsden, who were appointed her solicitors by Mrs. Durack, wrote to the manager of the *West Australian Newspaper Co., Limited* :—

Mrs. Durack has consulted us with reference to the publication by you of a letter under the heading of "The Durack Murder," appearing in your issue of the 14th inst. The letter contains a gross libel, reflecting on the memory of our client's deceased husband. We shall be obliged if you will inform us whether you still retain the original manuscript of the letter, and if so, whether you will hand it to us and disclose the name of the writer, against whom Mrs. Durack intends instituting proceedings for criminal libel.

The reply to that from Mr. J. W. Hackett was as follows :—

I fear the original manuscript of the letter to which you refer cannot be produced ; and it is impossible for us to disclose the name of the writer, it being contrary to our custom except on special occasions to disclose the names of the authors of letters published anonymously. I note that you say Mrs. Durack intends taking proceedings for criminal libel. I would point out to you that, in view of the gravity of the charge, it seems eminently desirable that the Government should be a party to any inquiry which may be made ; but whether by way of prosecuting the writer or answering the charge

in their own defence is a question to be decided. The proper course would be, to my mind, to send a special commissioner to investigate the matter on the spot, and see how far the statements in the letter are justified or otherwise. We shall endeavour to put the writer of the letter into communication with the Government, in case steps of this kind are taken.

We have in this country a law which says or implies, I believe, for I do not think it states very clearly, that it is within the power of the Attorney General to say whether or not he will allow a libel to lie. There is a change in the law of England—I hope I am not wearying hon. members, and I have nearly finished with the technical part of this—which is referred to in the authority I quoted just now. That authority says :—

By the Law of Libel Amendment Act 1888, no criminal prosecution can now be commenced against any proprietor, publisher, editor, or any person responsible for the publication of a newspaper for any libel published therein, without the order of a Judge at Chambers being first had and obtained. Such application must be made on notice to the person accused, who is thereby to have an opportunity of being heard against such application.

In 1888 the law in England was the same as it is here at present, but it has since been found necessary to amend the law, so that where a case such as I have quoted occurs you can go before a Judge in Chambers, or I presume before the Full Court, to argue your case and endeavour to get redress and have the name of the writer disclosed. I need not read the letter the solicitor wrote to the late Attorney General, but the document I have in my hand is a copy of it, and I will read it, if members wish me to do so. This sets forth the case fully, showing the great injustice, the great wrong that has been perpetrated by absolute falsehoods ; but the late Attorney General refused to allow the parties to prosecute this paper criminally. What we want is that the editor of this paper shall disclose the name of the writer of that article.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. F. Illingworth) : Read the letter.

MR. F. CONNOR : I have not the reply, but I will read the letter to the late Attorney General.

A MEMBER : What is the date of that letter ?

MR. DOHERTY : It was at the time of the general election.

MR. F. CONNOR: The letter to the Attorney General reads as follows:—

Pursuant to The Newspaper Libel and Registration Act 1894, Sec. 3, I hereby apply for your written fiat or allowance to commence a criminal prosecution against the *West Australian Newspaper Company, Limited*, the proprietor of the *West Australian* newspaper, published at Perth aforesaid.

The said *West Australian Newspaper Company, Limited*, wickedly and maliciously contriving and intending to injure, defame, disgrace, and vilify the memory, reputation, and character of Jeremiah John Durack, late of Denham River, grazier, deceased, the late husband of Frances Durack, of Fremantle, in the said State, and to bring her and others, the sons, daughters, and descendants of the said Jeremiah John Durack, into great scandal, infamy, and contempt, and to stir up and excite and provoke them to a breach of the peace, and to cause it to be believed that the said Jeremiah John Durack in his lifetime was a murderer of blacks, the aboriginal natives of the said State, on the 14th day of March, 1901, wickedly, maliciously, and unlawfully did print and publish and cause to be printed and published in a certain newspaper called and entitled *The West Australian* a certain false, scandalous, and malicious libel of and concerning him, the said Jeremiah John Durack, in the words and figures following.

I read the letter which appeared in the paper at the beginning of my remarks. This is an appeal to the Government to allow it to be proved that the reputation of an innocent woman and her family was good, and that the memory of this man, who was an honour not only to this country, but to Queensland, where he was well known and respected, should not be traduced and vilified by any section of the Press or otherwise in this country. I go into details, so that members may see it is necessary that the present law should be altered. Since the Government refused to allow this case to go before the Court, and since it was known that the *West Australian* refused to give the name of the writer of that villainous production—

A MEMBER: The late Government.

MR. F. CONNOR: I am not talking against the Attorney General. Perhaps he did his duty, and I shall be told that he did, but I do not think so. I have no hesitation in saying that I think it is due to the influence of the editor of the *West Australian*, an influence which is detrimental and unfair to the people of this country. Those who are

aggrieved should be able to go into Court to prove the innocence of that man. It is a scandal to the laws of this country and to what is called the respectable Press of the country that such a thing should be lawful, if it be so. I am not going to take any notice of the gutter Press, which has been assailing me pretty roughly. It has been writing, or somebody has been writing to it, and the production has been elaborated by that Press on things the writer does not know about; writing of a country he had never been in, but which I have lived in and know about, and to which I am not ashamed to return. On the contrary I shall be welcomed by everybody in the place. The writer of this article in the respectable Press has written in a manner which is not fair, which is untrue, and which ought to be stopped. Here is the next thing following on the letter refusing to allow these people an opportunity to prove the character of the deceased man. This is an extract from a leading article published in a paper largely read. Probably I am trespassing upon the House, but my object in pressing the speech upon hon. members is to get an alteration of the law. The law is wrong, and if the facts be not put forcibly before the House, the probability is the law will not be altered, whereas we want it altered. We want a guarantee from any person publishing a paper in this State that, if he goes beyond what is right, or what a Judge of the Supreme Court or a jury of his countrymen consider right, we shall be able to get at him. We want the law to say "You must not do that. You must not vilify or traduce the character or the memory of either the dead or the living, and, if you do, you are responsible." Following the refusal of the law to allow these people to vindicate themselves, a paragraph, which I have here, appeared. I tell members of the House, and I tell the public through them, that this is undoubtedly untrue, and absolutely slander. I say "untrue," for I do not know any word stronger than that. These papers should not be allowed to publish such assertions. This is from a leading article in a paper published here and largely read:—

Whatever be the consequence, we at least dare tell the truth, and we now deliberately assert that the real secret of the Durack

murder was the habit of the Duracks of prostituting their girls.

A MEMBER: A lie.

MR. F. CONNOR: Should people have no remedy against it? Must people in the North sit down and listen to it? I know the household that man lived in, and I know his people. There are no better-living people in Western Australia. [Two or three MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] There is no better, or more moral, or more religious family. These people live right up to their faith, and do what their conscience tells them. And here they are vilified, and there is no remedy. I do not think I will say any more on the subject, but will pass it. I will ask the Premier, who is also the Attorney General, to take this into consideration; and I advise him, if he has any influence with the gentleman who is editor of the *West Australian*, to endeavour to bring about the disclosure of the name of the writer of the article to which I have alluded. My own opinion is that he dares not disclose the name, because he knows too well who wrote the article. Coming back to the Address-in-reply, I may say I agree generally with the terms of that Address, and I must re-echo also what has been said by members, that there is absolutely nothing new in it, which perhaps is one of its best qualities, because we are not in a position to launch into any new or extravagant policy in this country. I think we want to put in the pruning knife, and it has been promised this shall be done. We want to cut down works not absolutely necessary, and to trim down as much as possible the expenditure sanctioned on the works already in hand, thereby getting the country into a sounder financial position than it is said to be in. A few items have been omitted from the Speech, and there are a few in relation to which some money may be spent. I have just preached the doctrine of curtailment, but there are a few things which will always pay in this country, and the carrying out of which will not cost much. That subject is the tapping of a water supply in this country; the proving of the depths of our minerals, and the encouragement of miners, particularly old prospectors who open new fields. I would impress on members of the Government the necessity for giving to certain districts of

this country artesian bores; for carrying still farther what is known as the public crushing battery policy of the late Government; for erecting, if necessary, in certain parts of the fields cyanide plants to prove the value of the ores. If the Government continue on these lines, the small amount that will be spent will be well spent. We will, I think, get the help of this House in carrying out a policy of this kind. There is one question which hon. members on the Government side of the House have absolutely shirked. It is a question of almost vital importance to this country at present; it is a question which unhappily, to a certain extent, is out of our hands; it is one which, when it came up in this House previously, was the means of raising a very interesting debate—the question of tariff. As I say, we have now no power over the tariff; we have no power over the customs. But I want hon. members on that (Government) side of the House to tell us—and I think they should have referred to the matter—whether it is their intention, when the extra duties have been put on by the Commonwealth Government, to adhere to the sliding scale given by the Commonwealth Act to this State.

THE PREMIER: Oh, we promised to adhere to the sliding scale: we are not going to touch that.

MR. F. CONNOR: You will leave it on in addition to the Commonwealth duties?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

MR. F. CONNOR: That was not the position hon. members sitting on the Government side took when they were sitting in Opposition. Their policy, now that they are in snug berths, is very different from what it was. Formerly it was to take off duties; now it is to make the people "pay through the nose" and to reduce no duty which there is any possible chance of keeping up. That is free-trade for you: that is the free-trade of those hon. members now!

MR. OATS: We advocate free-trade for the necessities of life.

MR. F. CONNOR: That is the policy the hon. gentleman, the Premier, has proclaimed, and he is proud of it. He proclaimed this to be the decision his Government has come to—grinding down the people under a protectionist policy.

What has he done? You are free-traders here. You say now you agree that the revenue derived from the Customs shall remain on the necessities of life, that what is already on shall continue, in addition to what may be imposed by the Commonwealth Parliament. I wanted that from the Government; and now I have it, very clear and distinct. I am pleased to have it from the gentleman who controls the Department of Mines. I would ask the hon. gentleman to remember that it may be necessary, in connection with the regulations for the importation of fruit, which were gazetted last week, to take into consideration another regulation which will probably be proposed in this House. I will ask the Premier, when the proposal is made, to take the same spirited stand as he has taken in reference to the apples. It will be remembered that in earlier debates, when the great tick question was being discussed in this House some years ago, a most indignant stand was taken by the present Premier and the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James) as regards the admission of cattle from tick-infected districts. The Premier in particular was horrified at the idea of such a thing as letting into the country anything that might pollute or destroy or injuriously affect any of its industries. But then he was in Opposition. Then the Government of the day said, "We will take it on ourselves, so that the people may get their meat cheaper: if there is any danger in bringing down here cattle from what is known as the tick-infected district, we will take the chance of that; we will bring the cattle down here." What was the policy then of the hon. gentleman, the present Premier? I never in all my ten years' experience in this House saw so much bitterness displayed, saw so much ill-taste displayed, as by the Premier and the member for East Perth on that occasion. Those gentlemen have now taken their seats on that (Government) side, and their policy is absolutely changed. Except that I am afraid of taking up too much of the time of the House, I would just give a quotation from the present speeches of the members for East and West Perth (Hon. W. H. James and Hon. G. Leake). If those speeches rightly utter the views of those hon. gentlemen,

they want to give the people cheap apples. That is their policy. Anyone who cares to look through *Hansard* will see that I am absolutely correct in saying that is their policy. Is not the change simply due to the circumstance that they have changed their side of the House? I propose that the Minister for Mines move into the chair the Premier has left. I propose to test the hon. member's sincerity as to his protestations that he desires cheap fruit for the people. I want to address the Minister for Public Works (Hon. W. Kingsmill) now. It might, perhaps, be better to make this suggestion to the Treasurer, if he were here. There are big leakages in some of the departments, or there have been. One of these leakages is in what is known as the insurance department. I would like—I see the Treasurer has left, but I will talk to the benches—I would like to suggest that it would be as well to have a look into what it is costing the State to insure its buildings in the country. I know that very high rates of interest are paid by the State on absolutely safe buildings; on buildings constructed of 18in. stone walls very high rates have been paid. I do not know how or why it is so; but I do know it is high time some alteration were made. I just mention it to bring it to the attention of the Treasurer, and I hope that when the Estimates come on we shall see substantial reduction in the item for insurance on public buildings. A matter which might have been referred to—it is probably better to ventilate a few of these things now—is that of the tonnage rate at Fremantle. It is not a very serious question, and not a political question, but it is a practical question, and one that I think deserves some consideration. It is suggested in the Speech that we should have a Harbour Board, and I think that is an excellent suggestion. I trust that when such a board is established, it will be a board distinct from any other department of the State. It should be absolutely free of political control, and should not be in any way connected with the Railway Department. I hold that when the board is established, it will be worth the while of its members to take into consideration the tonnage rate. At present the rate is threepence per registered ton on all ships coming

into Fremantle. Some ships, it is to be noted, come in once a fortnight, some once a month, some once a year, some once in every five years. I think the rate is not quite fair, for it is the same for ships coming in once a week, or once a fortnight, or once a month, as it is for ships coming in once a year, or once in 10 years, or only once altogether. The question of private enterprise was discussed by the member for Perth (Mr. F. Wilson). I am opposed to it in connection with the railway system of this country.

A MEMBER : Are you ?

MR. F. CONNOR : Yes ; I would not even allow a private railway to be built to Southern Cross.

MR. OATS : Your firm is a private enterprise, I think, sir ?

A MEMBER : No ; it is a philanthropic institution.

MR. F. CONNOR : I take it a majority of members of this House, myself included, are opposed to private enterprise in the building of railways. Still, I am free to admit that if the Government are not in a position to build a railway to a place where it is required, if the Government cannot or will not find the funds to do it, and if the railway is shown to be of utility or necessity, then I say so long as there is no interference with the trunk railways, and provided the line run to an outside place, there is no reason why private enterprise should not be allowed to build it. I am happy in taking this position, because I hear a chorus of approval on this side of the House and a chorus of approval on that side of the House ; and I am perfectly well aware that at least one member of the Ministry is also in favour of the suggestion I put forward. Here another question arises—that of private enterprise in connection with the dock at Fremantle. There is a work of absolute necessity. We want a dock built at Fremantle as soon as it can be built ; but the Treasurer looks at me as much as to say, “We have not the money to do it.”

THE COLONIAL TREASURER : It is in the Loan Bill.

MR. F. CONNOR : Yes ; but it was in a Bill before. We have been taught lessons while we were on that side of the House. We are not going to forget the lessons taught us by the able gentlemen who

now sit opposite us. It would be discourteous to them if we did. If they say they are going to do a thing, we shall insist on their doing it, we shall make them do it. We intend to try and make the Government do all they promise.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER : Will you vote for reappropriations ?

MR. F. CONNOR : A railway which I cannot say I would support for construction by the Government, but which nevertheless should be built, is one which would run to the south of Fremantle. The population between Perth and Fremantle is becoming somewhat congested. If things continue as at present, we shall soon have one continuous town between Perth and Fremantle. The only outlet then, when that time comes, is to be found south of Fremantle. I went along that coast a few days ago in a steam launch, and indeed the trip was a most pleasurable one. The scenery is very fine ; there is a magnificent beach all the way ; the district has very good soil, and it would be in every way an excellent place for settlement. The line would connect with Rockingham, and there it would join the South-Western railway. At present the proposal is to build a line as far as Owen's Anchorage. The extension I suggest requires only a few miles of old rails. It might be a light line, with the rails simply laid down in the sand. There are no engineering difficulties of any description. Such a light line, which would cost less than an ordinary road, would tend to keep the minds of the Fremantle people from settling on the idea that there is in a great degree a policy of centralisation for Perth ; that Fremantle is not to get its fair share of the good things going ; that the lungs of that city will not be allowed to expand.

MR. OATS : There are no old rails in the country now.

MR. F. CONNOR : I was going to refer to the shipping laws, but I think I will pass that subject, because I fear it is out of our hands. To a considerable extent we are now dependent for our laws on the Federal Parliament. Perhaps, therefore, I had better leave the shipping laws for the present. There is going to be trouble in regard to the shipping laws of Australia, though the trouble will not be as great in the other

States as it will be here. We shall have "rings" in connection with shipping, to which all rings of which we have heard in the past will be as nothing. It is being worked up very carefully, very insidiously I may say, by the agents of the shipping companies; clever men who are making use of people to advance what will be a curse to the country when it comes, the suggested shipping laws of Australia.

MR. HOPKINS: Have State shipping as well as State railways.

MR. F. CONNOR: The position that has been taken up by a large section of the House, in reference to the great question of to-day, the strike, almost amounts to intimidation. I have not spoken publicly before in reference to this matter, and I will now give my opinion in a very few words. I will put it as briefly as I can, and I hope I shall be understood. At first when the strike took place, the public said the men are in the wrong. The Government were supported by their own side in this House, and probably by a large majority on the Opposition side, when the strike started or was suggested; but the position has changed. What is the issue? A certain section of the men on the railways said that they were not sufficiently paid.

MR. OATS: That is true.

MR. F. CONNOR: They applied to the Commissioner of Railways, asking for an increase, and the Commissioner said "I will not give it to you at present." The men then said "We have been agitating for this for eighteen months or two years." I am not sure about the exact period. I challenge any member of the House, and amongst them I challenge the Premier and the Commissioner of Railways, to say that these men are not entitled to, or deserving of, what they ask for. I think it is a very clear issue. If the men are entitled to the increase, why not give it to them? If they are not entitled to it, fight them to the bitter end.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: What did the Minister reply?

MR. F. CONNOR: I am not going to say what his reply was. I put the matter logically and clearly before the House. The men asked for what they are entitled to, and the Government refused them. Who is in the right? You cannot weigh the matter in any other manner; it cannot be put in any other way. Are the

men right or wrong?—that is the position. If the men have no right to this increase, I would uphold the Minister in what he has done; but I challenge the Minister to say that the men are not entitled to the increase. I challenge him to say that seven shillings a day is a living wage in a country like this where provisions are so dear, and where men have to live isolated, far away in the country. Members may talk about their dignity and the dignity of Parliament, but I say the dignity of the House will not feed these people. It was the duty of the Minister to know of the justice of the men's claim, and to say "You have a right to it, and you shall get it." I have no hesitation in saying that this strike should be declared "off" by the men getting the rise asked for, as long as it is admitted, and not stated by any person that they are not worth it. But what do we see? The Premier going to the men. He is supposed to be the mouthpiece of the Government, and he goes to the Chamber of Commerce meeting on Friday, and says "I will have a stiff back; I will make the men come to my terms"; but on Sunday he goes and talks to the men in the Park; he is "hail fellow, well met; have you got a pipe of tobacco, old chap?" That is the way in which he talks to the men, but the next day you see him with a "stiff back" policy. It is not a position that will hold water. That style of policy will not increase the confidence of the people in the Government. "All things to all men" policy is no good. If the Premier was right, he should have stood away from the men and not allowed them to think he was going to give in to them, and then go to the gentleman class and say "I am stiff-backed, and will not give in."

MR. OATS: That was not on Sunday.

MR. F. CONNOR: I have one more item to refer to, it is a rather important one, and I think members will consider the statement I have to make rather startling. It will interest the Minister for Works. I am going to refer to the Coolgardie Water Scheme. Of course there is no blame attachable to the Minister, and no blame attachable to any member of the House; but I am informed on what I consider to be good authority that the pipes which have been manufactured for the Coolgardie Water Scheme

are absolutely and utterly useless. The joints prepared for these pipes cannot be made to hold, and the scheme is an absolute failure. I do not say that is so, but I want the importance of the thing to be brought home to members. I want to know why it is so. I am not attaching blame to anybody, for it is a serious thing for the country, a most serious thing for the country if true, and I believe unfortunately there is some truth in it.

MR. SPEIGHT: Who is responsible?

MR. F. CONNOR: I am talking about the position the country is in. I am not making anyone responsible. If all the pipes are no use, and the joints are no use, it is time some steps were taken to stop the scheme until it has been proved that the pipes will stand the pressure to carry the water to Coolgardie. This is the most serious thing that has come before this House, if it be true; but I hope it is not. The only test that has been made of these pipes, as far as I can hear, is that which is made in the workshop; but that is no test at all. The pipes are put in and shored up, and there is no "give." Put the pipes down for a few miles before any more money is spent on this scheme. I think that some inquiry should be made into this matter, and I recommend the Minister for Works to have these pipes tested. It is worthy of consideration whether the Minister should not put down a few miles of pipes before another shilling is spent on the work, and prove to the satisfaction of everyone that the pipes will stand the pressure, and then everything will be satisfactory. It is asserted by one who should know that it is impossible for the joints to hold, and that it is impossible to make use of any of the pipes already made for the great Coolgardie Water Scheme. I am sorry it is necessary that I should bring this before the House, but I hold it is better, if this awful catastrophe is to take place or has taken place, that the Ministry should take steps immediately to prove whether there is anything in the suggestion. I may tell the Ministry that I know a little about it, and I may tell them that the first trial of the pipes was not satisfactory. It was not until the pipes were shored up and pressure put at each end of the pipes so that they could not move, that they would hold the water;

but what about the pipes when they are put up and down hill? You cannot make use of these pipes by any other jointing because the bar will stop it, and if the pipes cannot be jointed as they are supposed to be jointed, they will be of no use. It is a very serious thing, and I commend it to the attention of the Minister. I hope he will see to it and stop any more expenditure, pending proof whether the pipes are good or not. A question mentioned in the Speech, and which will probably affect me more than anyone else, and be the means of making my presence here impossible, is the redistribution of seats. I know as a matter of fact the constituency I represent is numerically not strong, but we have to take into consideration the area and importance financially of any district, as well as the number of the population. The exports from Wyndham, that is the port of the constituency I represent, this year will reach nearly one hundred thousand pounds, and then the trade is but in its infancy. I think that an export of one hundred thousand pounds is more than any other district in Western Australia can produce; and remember the district has only been settled thirty or forty years. In this great area of the North, we have sent out men to explore and survey the country, and I have no hesitation in telling members from my knowledge of the country that they will see a great population there before long, for there are great mineral deposits there, and I am sure the mineral deposits combined with the pastoral industry will quite justify my presence here. In regard to the South Fremantle Explosives Magazine, I think in every debate on every Address-in-reply for the last few years to which I have contributed, I have mentioned this matter, and two specific motions have been passed in the House in reference to it. The magazine is dangerous if it be allowed to remain at South Fremantle.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: They have built the stock yards right up to it.

MR. F. CONNOR: The jetty there is for stock purposes, and I am sure the Treasurer would rather feed the people than blow them up. I think it would be better to have the magazine area as a stock reserve, than blow people into atoms and send the member for South Fremantle

and myself where we do not want to go. I want to give my opinion about the position of the House, in a few words. As far as I am concerned, I am not going to offer any factious opposition to the Government. If they carry out the policy which we think is in the best interests of the country, I shall help them in every possible way. We do not want to emulate the deeds of the members on the Government side when sitting in Opposition, and try to put the Government out on every possible occasion, but we wish to help them. If the Government will be fair in their judgment, and do what is best in the interests of the country, and allow us to be untrammelled by party ties, as long as they do what is nearly a fair thing they can rely on my support.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): It was not my intention to speak on the Address-in-reply, and I should not now do so had it not been for several remarks passed, and I may say aimed at us on this (Opposition) side from the Ministerial benches, to which remarks I have to take exception; and I think, in the circumstances, I am justified. The member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner) was, I consider, very kind in his speech; and I congratulate him sincerely on the manner in which he dealt with us, the kindly manner in which he invited us to sit on the other side. I am sorry to say I much regret that we are not closely allied in politics, but I cannot see my way clear to accept his kindly invitation. Then came the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins). I much regret that he did not hold out to us such inducements as did the member for Albany. He thought fit to threaten us. He threatened us with all sorts of dreadful things, with a dissolution of the House if we did not support the Government, or apparently if we did not give them more support than we were giving. In the strongest terms I deprecate the action of that gentleman, and I liken his remarks to a gale of wind blowing through the bung-hole of an empty cask. I will take no notice of them, for the reason that his threats are empty. I defy him or his influence to bring about a dissolution of the House, and I go as far as to say I doubt very much whether he is not less prepared to face his electors than is any other member of this House.

MR. HOPKINS: That is only your opinion.

MR. BUTCHER: It is only my opinion. Personally, I am perfectly prepared to face my electors, for the simple reason that when I met them I made absolutely no pledges; therefore I am perfectly safe, and thoroughly in readiness to meet them again. Then came the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James). He called upon members on this side of the House to give an explanation of their position. He constituted himself, in a sense, an agent for the various constituencies. And I want to know what right had that hon. member to question us or our actions, and especially mine? I say it was the utmost presumption on the part of any hon. member to call any other member to task for taking up his seat in any particular part of the House. It is absolute presumption. However, for the information of that hon. member, I will tell him how I came to sit here. When I went before my electors, I told them distinctly that, if they chose to send me to Parliament to represent them and their wants, they must do so on my terms, for the simple reason that I did not particularly wish to go to Parliament; but if they desired me, and thought I was a fit and proper person to represent their interests, I was prepared to place my services at their disposal, but on those terms. I am sorry the hon. member is not present, that he might hear what I am saying. I told my constituents that, if they sent me to Parliament, they must send me with an absolutely free hand; that I would not attach myself to any party nor bind myself to any measure, and I should go with an absolutely free hand to use my own discretion. I was independent when I stood on the hustings; I was independent when I came to this House; and I am independent still. That is why I sit here, and I hope the member for East Perth will be satisfied with that explanation. Many matters have been referred to during the debate which are in the Governor's Speech, and many which are not. But I will deal with a few of the former. There is the Electoral Act. Of this I have spoken in rather strong terms, and have on many occasions characterised it as a most marvellous production, almost a work of art, and a masterpiece of legis-

lation. It applies very well to all those electors who live in the large centres, but to those who live in the scattered districts of this State the Act is absolutely useless. There might just as well be no Act at all. It appears to me, and always has appeared, that this Act was framed with the object of giving the working men to understand or to think that they have votes, but, on the other hand, of debarring them from the privilege of exercising their rights. Section 84, sub-section 1, refers principally to residential voters, and provides that they cannot vote by proxy, but that any other than a residential voter can do so. I want to know why those two classes of electors were not placed on an equal footing. Why should the voter who is other than residential not be on the same ground as the residential voter? That is an absolute injustice to the residential voter. I have not the Act before me, but I dare say every hon. member here knows its wording as well as I do. A great deal of stress has been put on the phrase "plural voting." I have taken exception to the principle, and consider it should be wholly abolished. But not so much importance should be placed on that as on the residential section of the Act. Proxy voting, I consider, is a thing which should be encouraged, and those residential voters should, as well as other electors, have the power of voting by proxy; and that, I think, would to a very great extent meet the case of the scattered districts. I should be very glad to see a system of electors' rights established in this State, and I believe it would greatly facilitate the conduct of elections. There has been a great deal said on the question as to which side of the House represents a majority of the electors of the State. I have gone into the subject very carefully in many instances, and have worked it out in many different ways; but I find it is one of those problems in the attempted solution of which one can obtain any result desired: therefore I do not intend to comment upon it. There was another very important question spoken of here several times, and by almost every member; that is, the rabbit invasion, a question which, I am sorry to say, seriously affects the district I have the honour to represent, as well as

those which are recognised as the coastal districts; and I am indeed sorry to note that the Government of the day seem to treat the matter with a certain amount of indifference, as did the old Forrest Ministry. Apparently, if the question had been as popular as the apple question, no doubt we should have heard a great deal more about it from the Ministerial benches; but I much regret to see that it has not excited so much interest, or become such a popular question as it deserves. However, I seriously hope that when the subject comes before the House for discussion, it will be discussed as it ought to be—not as a party question, but as one which seriously affects the whole of this State. I can assure hon. members that, if once the rabbits are allowed to come into the settled parts, especially into the coastal districts, where we have vast extents of salt, sandy country, thickly covered with scrub, and a kind of scrub which remains green and is edible for rabbits at all times in the year, no human power will ever be able to get them out, and every pastoral industry within this State, if not absolutely ruined, will be hampered to such an extent that it will become unprofitable. Much has been said concerning the meat supply; and I think there is a motion before the House asking the Government to formulate some plan of getting a cheap supply of meat in this State. I think the only way of getting a cheap meat supply in our centres of population is to assist the pastoralist by every possible means in getting his produce to the market in something like fair condition. So far, there has been an attempt on the seaboard to give us shipping facilities, and a sort of half-hearted attempt to give us a stock route, or a supply of water upon a certain track which is termed a stock route; and that is all, for it is simply a name. People take advantage of it, thinking it to be a practicable route; and when they get part of the way down to the South with their fat stock, they find there is not sufficient water in any of the wells; consequently, their stock lose condition, and the meat, when it arrives here, is unfit for consumption, having lost so considerably in weight as to greatly increase the price to the consumer. To my mind, the only way to get cheap meat in the large

centres will be to facilitate the operations of the pastoralists in every possible way, or else to let the rabbits in, and then there will be any quantity of fresh meat, consisting of nothing but rabbits. Another hon. member, in the course of his remarks, spoke at some length concerning the members of this (Opposition) side of the House; but I think I can leave that matter, as it is not one of great importance. Then a great deal has been said concerning the prohibition on imported apples, and I am glad to see the prohibition removed. But the northern districts of this State are now in an infinitely worse position than they were before the prohibition was removed; for the reason that, to every part north of, I think, the 26th parallel of latitude, apples were admitted without any inspection, and without any conditions at all; but now it is necessary that all imported apples be landed at Fremantle, and be subject to inspection. And I consider, if it were safe under the old regulations to allow apples to be landed north of the 26th parallel, surely it would be perfectly safe to do so now. The member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) dealt at length with the native question. With this question I am fairly intimate, as I have been living north of Champion Bay for the last 24 years, and have seen the natives work under various conditions, and should therefore be some sort of authority on the subject. But I do not intend to deal with this just now, because I have no doubt the question will come up later, and then I can have an opportunity of giving my opinion and my experience. However, I can go so far as to indorse every word spoken by the member for East Kimberley. I might go as far as to say I deprecate in the strongest measure the action taken in publishing the reports. How they got possession of such reports, I do not know, and in nine cases out of ten those reports are absolutely false and without foundation. So far as the policy of the Government is concerned we have heard a great deal said about it, and for my part I think the policy a fair one under the circumstances. As things are at present we all recognise that the country is not in a position to launch into extensive public works, therefore I consider it reasonable on the part of the present administrators

to curtail expenditure as much as possible, and they are perfectly justified in bringing down a policy which will not incur any large expense. My sympathies are with them in this matter, and I shall give them my support as long as they administer the affairs of the State in a manner I consider correct.

Mr. F. W. MOORHEAD (North Murchison): In my case, like that of the member for Claremont (Mr. W. F. Sayer), the House has to thank the observations of another member for my intrusion in this debate. I had originally intended not to speak, and that intention had been confirmed by the very eloquent addresses we had from members dealing with the Address-in-reply; but this afternoon my attention was called to some observations addressed to the House by the member for Northam (Mr. G. Throssell) last week. I purpose replying to those observations, and, as the hour is late, to be brief with them. The hon. member has seen fit—I wish to impress upon the House that this is by way of personal explanation—to charge me with ingratitude; to charge me with practically biting the hand that was held out to me. I may say I am under no obligation to the late Government for any personal favours. If the hon. member chooses to style as personal favours the instances I shall presently record, then I promise the hon. member and those who sit with him that as long as I am a member of this House I shall continue to solicit such favours from whatever Government may be in power. The only instances I can recall in regard to which I may be considered under a personal obligation to my old chief, Sir John Forrest, are these. A policeman who had been called upon to resign had a grievance which did not seem likely to be immediately redressed by his superior officer. His case was that some 12 years ago he, in the discharge of his duty, received a wound to his nose. The doctors here treated it for cancer, and burdened that unfortunate man for about eight years. The man went to London, and returned in a most mutilated condition with a certificate from the doctors that he never had cancer. The ordeal caused him to be somewhat deranged mentally, and he became objectionable to his neighbours in the district. He was called upon to resign, and his

resignation was accepted two months before the end of the time which would have entitled him to a gratuity from the Police Benevolent Fund. He came to see me, and I solicited interference on the part of Sir John Forrest, and I am happy to say that Sir John Forrest, with the generosity and benevolence which characterised him, saw the justice of the claim, and personally looked into the matter of this gratuity. The only other instance in which I ever endeavoured to get the influence of Sir John Forrest was this. An old night-watchman on the railways after a continuous service of 13 years, during which he never missed his duty for one night, was killed whilst on duty. No action would lie, and the department did not appear to recognise that the widow had a claim. I approached Sir John Forrest, and I am glad to say that, with the same generosity and benevolence which characterised him in the previous instance, he procured £100 for the widow and family of that man. These are the only instances in which I ever solicited favours at the hands of the late Ministry. Perhaps it may be thought that the hon. gentleman (Mr. G. Throssell) is repeating the slanders which were echoed by his coadjutor, the late Minister for Lands (Mr. C. J. Moran), and which did not come under my observation till weeks after they were uttered or perhaps I should have noticed them. I am bound to notice them now, as they have been brought forward in the House by an ex-Minister in the position of the hon. member for Northam. The hon. gentleman may have been deluded into this by the fact that during the late administration of Sir John Forrest I was the recipient of "silk." That was not at my personal solicitation, nor was it by political favour; and I purpose very briefly to recount, even at the risk of detaining the House, the circumstances which led up to that.

A MEMBER: Your ability.

MR. MOORHEAD: In conjunction with the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James) and another gentleman, who occupies a seat in the Upper House, I laid before Sir John Forrest a request to be called to the inner bar. The two gentlemen joined with me in that request are gentlemen whose claims, I am happy to say, I advocated as far back as 1897.

One of them was my senior at the bar and occupied the highest position. Sir John Forrest did not choose to recognise their claim; and the suggestion was made to me that, if I separated my claim from those gentlemen's, the request might be acceded to. I refused, and here is my answer:—

I am just in receipt of yours of the 7th inst. Pray do not mistake the nature of my application. I have not asked for any personal favour. I merely requested, from what hitherto had been recognised as the proper quarter, a due recognition of my standing in the legal profession. It was sufficiently humiliating for me to be obliged to make such an application at all, as at home or in any of the other colonies men of similar standing would have long since been removed from the outer bar. As apparently you do not know exactly what to do with my application, allow me to relieve you of the responsibility by asking you to kindly return it, and forget all about the transaction.

In response to that, and in accordance with the ordinary consistency which characterised the late Cabinet when brought face to face with difficulties, the Ministry brought in certain regulations and compelled us to apply to the Chief Justice. I consulted the gentlemen who joined me, and they agreed to my making an application. I made my application to the Chief Justice, which was granted forthwith, and I am not under any obligation to the late Ministry. The hon. gentleman (Mr. G. Throssell) said I charged the late Ministry with rottenness and corruption. I deny that I ever suggested such a thing, and I am happy to have an opportunity of saying that a more honourable or straightforward man to follow than Sir John Forrest I have never met, and I should be happy to join him again were he here. I say so with this qualification, that I should follow him as a constitutional Minister with a Cabinet of men, and not of the creatures we had who placed him in the position he came to occupy, namely that of an unconstitutional Minister. Here are the words I addressed to my electors; these are the words I uttered on the platform; and these are the words I am prepared to stand by to-night:—

During the eighteen months that I have had the honour of representing the district I have been a close student of the method of government pursued, and I am reluctantly compelled to admit that constitutional procedure has often been departed from; that

more than one of our public departments have been and are being gravely mismanaged; that incompetent individuals are retained in responsible positions for which they are wholly unsuited; and that our finances have been plunged into hopeless confusion by a reckless and indifferent system of expenditure.

Allow me to ask: Does any member of this House, or any person outside it, contradict the assertions on which I based my change of political faith? What about our Excess Bills? Again, I say our finances have been plunged into hopeless confusion. What about the declaration of the coadjutor of the member for Northam, who told us that since 1896 not a single honest balance-sheet had been issued? What about the departure from constitutional precedent, when we had the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piessé) telling his constituents that from 1896 the estimates brought down to the House were below the proper figures?

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I altogether deny having said that.

MR. MOORHEAD: The statement, once more, appeared in the newspapers, and I have never seen a denial of it. I never heard of the denial until to-night. Of course, I am bound to accept it. Only the other night the hon. member in his speech admitted, in regard to the expenditure from the revenue, that the works were always under-estimated.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I did not say "always." I said "occasionally."

MR. MOORHEAD: It ought not to have been occasionally, even. Take every one of our public works, and let the hon. member point to a single one of them in which the actual cost did not exceed the estimate. I never attacked the honour of Ministers. Not for one moment did I assert that the Government of Sir John Forrest, which I followed for 18 months, was rotten and corrupt. So far from that, I pointed out to my constituents that the unconstitutional position which Sir John Forrest was ultimately obliged to take up arose from the fact that his coadjutors did not appear to recognise the responsibility of their position as Cabinet Ministers—arose from the fact that his coadjutors became simply heads of departments. If anyone in the community wanted anything, he did not go to the head of the department: he went invariably to Sir John Forrest. Our

first Premier was the creature of circumstances. If he had had what I contend he ought to have had—men who recognised the responsibility of their positions as Cabinet Ministers, we should have had better government. The member for Northam the other night, when dealing with my remarks on the subject of his minute, said that I charged him with having participated in a political dodge, and that I said that on his shoulders rested the responsibility for the present position of affairs. He stated that he could hardly have been trusted in politics if he had done what I had charged him with. I pointed out that in the papers on the file in the office there is not one single word which would bear out the hon. member in his statement, that he left behind him a memorandum to the effect that these "men had proved their case up to the hilt." If he chose to make a charge of participating in a political dodge out of that, I cannot help it. Did not the hon. member dangle out promises through the mouth of his late Minister, Mr. Wood? Was not a promise of the Havelock street bridge dangled before the electors of West Perth? Why, a load of timber was actually carted down to the site before the land was resumed; actually the land was not resumed then. Did he (Mr. Throssell) not dangle out a promise in connection with the William street bridge? Is it not a fact, that tenders were actually called for a girder whilst the plans are actually not prepared yet? Is that not dangling promises before the electors? And were not those things done before the recent general election? I say, in conclusion, that the hon. member in writing that note to Mr. Guilfoyle in which he stated that the mer had proved their case up to the hilt, was playing the part of a political Codlin. It was a case of "Codlin's your friend, not Short." He was saying, in effect, "I am your friend, not this man who has got into power. Watch me and my supporters. It is true we don't mean to turn out the Ministry in a moment, but when we come along there is no doubt the working man will benefit." That was the astute position taken up by my friend the member for Northam. I say I refuse to be judged by the standard set up by the hon. member. He states that he had

always, up to that evening, found me an honourable man, with a spotless reputation. "But," he said, "the honourable member had, on his own showing, deserted the party that had granted him personal favours and had turned round and charged it with rottenness and corruption." It was only the other evening he discovered that. I refuse to be judged by the standard of a code of honour which discovers political turpitude only when a member is personally attacked.

MR. J. GARDINER (in reply as mover): I believe I have the right, as mover of the Address-in-reply, to speak.

SEVERAL OPPOSITION MEMBERS: We cannot hear you for the rain (then falling on the roof).

[A pause ensued.]

MR. GARDINER (continuing): I should like to avail myself of the privilege of replying to the speeches of many hon. members; but I believe there is a greater business in hand at present. It does not matter very much to the country what I think of some of the speeches of those members, or what they think of me; but it does matter very greatly to the country what we do in regard to the great strike with which we are now faced. Therefore, I shall merely thank those hon. members who have made such kind references to my deliverance, and shall defer my criticism of their speeches to some more opportune moment.

ADOPTION OF ADDRESS.

Question — that the Address-in-reply be adopted — put, and passed without dissent.

RAILWAY WORKERS' STRIKE—MOTION BY THE PREMIER.

DEBATE ON THE POSITION (PROLONGED).

THE PREMIER, in moving for the suspension of the Standing Orders, said he did so for the purpose of moving a special resolution relating to the strike.

Standing Orders suspended.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake): I submit this motion to the House:—

That this House deplores the existence of the present strike of railway employees, and is of opinion that the men should at once return to work, and thereupon a board should be appointed to consider and settle the question of the demand for increased wages, without any delay.

I am relieved to think it possible to-night, or at any rate within a few hours, that the responsibility which has rested on my shoulders for the last few days will be removed, and we shall have a settlement of this unfortunate matter. Hon. members may, or may not, believe me when I say that during the last few days the pressure upon myself and upon my colleagues has been very great; it has been very trying, because we have endeavoured to do justice and at the same time to maintain the Constitution. I might have hesitated in bringing forward this motion this evening, but the House is aware that the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) has, upon two occasions, failed to obtain an opportunity of bringing forward a definite motion. No member of the House regretted more than I did that he, unfortunately, was blocked by the Standing Orders; and I felt it was my duty if, by any possible means I could assist him to have the matter discussed, it should be done. I am glad to think now that the motion is before the House. The motion expresses the opinion of myself and my colleagues, and any hon. member is open to move any amendment upon it; consequently we shall get a definite expression of opinion from this Assembly. Again, I should not perhaps have moved had I not been in a position to declare that after the negotiations of the last few days, they have now all ended. I and my colleagues have written declaring our views on the subject; our demands or requirements of the men have been refused; and we have made it a condition precedent really, namely that the men must go back to work if this matter is to be decided in a friendly and proper spirit. But we have given a pledge, and we give it now, that a proper board representing persons on both sides of the dispute shall be appointed to determine, without any delay whatever, the question which is at issue; and moreover we have declared that we will reinstate these men in their original positions without any qualifications whatever if they will return to work at once. I say we will reinstate them at once, every one of them, and we make no reservation; and I also declare, and I declare it upon my honour, that there shall be no "marked" men on account of the recent dispute. (Several MEMBERS:

Hear, hear). Also, while I desire to be fair to the men who have gone out on strike, I must be equally fair to those who have come to the assistance of the State in a moment of emergency, and the men who have been temporarily employed will be offered employment at the same rate of wages and will not be discharged. We shall no doubt require more men to assist in the working of the railways; up to the present moment so few new men have been taken on that we shall not be hampered by their presence; that we can not only replace the strikers in their old positions, but I am also happy to state that we shall be able to continue the men who have come to our assistance. To show that the negotiations are ended, I will read telegrams which have passed between myself and the executive committee of the Railway Association this afternoon. I do not propose to quote my letters of the 8th and 9th of this month, that is yesterday and the day before, declaring the views which we entertain on the question, because everybody knows the contents of those letters, and they can be seen in yesterday's and to-day's morning newspapers; but I wrote, as I say, letters on the 8th and 9th, and this afternoon about 4 o'clock I received this telegram from Mr. Guilfoyle, the general secretary of the Railway Association:—

Your letter 9th instant received. Men will not return to work until fetti's grievances settled. Why not accept board agreed on at conference Monday, please?—(Signed) W. GUILFOYLE.

In reply I despatched the following:—

Government have always been ready to accept board. Have so far received no reply to my letters of 8th and 9th.

A slight mistake was made there which I corrected with this telegram:—

Slight mistake in my last telegram. I should have referred only to my letter of 8th, as I presume your telegram part reply to letter of 9th.

That did not alter the substance of the telegram. Then I received this from Mr. Guilfoyle, and I ask hon. members particularly to listen to it:—

Government rejected board agreed upon at conference on Monday, after occupying attention of my committee and myself all day. Subsequently we decided no use continuing negotiations.

I then, in reply to that telegram, said:—

I accept your decision that negotiations shall no longer continue, but protest strongly

against your assertion that Government rejected board.

Hon. members will surely remember that the speeches of everybody, and the correspondence, show that a board was actually agreed upon to settle the grievances of certain civil servants. That board was composed of two parties taken as nearly as possible from the two sides in the dispute; two members actually from the executive of the Railway Association, and two members from the staff of the railways. Now here was a board, as I say, to settle civil servants' disputes, consisting of three civil servants, and a fourth man, the actual accredited agent of the men who were fighting the department. Can it be said, then, that those men had any fear that justice, from their point of view would be denied them? Could anything be more liberal than the intention of the Government in agreeing to the constitution of that board? And does that look as if it were a trick, does that look as if they were unfairly treated, does it look as if we discredited their representatives? I say, no. Nothing could be fairer, nothing from a manly standpoint could be more honourable than that. The Ministry have decided on a certain course. We contend that the demand for the increase of wages has never been absolutely refused by the Commissioner of Railways; and we say, moreover, that from the time the demand was made we were ever willing to refer the dispute to a board which would represent both sides and that the matter should be inquired into and determined without any delay. And, moreover, we said that the award of increased pay, if allowed to those who claimed it, should act retrospectively. Recognising the principle of trade unionism, recognising what the Legislature has affirmed, we desired to follow what appeared to us to be the proper course that with the idea of avoiding strikes we should refer this matter to arbitration for final determination. But those very men who clamoured for the recognition of this principle, now that it has been given, find are the first to violate it. I have found myself in this position: I must either yield to what I believe to be an improper demand, improperly brought forward, or I must myself violate the constitution. In disputes and difficulties between parties, we have recourse to

some tribunal. Sometimes it is the tribunal of justice, the courts of the land, and sometimes it is to arbitration. But the old days of trial by ordeal have passed; though unhappily it seems the parties on the other side of this dispute desire to revert to that old barbaric custom. We say that this system of settling matters by strikes is only another form of terrorism, and the desire of the public is that every Legislature should substitute for that form of terrorism something more manly and more humane; and in that we recognise the principle of arbitration. But when either of these fail, if the law give the subject no redress, or if he be unfairly treated before the tribunal of the court or of arbitration, there is a final court of appeal under the British Constitution, namely Parliament itself. Parliament was in session when this strike began. If the men feared failure to obtain redress of their grievances by the other course which I have suggested, was it not open to them, whilst Parliament was in session, to make an appeal to hon. members who sit here, members who represent every shade of opinion, and I believe every interest in the State? And if we are not capable of deciding as men a dispute between men, then we have no right to occupy these benches. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] But our first duty is to uphold the Constitution. This is no dispute between labour and capital. It cannot be said that in this particular instance there is any grinding-down of labour under the tyrannical heel of capital. The strikers in this instance are like those who occupy this Treasury bench: they are civil servants, who should recognise me as their official superior; and I, as their official superior, recognise the superiority of Parliament—Parliament who are my masters, not the strikers. (General applause.) Parliament, indeed, is the master of both parties. If I have denied these men justice, if they cannot get justice from me or at the hands of any tribunal which they elect, or upon which we agree, then I say, let them come before this tribunal, which again I affirm is the master of both parties. We have now to maintain the dignity of the Government; we have to maintain the dignity of the State; we have to

maintain, too, the dignity of Parliament: and I declare with all sincerity that, if the Government be not upheld in the course they have taken, the power of Parliament itself is imperilled. The men who are out on strike, I have declared and still declare are civil servants. Their salaries are the subject of a vote of this House; the money to pay those salaries was passed last year; and it is the duty, I have said inside and outside of this House, for Ministers to keep within the vote of Parliament: they are not justified in exceeding the authorisations save in exceptional circumstances. And the civil servants know that we are bound by that principle; they know that they are dependent, not upon individual Ministers, but upon Parliament, for their salaries; and they know, too, that they cannot get an increase in their salaries without the vote of Parliament; and, indeed, if we were to give that increase, we should be violating the big constitutional principle for which we have contended, namely the necessity for recognising Parliament and Parliament alone as the proper authority to control the public funds. To grant these men this increase at the present moment would, I say, be a violation of a constitutional principle; and if we were to accede to that request without a vote of Parliament, you gentlemen on both sides of the House would not be doing your duty if you did not burl me from office. Again I say, with the knowledge of these circumstances, why did not the men appeal to Parliament—to Parliament, the masters of us both—Parliament, to whom they must look for their salaries and for any increases; and if it were in our power to give those increases to-day, could we not give increases to other civil servants during the course of the year? And how can we possibly estimate our expenditure if increases are to be forced upon the Government by their own civil servants, whilst Parliament is out of session? I refuse to budge an inch from that constitutional position; but if the House declare that I am wrong, very well. Other gentlemen, I have no doubt, can be found to take my place and the places of my colleagues. What happened on Monday was this. A board was agreed upon, as I have said, but the strikers declared at once, "Though we appoint the board, we will not be

bound by their decision." Was there ever anything more absurd than that? They also contended the men would not return to work unless they were satisfied with the decision of the board. What was the good of that? Here we appoint a board, and we emasculate it at once, rendering it practically useless either as a deliberative or judicial body. If I were to consent to such a course as that, I should properly be laughed at as a spineless politician; a man who is only seeking an opportunity to give way; a man who makes himself a feather bed. No; I prefer the hard cobble-stones of constitutional principle, and, if I fall, I fall on and by them. The third point was the question of reinstatement. I yielded to that. I told the executive in my letter that the men would be reinstated at once, but at the same time the people who had been taken on ought to be and should be duly regarded; and I regretted to see in yesterday's *Morning Herald* there was a gross misrepresentation of my letter. [MR. F. CONNOR: Oh!] I do hope hon. members will not interject. I feel that if I am thrown off the thread of my remarks, I shall not do justice to myself or this House. I say I was grossly misrepresented in that newspaper, because it was suggested that this remark about the reinstatement, or the difficulty of reinstating if there was delay, amounted to a threat. I am going to read an extract from this newspaper. It says:—

But if the matter of the board has been mismanaged, what shall be said of their proposal as to the reinstatement of the men on strike? What the Premier's letter on this point really amounts to is that reinstatement shall be conditional upon the claims of the men who have been taken on during the strike.

Listen to that: "conditional upon the claims of the men who have been taken on during the strike"!

If the Ministers had consulted men of experience in dealing with large bodies of workmen, such as Mr. Morgans and Mr. Teesdale Smith, they would have discovered that trades unionists do not sacrifice their own men. The essence of trades unionism is unity. The men have sworn to stand or fall together. Here in Mr. Leake's letter is a suggestion that the men who have been taken on should be retained in their positions, and the strikers whom they have succeeded should not regain their places. It would be actual dishonour for trades unionists who have gone on strike to accept a settlement under which a number of them would be sacrificed. In no large strike has

such a condition been accepted, and if the railway men were to accept it in this case, they would be held in contempt by every trades unionist in Australia. Then Mr. Leake proceeds to emphasise his condition as to reinstatement by saying the longer the strike continues the more difficult it will become to replace the strikers when a settlement takes place. This is the sort of threat that only hardens the heart of a striker. If all other conditions had been satisfactory, this one as to reinstatement made it absolutely impossible for the men to accept the terms of settlement.

I think this was a misrepresentation, because I tell the House that, before that article was written, I myself was in the editorial office of that paper, and I told the editor a message had gone to the executive of the association to say that, if the men returned to work in the morning, they would one and all be reinstated at once. That is the misrepresentation I complain of. I make no comment upon it, but I think it fair to myself to show it is by representations of that kind the strike is continued; and when we find that course pursued, when we find speeches distorted by the executive of this body, when we find that men are not kept informed of the procedure and the communications which have taken place, when we find that a few think a letter from me as the Premier of this State is not good enough to put before the executive, then I say they are not fighting fairly; and when, in addition to that, we find that men read in public only half a letter, only so much of a letter as fits in with the views they are advocating, then I say we have received no fair treatment, and that the men and the general public are gulled. I cannot submit to that sort of thing. If these men will not defer to the tribunal of Parliament, I do so. I want to know where I stand. I want to know whether sound government, honest government, or at any rate manly intentions, are to be maintained. What I want to know is whether I am right or whether I am wrong. If I have done wrong, for goodness' sake let Parliament say so, and say so with no uncertain voice. If I am right, I appeal to you as men to stand by me. This is a crisis in the affairs of this country which has never arisen before; the eyes of the Australian States are upon us; and it behoves us to show that the Government stand firm, and that we are going to

recognise the rights of the people. Are the Ministry going to control the affairs of this country, or are they and the Parliament to be controlled by a section of the civil service?

MR. F. CONNOR: This is not a party question at all.

THE PREMIER: I know it is not; and that is why I am throwing so much vehemence into my words. I feel that I can appeal to the manliness and good sense of every member of Parliament.

MR. JACOBY: Patriotism.

THE PREMIER: "Patriotism," which is better still, and the idea of constitutional right. It is not a question now as to whether seven shillings or eight shillings a day is an adequate wage. We have never refused that request. If it were a question of seven shillings or eight shillings a day, it might be determined easily. They say there have been pledges, and that we ought to give way; but I say that if it is so simple as that, if the duty of the Government is so obvious, there was no necessity for a strike. If the claim is just, why should the men strike? No; that is not the point. The question is this, and it is this I am fighting for—it is not a question of rise or no rise, but a question whether the Ministry and Parliament shall rule, or whether the Western Australian Government Railway Employees' Association of civil servants shall dominate us both.

MR. F. CONNOR: Right or wrong.

THE PREMIER: Right or wrong, certainly. Are we to delegate our powers, not only as a legislative but as a governing body, to a parcel of civil servants? In using that expression, I do not wish to convey any disrespect of the civil servants. I know what a body of men they all are, and I know too what a fine body of men are these railway employees—none finer in the State. But I do deplore this fact, that these men, physically a fine lot and mentally superior to the average man, should be misled by one or two persons who are clamouring for notoriety, and are aiming at a power which the Constitution denies them. I will admit that the strength of their position is enormous; not by reason of its justice, but by reason of the power they wield. It is the strength of force and might, not of justice.

A MEMBER: The force of cruelty.

THE PREMIER: It is the force of cruelty, one hon. member says. These men control, or at any rate think they control, the carrying power of this State. They know that if they strike and succeed in inducing their friends to come out with them, they can paralyse our carrying trade and cut off supplies from the goldfields, thus exciting perhaps the angry passions of the people. They think if they pursue on the fields the tactics they have adopted down here, they will put the people against the Ministry, and that consequently the Ministry, no matter how right they are, must yield to this pressure. But if we yield to-day, we must yield again next week or next month. We have come face to face with a difficulty, and I am going to see it out. There has got to be a decision on this point one way or the other. Either I am right or I am wrong. If I am wrong, tell me so; if I am right, stand by me.

A MEMBER: You are right.

THE PREMIER: I say if this continues, these men have the power to force the mine-owners of Coolgardie to shut down the mines; these men can turn out of work nearly all the hundreds and thousands of men on the fields; they can raise a riot, if they pursue there those inflammatory methods they have adopted here. The men on the fields cannot live without food supplies, and we have resolved to do our best to keep up those food supplies. We have determined that, if necessary, we shall curtail the passenger traffic and have special trains run to the fields, conveying nothing but food supplies. We want to be true to the people on the fields, and we shall do our very best for them. Every other public convenience must suffer, but human life must be respected. If we do not make an effort in this direction, we certainly will be liable to censure. Consequently, our first effort in the morning, if the strike continues, will be to put on what new hands we can to load up food trains. We will call for volunteers from the public for the service, and we intend to despatch a train of food supplies to the goldfields in order to show the public up there—I do not say our friends up there, I say the public—that we at any rate are loyal in our intentions; and that what we say we intend to do.

MR. F. CONNOR : You did not say that at West Perth, when you were standing.

THE PREMIER : Is it fair to bring in an electioneering claptrap cry on a great occasion like this? I regret that the hon. member should descend to such a level. I have always regarded him, although a political opponent, still as a man; and I have always thought that whatever faults he might have, he at any rate regarded the public interest as the paramount consideration. Well, I do not know that I can say any more. I have endeavoured as briefly but as emphatically as possible to lay the painful position of affairs before the House. I have done all I can to allay any feelings of irritation. You will notice that there has been no talk of calling out this body or that body, that there has been no threat of anything of that kind. And we do not propose there shall be. If we cannot win by appealing to the good sense of the public at large, then we cannot win at all, and we must go down. But we will go down in those circumstances with absolute ignominy. I do not want to go down with ignominy; I do not want it said of me that I was afraid to face a difficulty when I met it. And I am conscious of this, that if I were to yield under pressure, the very men who beat me would laugh at me to-morrow and tell me that I was —

A MEMBER : They would despise you.

THE PREMIER : They would say, "Another of these jelly-fish politicians, who will yield at once when he is squeezed." If one man knows he can squeeze another man in authority, he knows too that another man can do it; and he knows, consequently, that he cannot possibly have any confidence whatever, nor can his friends have any confidence, in the stability of that man in authority as a leader. At this early stage of my political career — and I consider this is practically the beginning of my career — if I go down, I want it to be seen that I go down as a man of honour. I will go down with my colours nailed to the mast, and I will go down fighting to the very last breath. Then I shall go down knowing perfectly well that at any rate I have done my very best to maintain constitutional rights. This Parliament must be dominated by no power: it must be dominated by no Ministry within, it

must be dominated by no mob without; because, if it is possible for either of the two to happen, then away with constitutional government altogether. Now here is a distinct issue. We have asked the House to affirm in this motion the principle for which we have contended. We have not by any form of words, or by any pretty phrases, attempted to avoid the real point at issue, or to catch the vote of any member. The underlying principle of the present situation is this — never forget it — that before the dispute can be settled or considered, the men must go back to work. That is the principle — each man must go back to work. Then, when that position is attained, I give my promise in this House to Parliament, as a Minister and as a man, that every step shall be taken to have the matter settled with the least possible delay. I believe it can be settled, if not within a few hours, at any rate within a few days, and at most within a week. Possibly, it may be settled in a few hours. Now, having put the case so clearly, hon. members know exactly how we stand and what we intend to do. I want to emphasise that I will not budge an inch from the position which I have taken up — absolutely I will not budge. But in saying that, I do not mean that I will not accept any verbal amendments to this motion, such as will make the meaning more clear perhaps. If, for instance, hon. members want to declare within what time the matter should be settled, I will agree to anything like that. If they want to say anything as to the constitution of the board, I do not think I can honestly object to that. All I want is that a board shall be agreed upon to determine this matter, and that the question shall be settled once and for all. Now, I admit I am heartily tired of the situation; but I am not going to turn tail, I am not going to leave my friends in the lurch, I am not going to leave Parliament in the lurch, and I am not going to leave the country in the lurch, so long as they will support me. But if there be an adverse vote on this motion, my resignation is in the hands of the Governor immediately it is passed. I feel so strongly upon the question that I want it to be distinctly understood that I cannot carry on this fight any longer unless I have the support of the public,

or certainly of Parliament; and I believe if Parliament be unanimous in passing this motion, the men who are opposed to us, and who have been misled, are sufficiently reasonable to believe that Parliament represents public opinion, or at any rate is capable of expressing it; and they will say "We have fought as men: we cannot fight against every constitutional principle and every constitutional body." And as soon as they know that they will get justice, that Parliament has affirmed that justice shall be done, I believe they will say "The fight is over: we will go back;" because they will know from the assurance I have given to-night that every man will be reinstated in his old position; no man will be "marked." With these observations, although they have been lengthy, I submit the motion to the favourable consideration of hon. members.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): I second the motion.

HON. F. H. PLESSE (Williams): Judging by the expression of opinion which fell from members a few evenings ago when this matter was touched upon, and when they seemed to be unanimous, we are upon common ground. I am sure it will not be expected of me to go very fully into the matter, for the reason that I have already expressed my opinion in regard to the course that should be taken. No doubt this is an occurrence which we all regret, and there is no one who regrets it more than I do for the reason that I have already in my official capacity in the past had to face similar difficulties, therefore I am able to sympathise with those gentlemen who have now to face this difficulty. I do not wish to be recriminating nor to reflect on any member of the House in regard to their action in the past, but nearly a year ago I stood on the floor of this House, and although I regret I had to take up the time of the House for two hours in putting my case before hon. members, I am sorry to say very little sympathy was shown to me in my position. Now to-day we find the Ministry faced with a difficulty which I think could have been averted if some support had been given to me in the past. It was never my desire to fight the railway men. My desire was always to work on terms of amity with these men, to do justice to

them, to be fair to them, and to endeavour as far as possible to administer the department which I then had control of in the best interests of the State. I tried to do my best, and I hope that in a measure I succeeded in many respects. In regard to the unfortunate disturbance similar to this, to which I have referred, had it not been for many of the expressions of opinion made in this House and many other places, I think we should not to-day have had to face this trouble. Now we have to deal with it, and I am sure the speech delivered by the Premier to-night must convince hon. members, and the people of the country, that it is a matter that must not be trifled with. It is a matter that must be dealt with firmly, at the same time not defiantly; still I think, in expressing the opinion the Premier did to-night, he has given the ideas of most right-thinking men on this question. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I have always said that if Parliament is to be dominated in this country, if the Government are to be dominated by a section of the civil servants of the country, or I may say the workers who are connected with a great institution such as the Railway Department is, then good-by to all authority. I could, I am sure, deal very fully with this matter, but as I have just now said I think the words which have been uttered to-night so fully convey to hon. members my opinion, because I may say on the whole I indorse the remarks which have fallen from the Premier; and I say this too that there is no man more desirous than I am to-day to see this matter brought to a termination. If I were to attempt to gain a political advantage, I could do so; but I am not desirous of attempting that, notwithstanding the fact that in some sections of the Press it has been stated that I am a seeker after office, and that I am anxious for office. I may say I am not. If it be necessary in the interests of the country for me to fill such a position, I am always ready to do my best; but I may assure the House, and it may not be generally known, that I am not one who seeks after office; and I say this too that if the price to be paid for that office be the helping to continue this unfortunate strike, then I am not an aspirant for it. I am sorry that the public, who after all are no doubt imbued with good desires

and motives, in a great measure have helped to continue this unfortunate state of affairs—at any rate a section of the people. There seem to be so many mistakes in regard to the matter that it would take hours to discuss them all. We find from time to time, appearing in the Press, letters from many people on the side of the men, stating that they consider the Government should give way, and that eight shillings a day should be paid to the men. No one is more desirous than I that the men should receive a fair day's pay for the work they are doing; but it is not a matter for the public or the Parliament to judge of until full inquiry has been made into the whole of the circumstances; therefore I take it the board that the Minister has determined on in this instance is one that should commend itself to the country, because, in doing what the Government have done, in asking for time to consider the matter, they are considering the interests of the large body of taxpayers of the country; because, had he conceded this point, it is hard to say how far-reaching it would have been. I am well aware of the difficulties with which the hon. gentleman has been faced; and I may say, knowing as I do of these difficulties, and also the results which might follow a hasty determination in this direction in regard to the expenditure, there is no one who can commend him more than I do for the action he has taken. But I will also say I am sorry to find that, on one or two occasions, the hon. gentleman has not acted in the conciliatory way in which he should have acted. Of course, there is no doubt he has been desirous of acting zealously in the position in which he is placed. I am sure he has been desirous of maintaining the dignity of his position and also his strength of character. I commend him for all this. I am sure no one will commend him more than I do, because it is following my own principle in the past. I have tried, wherever it has been necessary, to maintain strength in regard to a principle. If that principle were such as I thought was in the interests of the country, I have tried to maintain it strongly. The Minister, in endeavouring to do this, was perhaps at times carried away by his zeal or his desire to maintain that principle in a strong manner:

hence it appears from time to time that one or two incidents may have, as it were, conveyed to the public mind that the intention was not so conciliatory as it might have been. I do not wish to deal with this matter at any great length. I could say a good deal in regard to the past; I do not intend to touch upon it; it is sufficient for us to deal with the present. And, as I said long ago, although I had differences, still when those differences were settled by others who assumed the responsibility, so far as I was concerned I was determined, if ever it came to my lot again to deal with that large department, to allow the past to remain the past, and to deal fairly and justly with that great mass of employees. I am confident, too, that we have in that body a large class of men who are a credit to the country, and I quite indorse the Premier's remarks in regard to them. One thing to which the Premier alluded I should just like to mention: that is, the recognition of the railway associations. Of course, once this was granted, we all hoped the difficulties would disappear, and that we should find the men working in a conciliatory spirit, and with a desire to do their best in the interests of the country. We considered, too, that the expression of opinion given some time ago by the secretary of the Engine-drivers' and Firemen's Association in regard to the principle of strikes, should so far have convinced the men that to resort to such barbarous methods as these—to use his own words—was to resort to a means which the country would not countenance. I have only to refer to those words which I uttered in this House on the 13th September last; and I will repeat that which I then gave to the House—the words of the secretary himself:—

I hardly think it necessary to assure you that such a thing as going on strike has not at any time been mooted or even mentioned among the members of this association, for one of the first items in the preamble to the constitution adopted by the conference held in Melbourne in 1882, and which is binding on this association in common with the kindred bodies in the sister colonies, reads as follows:—“Strikes and other barbarous methods of obtaining redress are not in consonance with the spirit of the times, and we rely on the justice of our cause and the force of public opinion to attain our ends, and the results so obtained are more lasting, although a greater

length of time may be necessary to gain the required point."

I may say of these words, coming as they did from that official of the executive, that if the principles they contained had only been adhered to in this instance, the end which they wished to attain could have been attained in the way there expressed, and attained with much more honour than is likely to be achieved through the means they have now adopted. I am sure everyone must regret this strike; that the men should have resorted to it, is also to be regretted; that they, now the opportunity is offered them through this motion of returning to their work, will take advantage of it, is sincerely to be desired. I should like to say I think it perhaps might be an inducement to those who are wavering, and also might help to restore the running of the trains, if a time were fixed; and therefore it might be well to make the motion read as follows: That a board should be appointed to consider and settle the question of the demand for increased wages; that the words "without delay" be struck out, and the following added: "and to report within a certain time"—fixing, say, a week. I think a week would be a sufficient time to deal with this one point; and therefore there should be no difficulty, considering too that sufficient inquiry has already been made throughout the department in regard to the question of wages in this special case, in bringing the strike to a conclusion. That would possibly meet with the approval of the House, and would probably bring about, at an earlier stage, a solution of the difficulty. I should like to say one word, too, before I conclude in regard to the wages, in reference to the many comments which have been made by the public as to the men being entitled to 8s. a day. We must not forget this is a matter which has certainly received or should have received the attention of the Commissioner of Railways, and which probably should have been settled. I shall not touch upon that point very fully, because all I know is from the reports I have heard. But as regards my own action in this matter, this request for wages did not come before me until the week before I resigned office; in fact it came to me during, I think, the first week in August. I virtually resigned on the 16th August;

consequently, I had not time to deal with it fully. But in regard to the question of the gangers, there was a decision arrived at that the gangers be paid at a certain rate; but the difference between the other men and the gangers was so small that I did not care, without having a scheme of classification placed before me, to deal with it at that time; hence the reason it was referred back, with a request that a classification should be made and the request again submitted. It is well known that I left office on the 23rd August; consequently there was not sufficient time to bring up the matter again. I may say, for the information of the people, who do not seem to understand this subject, that upon this great railway system there are different lengths of line, some requiring more attention than others; and we must not forget that there are different conditions of climate, different circumstances in which the men live; hence the reason I was anxious to have a classification, grading the men according to the positions in which they were situated or according to where they worked; and I think it should commend itself to the House and to the men themselves that such a classification should be carried out. If there is to be a minimum, and if it be fixed at 7s. or 7s. 6d. or whatever it may be, let it be fixed. But let there be grades; because unless there are grades, there will be great difficulty in carrying out this service in anything like a satisfactory manner, either to the Government or to the men. And we must not forget that in some districts the work is lighter than in others. If we are to pay the men the same rate of pay for their services, then we must increase the length of line they have to work, or must reduce the number of men employed in the different gangs. All this means time, and time should be given to the Commissioner and his officers to deal with this subject. If it be decided that 8s. a day shall be paid to these men, let the decision rest with those who recommend it, and let the country pay it; but if it be decided that they shall start at a maximum of 7s. or 7s. 6d. and with grades going up to 8s. 6d., I take it that also should be accepted by the men as a final settlement of this difficulty. I have mentioned this because it seems that

people who are constantly writing say the men should be paid 8s. a day irrespective of the conditions, and I believe that if I were only able to trace out many of the writers of those letters we find to-day, I should discover they are paying their own men only 7s. a day, but because this is a Government concern and they will gain popularity, they write to recommend 8s. I say those people are not true friends of this country. I have never subordinated my own personal views in order to gain popularity or to achieve gain in a political sense. It should be the duty of every man who is desirous to help forward the interests of this country to study this question thoroughly, and to decide upon it irrespective of the consequences to him politically. Notwithstanding the fact that I could probably say many things—and I was inclined to do so, for I felt much hurt over this subject in the past, but I restrained myself—I say let bygones be bygones in the interests of this great country and this great railway system, which, after all, is the main artery of communication in the country, the life-blood, I may say, of its progress; and why should we man that by supporting those who, I am sure, are unfortunately advised, and who probably have adopted a course which cannot be supported by any right-thinking man in this country?

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): I rise to move an amendment, namely:—

That all the words after "that" be struck out, and the following words be inserted in lieu thereof:—"This House, while recognising the propriety of the Government demand that differences between the Railway Department and its employees should be settled by arbitration, is of opinion that owing to the long delays—caused by unavoidable political changes—which have occurred in dealing with the present dispute, and to the general admission of the justness of the claims of the permanent-way men, arbitration should be waived in this instance, and recommends that the Government should accede to those claims."

This evening I feel a sense of responsibility which I fancy very few members have experienced on their first entering Parliament. At the very outset, I would ask members to believe I am not actuated in any way by any personal motive, but that my desire is to see the end of this terrible strike, and my anxiety is in the interests not of the men only, and not of the mem-

bers of the Government, or members of this House, but of the great community of Western Australia. I have no personal interest to serve more than this, that in common with all business men my greatest aim is to see the strike ended, and to that end I myself am sacrificing a considerable amount of personal popularity in certain circles. Before I go any further I would like to say it has been said I am a member for a labour constituency. I am not member for a labour constituency. The labour vote in South Fremantle covers a very small percentage of the total voters in that district. I am speaking under a sense of very great disadvantage; I am a victim of circumstances. Owing to my want of knowledge I was precluded from debating this subject last evening; and, owing to a bungle perhaps on the part of the gentleman on my left (Mr. C. H. Rason), I was again precluded from introducing the motion. I now labour under the greater disadvantage of having to follow the Premier, an old experienced parliamentary hand, and a brilliant speaker. Worse than that, I have to face the utterances of the leader of the party on this side of the House; but I will say nothing about that, because this is not a party question, and in that respect I trust that even should my amendment be carried, the Premier will not put into force that threat which he held out to us a little while ago.

A MEMBER: You had better ask him.

MR. DIAMOND: I ask members not to interrupt. This is a very difficult task I have to perform, and if you will give me a chance I will do it to the best of my ability. We have heard a great deal this evening from the Premier about the Constitution; we have heard from him about the terrorism of strikes; we have heard about the capitalists grinding down labour, and so on—

THE PREMIER: No; you have not.

MR. DIAMOND: I am quoting your words.

THE PREMIER: You are misquoting me.

MR. DIAMOND: But having heard so much about constitutionalism, etcetera, we have heard nothing at all about the real subject we are to discuss this evening, the absolute rights and wrongs of the case. We have not heard one word of that, and I will endeavour in very

plain words to lay the actual rights and wrongs before this House. In doing so, I repeat I am not here as an advocate of the railway men. I am here to advocate the public cause, and do not you forget it. Public opinion is sweeping round, and is coming in with such a tremendous stream that it will overwhelm those who are standing in its way. The rights and the wrongs of the case are these. The men formulated a demand or claim on the department a long time ago; I believe 12 months ago or more. I believe they say they made the claim 18 months ago.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: They made it in August last.

MR. DIAMOND: They were bandied about from pillar to post. A clear statement of the case was made at a meeting held in the Fremantle town hall last Saturday night, and that statement has not been gainsaid. One Commissioner of Railways did nothing, another did nothing, and now we have a third Commissioner who is going to do nothing. The facts of the case are as follow. These men are working in the lowest grade of the service at 7s. per day. Is there a man in this House who will say that 7s. per day is a fair and reasonable wage for those men, considering the cost of living in this State? No; there is no man in the House who will say so. The gentlemen on the other side of the House, members of the Government who are opposing the demands of the men, dare not say it. The men have asked for an advance of 1s. per day over and over again. No one has ever said that they were not entitled to it. They were put off with all sorts of specious promises. They were never given a fair, straightforward answer by anybody until I believe the late Premier left that minute of his, saying the men had proved their case right up to the hilt.

A MEMBER: He did not leave that minute.

MR. DIAMOND: All parties concede practically, if not in words, that the demand is just. It is not the whole of the railway service that is demanding this increase of 1s. per day; it is only one section of the men, requiring little or no classification, who wished to establish a minimum wage. Is that minimum too high? It is impossible for people in this State to contend that the men are not

entitled to the payment of 8s. per day which they ask.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: Are they married or single men?

MR. DIAMOND: It having been generally conceded that the men are entitled to this rise in wages, the question comes, why could not they get it?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Who conceded that?

MR. DIAMOND: You talk about arbitration, and boards of this and boards of that. This House and the Upper House, or both of them together, last year shut the men out from arbitration and conciliation. Is that the fault of the men? Had that Arbitration and Conciliation Bill not been mutilated as it was in a stupid, senseless manner, the law of the land would have been such to-day that the men in the Railway Service Association would be registered under it, and it would be utterly impossible for this strike to take place. Now, I ask hon. members to give consideration to these facts. If I am stating anything not absolutely according to fact, I shall be glad to have it contradicted. The men are shut out from arbitration and conciliation by the deliberate act of a majority of Parliament—whether it is the Lower or the Upper House I am not prepared to say, and I do not think that point is of any vital importance. The men are shut out from the benefits of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, which comprised a compulsory clause and a definition of labour by which clerks were excluded. There seems to be an idea, in the Upper House at any rate, that this word "clerks" might include accountants and bookkeepers, men holding important offices in the State. As a matter of fact the clerks referred to are what are called "checkers" and tally clerks, who have received the same wages as the men, and are working side by side with them day after day. Now, for that childish reason—I hope I am not speaking disrespectfully of the Upper House—this definition was struck out; and the Railway Service Association, having these tally clerks in their body, are shut out from the operation of the Act, and cannot therefore register under it. I believe the association tried to register under it, but were unsuccessful; and now when those who applied for

registration under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, who were ready and willing to come under its operation, but to whom Parliament refused the right to come under its operation, are bandied about, as I said, from pillar to post for a year, and can get no satisfaction, they are told they will have to wait until the whole service is reclassified.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: No; not that.

MR. DIAMOND: They were told that they would have to wait until the whole of the service was reclassified. The Commissioner of Railways used those words in the presence of myself as a member of a deputation. He said the men would have to wait until the whole of the service was reclassified. That was the answer given them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: What about the rate of pay being retrospective?

MR. DIAMOND: That is quite correct. The Minister did say that the rate of pay would be retrospective. At the same time. I would rather that he did not interrupt me. Then, later on, the men were offered a board; but they were offered that board for the first time when they had sent in their ultimatum. Now, why in the name of common sense was the board not offered when the men sent their first appeal to the present Minister of Railways? I say, of course he has no right to have the matter thrown on his shoulders; and I say with all due respect that he has no right to take it on his shoulders. I sympathise with him; I say it was under a mistaken sense of duty that he assumed this responsibility. He should not have done so: he had no right to take it on his shoulders. It is a great pity for himself and the country that he has taken it on himself. After the men sent their ultimatum, I believe there was some talk about a board; but the thing had then, in my opinion and in the men's opinion, gone too far. I am trying now to explain to members that I am not here as a labour member, or a member representing a Labour constituency. I am here endeavouring to put this case clearly before the House from my own point of view. These men, I say again, have been bandied about from pillar to post: they could get no answer to their request for nearly twelve months, I

believe. And, at last, when driven to desperation and take the only means left to them—for Parliament had shut them out from the operation of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act—the only means, I say, to get redress of what they consider a grievance, and no one in the House says it is not a grievance, they are practically told “Yes; you ought to have this extra shilling a day; you ought to have had it long ago; but you will have to arbitrate in the matter.” I say that in the position it was in then, you might as well have appointed a board of arbitration to decide whether the sun was shining or not. Everybody said they ought to have the extra shilling a day. They had never had a proper answer one way or the other. When finally in a rough and ready way they try to get the money, they are told that they ought to wait for a board of arbitration. Those, in my view, are the principal facts of the case. Now I come to a statement of the matter from the point of the public. This is not a party question. I certainly do not know of any arrangement to make it a party question. As I said before, I will try to put it to the House from the public point of view. I say it is not a matter of constitutionalism; it is not a matter of the dignity of the gentlemen occupying the Treasury benches; it is a matter in which even the dignity of this House to a certain extent might have been ignored for the sake of the people of the country. I see there are in the House a number of members who do not seem to have any sense of the terrible responsibility that is on them. We have to face a terrible time. You cannot replace these men; or if you do contrive to replace them, it will take a long time to do it. If the men are to be replaced, it will take so long to do it that a great part of the industries of our country will become extinct, at any rate for the time being; and there will be terrible suffering. Therefore I appeal to and implore members to brush aside, if they can for a little, the eloquence of the leader of the House—a gentleman whom I respect and esteem—and try just to look at the common rights and wrongs of the case. I shall be sorry indeed if this terrible state of things lasts any longer. I say fearlessly, if I saw any other way out of it, if I saw any prospect of the men yielding—and I have tried to

get them to yield—I have tried my best to get them to yield, if I thought those men would give way, I would not advocate what I am advocating to-night, not for a moment. I would leave them to the mercies of the Commissioner of Railways and the Government; and I believe they would get the higher wages eventually. In fact, I am sure they would. But they have taken into their heads this idea—they have been refused justice over a year; now they have taken their own way of getting justice, and they are met with a demand that they should submit their claim to arbitration.

MR. MORGANS: Can you show some reasons why they should not?

MR. DIAMOND: I have endeavoured to give my reasons why the matter should not be submitted to arbitration, and I will recapitulate them. I believe those members who have spoken on the subject acknowledge that the men are entitled to the increase of a shilling a day. Everyone who has spoken on the subject has acknowledged and the Press are unanimous in saying that the men should get a shilling a day extra. Then why in the name of common sense should we not give it to them, without going to arbitration? There is nothing to arbitrate about if everybody are agreed.

THE PREMIER: Then there is nothing to strike about.

MR. DIAMOND: The Premier said something about the capitalists grinding down.

THE PREMIER: I said it was not a dispute between capital and labour.

MR. DIAMOND: Yes; grinding down. If 42 shillings a week in this State, where it is so expensive to live, is not a fair amount of grinding down, then I do not know what grinding down is. If these men had been in the service of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) or the member for Wellington (Mr. Teesdale Smith), or in the service of others in this House who employ a large amount of labour, the rise in wages would have been granted long ago, without the men being bandied about from pillar to post.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: We always paid 7s. 6d.

MR. DIAMOND: The Premier plays to public opinion; but, as I said a little while ago, public opinion has wavered in

this instance, because the men's case was not known until Friday morning. If public opinion has ever wavered it is doing so now in the direction of the men. There was a meeting on the Fremantle Oval this afternoon at 4 o'clock. Three thousand people were present, people of the town, not the strikers, and a big petition is being signed in Fremantle to-day. The wording of that petition was adopted almost unanimously at the meeting on the Fremantle Oval. One man held up his hand against it, but I believe he was deaf, and he acknowledged afterwards that he had made a mistake. The resolution which was approved of at that meeting was moved by a gentleman holding a high position in the town of Fremantle, it was seconded by a man holding the largest amount of land in Fremantle, and the motion was supported by similar people.

A MEMBER: What are the names?

MR. DIAMOND: Mr. Hicks and Councillor Manning, representing money and land. If that is not a fair expression of public opinion in Fremantle, I do not know what it is. We have the Chamber of Commerce of Fremantle deciding in favour of the men's claim. Members will see, if they do not shut their eyes, that public opinion has gone over to the men's side, and has become very strong. How, in the face of public opinion, can the Government continue this strike? I understand that the Commissioner of Railways has called for free labourers to take the place of the men on strike. How many do you think he will get? Why he will get no answer. I do not think the Government could import labour to take the places of these men, and how the Ministry can maintain their attitude is a mystery to me.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: If these men asked for a pound a day, how would you manage?

MR. DIAMOND: The interjection is too childish to answer. I am only asking the Premier and Parliament to arbitrate to-night; I only ask members not to be carried away by the eloquence of the Premier, and have dust so scientifically thrown in their eyes, which the Premier can do when he likes. With reference to the remark that if the men are given a shilling a day why not give them a pound a day if they ask

for it, I may say the men have pledged themselves as clearly as possible, and they say that if this increase is granted they will go back to work, and everything else in the future shall be submitted to arbitration. That is a safeguard to the country. In my experience in the State I have never known of labour unions breaking their pledges, and I will give you an instance. See how well the lumpers have stuck to their pledge, how well the engine-drivers have stuck to theirs! As far as we have had experience in this country, the labour unions have stuck to all their pledges; and if the Railway Association pledge themselves—and I have seen their pledge in writing in connection with the public meeting this afternoon, and the memorial signed in Fremantle—that if this concession is granted to one section of their body they will submit everything else in the future to arbitration, what is the use of saying anything about a claim of one pound a day in the future? Let us settle this question without any hot blood. In conclusion I may repeat that I have no other object to gain than to try and settle this trouble amicably. It is a hobby with me, and I honestly and conscientiously believe that the means I propose for settling this difficulty are the best, and if I did not think so I would not have the audacity to put them before the House. Finally, I am sure the Premier who held out a threat of resignation, if he thinks over it again, will admit that it is not a fair thing to members of the House. To myself it is particularly unfair, because I am labouring under a terrible disability in proposing this amendment. I had to follow two old experienced parliamentary hands, one on this side and one on the other side of the House, and I am sure members will recognise the difficulty I am labouring under. I am sure members will do me the credit of believing, when I give them my assurance, that I have no object to serve but to do the best I can to end the strike; therefore I ask members to vote for my amendment.

MR. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I second the amendment.

MR. R. SPEIGHT (North Perth): Everyone can appreciate the difficulty with which the present Cabinet have to deal, and which comes upon them so soon after taking office; a difficulty which

has been created before they had any association with that office; and if any moral assistance can be given to the Government by passing the Premier's motion, I for one will support it, because I think the course adopted by the men has not been the correct course; and if they had adopted a proper course the chances are they would by this time have got what they are now endeavouring to get by force. But whilst I say I will support that motion of the Premier, I cannot ignore the problem as to what are the fighting qualities of the department as against these men who have so unwisely gone out on strike. No doubt we have had a week of cessation of business; no doubt there has been some difficulty in meeting the requirements of the public; and if I were in the Cabinet, I should require the officers of the department to advise me of their ability to contest this question successfully; and if they assured me they could contest it successfully, I would say "Go on with the fight, and fight it out to the death." I do not for one moment believe in any section of men, particularly in a public service like the Railway Department, taking upon themselves to bring disaster upon the whole country. Therefore, though my sympathies may have been with the men, it is not at the present moment a question of whether they are entitled to 7s. or 8s. a day: it is a question of the *modus operandi* they are adopting to obtain their object. I want my friends in the Cabinet to consider that phase when the time arrives for them to do so, and to put the responsibility upon the departmental officers who may have had something to do with bringing about this misunderstanding; to put them to the test as to whether they can bring about a successful issue to this fight. If they can, then fight it out. This does not mean refusing the men whatever rights they may hereafter prove themselves entitled to, but it means that we cannot be coerced by their saying, "We will shut up your property if you do not pay us what we want." That is a wrong position to take up, and it is a very delicate position for anybody in authority to accept. But, at the same time, we have had experience of strikes; we have had the engine-drivers' strike some short time ago, and through a week's lock-out

we nearly arrived at famine conditions: the people on the fields and throughout the country were practically on the point of starvation. [A MEMBER: Shame!] I consider the responsibility of the Government is clear; I consider the tone and standard of morality laid down in that motion are sound; and I shall support it, subject to the remarks I am making, because I feel it essential that we should stand shoulder-to-shoulder upon a question like this. But suppose we pass this motion, and suppose these men continue to be what I may call stupid, and remain away from their work, and the departmental officers who are responsible for carrying on the business of the railways assure the Government that if they are allowed to do what they wish they will be ready to do it, and shall fight out the fight to the bitter end: the first and most important consideration is that we have constituted ourselves sole carriers of the traffic of the whole of this State; and any cessation in the work of 700 or 800 men creates a palsy in the community. Everybody wonders where he is to get his next day's food, where he is to get his next day's supplies. Is that a condition of things which should exist in a country like this? This trouble has been brought about by circumstances of which the House is not yet in full possession—[MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear!—and I wish to impress upon the Premier and the Commissioner of Railways that they should consider they have only inherited this legacy, and that they must meet the emergency to the best of their ability, to avoid a great catastrophe to the people of this country. It would be a serious matter indeed if that arose; and therefore, put the responsibility where it ought to be put, and if the departmental officers say they can beat down this strike, then, rather than give way on a principle, beat it down, and then face the remaining questions. I will vote for the Premier's motion; and I make this suggestion only as a subject to be possibly dealt with if this motion have no effect on the men. I say the Premier has not created the difficulty; it has been passed on to him; and if he be assured that he can beat the strikers, and has to face the closing of his lines to traffic, he must grasp the nettle, and grasp it in such a way as will enable him

to come to us and say: "I was obliged to do it, and could not help it." If he come to that conclusion, I will support him; for I say, the men, being in the wrong, should not be supported. Everyone who knows this country knows there is only a hand-to-mouth supply, and everyone is aware there will be an outcry in relation to the shortness of that supply, if we cannot combat it. If the department can combat it, by all means let them do so. I sympathise to the fullest extent with the Ministry in this difficulty forced upon them. I object entirely to the actions of the men in regard to it; and if it be essential to strengthen the hands of the Minister, subject to what I have said as to the consideration of the general community, I shall support the motion submitted to the House.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): I listened with very great attention to the words that fell from the Premier, and with a considerable amount of pain occasioned by the fact that a responsible Minister of the Crown has had forced upon him a situation compelling him to appeal to the patriotism of this Chamber to support him in his action. The situation really means that the constitutional life under which we live has either to be abolished or to be upheld. There can be no question whatever as to the issue before the country at the present time. So far as the men are concerned, I know their work as well perhaps as any man in this Assembly. I know many of the men who are out on strike. A number of them worked for me either in this State or in other States. But when it is a question of demanding absolutely that their statements must be accepted without investigation practically by an independent board, then I assert these men are being misled. It is not the spirit of the men itself which is wrong. They have not had all the facts of the case clearly put before them, and put before them without prejudice; and there can be no greater proof of that than the fact that at a meeting on Friday only a portion of a letter was read to the crowd, instead of the whole of it. Yesterday I was speaking to some of the men I know amongst the fettleers, and talking to them privately as a private man to a private man, as a friend to a friend. The question of their wages was a matter altogether

beside the question to be decided. The question to be decided is whether the employer is to be "boss" or whether the men are to be "boss." If the men are boss, absolute boss, it simply means that in course of a little time they will be quarrelling among themselves. By "bossing" I do not mean anything offensive, but I simply refer to those who have to lead. There must be a leader in everything. In all walks of life among unions it is recognised there must be a leader, and that the leader's position must be fairly considered and fairly respected. There is no getting away from the fact that the question is not as to the justice of 7s. or 8s. a day to be paid to the men. Responsible government under which we live is on its trial, and that has either to be absolutely condemned or to be upheld. I agree entirely with a great deal that fell from my friend the member for North Perth (Mr. R. Speight). I do not know whether the officials of the department have been consulted or not, but I think they should be, and that counsel should be taken in connection with this matter as to whether they can see the country through. The inconvenience the public suffer at the present time so far as food supplies are concerned should be met, even if the passenger traffic has to cease; for the public of this country can better afford to put up with the inconvenience of losing their passenger supply, and with the harm to their business, than we or they can afford to have the constitution of this country set at naught. I say this with all deference and on my own responsibility, and with no desire to in any way hurt anyone's feelings, that I do not think the subject is narrowed down to the question of 7s. or 8s. a day, but the question is, I repeat, one of upholding the Government or knocking it down. Although my sympathies must naturally be with the men who helped me to earn my living for a good number of years, I am not going to let my sympathies run away with my judgment. I am not going to let any personal inconvenience—and God knows I suffer enough from the present strike—stand in the course of what is a perfectly plain duty, that of upholding the constitution without which we should have nothing but anarchy and destruction.

MR. DAGLISH (Subiaco): It is with considerable regret that I seconded the amendment, and I assure the House it was in no hostile spirit so far as the Ministry are concerned. It seems to me the Government are in the unfortunate position of having come into a heritage of mismanagement in the Railway Department, which has culminated in the present strike. I do not think it necessary to go into the rights or the wrongs of the strike at the present time. I spoke very strongly and very earnestly against the strike while there was a prospect that it might be averted; but the time for discussing the rights or the wrongs of the strike is now past, and what the House has to consider is the question of how the strike can most assuredly be brought to an end, and brought to an end at the earliest possible moment. I contend that the course proposed by the amendment is the surest and speediest way of settling the dispute; and whilst supporting this amendment I recognise we must extend a large amount of consideration to the strikers, even when they have gone wrong, owing to the fact that they were not the first party to be in the wrong. I do not refer now in any way to the present Commissioner of Railways, but undoubtedly in the first instance wrong was done to the workers in the Railway Department. Subsequently the workers endeavoured to associate themselves together, and they got by that means a sort of safety-valve. Then the Commissioner of Railways endeavoured to sit on the safety-valve and the trouble was accentuated. I believe that in that first action lay the root which has produced the evil of the present day; and in regard to the unbending attitude so far exhibited by the men on strike, we ought to remember the amount of provocation they received in the first instance, and also the long time over which their grievances extended. I cannot dismiss from my mind that for some time past the men have been asked to work in the Railway Department at a wage they should not have been asked to work for. It is not reasonable to forget this is not a question of constitutional procedure which we are considering, but a mere question of justice; and if Parliament is the highest tribunal in the land, it should place the consideration of justice before

all other considerations. If wrong has been done, the House should redress it. It is admitted on all sides that if, before this strike had occurred, a proper proposal to raise the pay of these men had been brought before this House, the increase would have been supported. It would certainly have been so, and I should have been glad of an opportunity to move such a resolution; but as I had no opportunity before the strike, now I take the first opportunity in supporting this amendment of doing so. I recognise that the existence or nonexistence of the strike does not affect my duty towards those employees of the State. I deplore the fact that any members of the civil service should have struck work. I agree with all that has been said regarding the impropriety of the proceedings. But at the same time I recognise that now the first principle which should guide this House is that of justice. The second principle that is to be considered is how we can most speedily prevent an industrial stagnation, prevent an all-round lockout of the workers, prevent all sorts of hardships to the breadwinners and their families; and I would urge hon. members to ask themselves whether these considerations are not more important than any of those others which have been urged this evening. I am going to-night to cast a vote in favour of the amendment, as I say with regret, because it is going against the motion proposed by the Premier, a motion with which I am largely in sympathy. At the same time, however, I consider it is the first duty of the State to carry on the State's service. During the last few days we have found that it is absolutely impossible to carry it on under existing conditions. And if it cannot be carried on under existing conditions, those conditions must be amended as speedily as possible, in order to prevent the infliction of any farther hardships on innocent members of this community, and also in order to prevent all that embittered feeling, all that turmoil and that injury to property which might possibly result from a long-continued strike of a large number of men. I trust that, under these circumstances, members will give a due amount of support to the amendment which is before them.

MR. C. H. RASON (Guildford): At this hour I shall speak but a very few

words; but I find myself in a position which it is necessary I should explain to the House, and still more necessary that I should explain to the Commissioner of Railways, to whom I have up to this moment given my support. I am in an awkward situation; I have been accused by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) of having bungled; therefore I wish to state to the House what is my position in this matter. Yesterday I had prepared a motion which I endeavoured to move. I am led to believe that if that motion had been adopted it would have effected a settlement of this strike. I will not refer to the terms of that motion now: suffice it to say that it was acceptable to the executive of the Railway Workers' Association. I believe that it would have been acceptable to the majority of the members of this House, and I believe the result of the motion would have been a settlement of this difficulty. I thought I should have had an opportunity when the member for South Fremantle took action yesterday. I was not aware—although I knew he was going to do something—that he intended to move the adjournment of the House. However, what his proposal was neither I nor, I think, anyone else on this side knew. Therefore I thought my best course would be to wait and see what action the hon. member took on his motion for adjournment; since he might possibly have moved something of which I could have approved. If he had moved something of which I could not approve, then I should still have been in a position to move what I proposed to move, as an amendment to his motion. I have been accused of bungling, and I wish to acquit myself of the charge. The member for South Fremantle bungled so badly as to be hopelessly ruled out of order, and thus I lost the opportunity for my motion. Now, to-day I was determined that, at all events as far as I was concerned, there should not be the same mistake again, and I took the opportunity of moving this motion—or, rather, of giving notice of motion in respect of it for to-morrow—still not knowing what the member for South Fremantle intended to do. In corroboration of what I say now, I should like to tell the House that I showed the motion to which I refer to several members of this House yesterday—amongst

others to the leader of the Labour party in this House. Therefore, if there has been any bungling it has not been on my part. However, in regard to the question before the House now, I find myself in this position. I have all along supported the Ministry in their action. I said before that I thought the action of the men in going out on strike was wrong. I think so still. But, as the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) has said, it is not now a question of whether the men have been right or wrong in their action; we have to ask ourselves whether we are justified, because we consider the men have been wrong and because we want to force them to give way, in bringing misery untold on a large number of people; whether we are justified in persisting in a line of action which probably will irreparably ruin many industries of this State. Then I have to ask myself, is the principle involved of such great virtue, is the demand made by the men so unjust, that at whatever cost to the State it must be denied? I have to ask myself, what is the nature of their demand? I am driven to this position, that I have to ask myself now whether in my opinion the men are entitled to an advance of 1s. per day or not. Asking myself that question, I unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative—they are so entitled. And now that I have to give my vote in that direction, now that I have been forced to give that opinion against my will, I shall have to vote for the amendment moved by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond). It is all very well for us to say we must insist on upholding the dignity of the House, we must insist on upholding the dignity of the Constitution. If we insist so strongly on upholding our dignity, surely we must be prepared to make some allowance, at all events, for the men. Have they no right to uphold what they consider their dignity? I maintain that they have. It is no use saying that they did wrong to go out on strike. That has gone by; they are out, and they are determined not to come back again, as I understand it, unless the claim of a comparatively small number of their body, a claim which has long existed, which at all events has been pressed and pressed on the attention of the Government for a very long time in a mild manner, be acknowledged. I am

told by responsible members of the Association that if this claim be acknowledged, they are prepared to guarantee that no farther claim shall be made until the whole of the railway servants are brought under the operation of the Arbitration Act, when any farther strike will be rendered impossible. That being so, seeing that it has never been denied that the men are entitled to that which they have asked, seeing that, on the contrary, the late Premier said that their case had been proved up to the hilt, seeing also that the present Premier when he was seeking election said that in his opinion the case had been proved up to the hilt, and that the men were entitled to the 8s. per day (for the present Premier did say so), in view of these things I have no hesitation in also saying that the men are entitled to the amount they claim. Therefore, however much I regret the course they took to obtain their demands, a course which I still think was wrong, now that I have been driven into this position, I must support the amendment of the member for South Fremantle.

MR. GORDON (South Perth): I have to offer my support to the Premier in the stand he has taken, and I maintain that stand has been just and fair from the outset. There is one phase of this question which has been brought forward to-night in Parliament, mainly by those who were supporting the Government, but who now say they will vote against them. It is the fact of the men having had their grievances for seven, eight, nine, and say some 15 months. It seems an extraordinary thing to me that these railway men have never recognised the fact that they had in the House their representatives who could have brought the question before Parliament many months ago, and received the justice which they probably deserve. It seems to me the men are worth the 8s. a day. I have not gone into the question, and I do not know the light in which the Board of Arbitration will view the matter, but in the face of the time the men have had their grievances before the Government I admit they probably are worth 8s. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) and the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) seem to me, by the action they are taking to-night, and their manner of speaking, to forfeit the right of representing any

constituency, even one of blackfellows. The member for Subiaco, a Labour representative who has a thorough grasp of the question, only a few nights ago came here and said that he would support the Government in their action; but now all his principle has gone for the sake of the starving poor. Who are the people who are making the women and the children suffer? The men who are creating the strike—the leaders? Not the workers. I maintain the men are not to blame. The hon. member for Subiaco forfeits his right to be here to represent the people by taking the action he has and throwing to the winds all our standing as representatives of the people. The member for Guildford is in the same position, and I would sooner be in my grave than have to occupy such a position. When I try, as I have done to-night, to fathom the reasons of the change of face, when I think to myself that the representative of Guildford also represents the Midland Workshops, I ask myself, is he afraid to face the men? He is afraid to take a proper stand on the question. If the men have the stamina which I think they have, they will appreciate the man who would go on the side of the Ministry and support them.

MR. J. EWING (S.W. Mining District): When the debate took place on the adjournment of the House last Thursday night, I was in the condition of almost every other member who took part in the debate, that of ignorance. I did not understand the question, I honestly assert that, and I believe other members also knew nothing of the case. After the adjournment of the House I went to my constituents at Collie, and I am just as straightforward a man as anyone else is.

MR. GORDON: You had no right to talk the other night on what you knew nothing about.

MR. EWING: I did not speak in that debate. I went to my constituents, and I met as large and as representative a body of workmen, miners, as there is in any other constituency. I went to a meeting, and a certain gentleman, who opposed me at the last election, got on the platform and addressed the meeting of strikers, and urged them to stick to the executive whether that body were right or wrong. When that gentleman had finished, and the meeting almost had

unanimously carried a resolution in favour of supporting the strikers, somebody wanted to know where the member for the district was. He did not know that I was there, but I happened to be there, and I mounted the platform and I told them in no uncertain voice that I was not going back on my principles. It was asserted at the meeting that the Commissioner of Railways had not offered to submit the matter in dispute to conciliation and arbitration. I heard the Commissioner say so, and I told the meeting that, and I think I can believe what the Minister said. After the straightforward and manly way in which the Premier has dealt with the matter to-night, and has told the men that every consideration shall be given to them, I should be wanting in my duty if I did not stand by the Administration of the day in this matter. In doing so I am occupying a position which very few members in the House occupy, and, if a general election took place to-morrow, I should have very great trouble in satisfying my constituents. There are 500 miners at the Collie, and a large number on the Greenbushes tinfields, and as time goes by I shall have to prove to them that I have done right in voting on the Ministerial side to-night. I yield to no man in my support of unionism; there is no question about it; but I say advisedly the leaders of unionism very often ruin their own cause, and I am inclined to think this is the case in the present strike. In coming to town in the train yesterday I met a constituent of mine at Pinjarra, a fettler, and I asked him if he knew the Minister had offered conciliation and arbitration on the wages matter. He said the Minister had not done so; and he added, "If I had known that to be a fact before I was ordered out on strike, I would have been working to-day." I submit that the secretary and the executive of the strikers have not placed before the men the facts of the case; and I maintain that before the railway men can take up this terrible attitude of keeping supplies from the goldfields and starving the population of the State, there should immediately be information sent to the men at the out-places as to the conditions which exist now. I do not intend farther to take up the time of the House beyond

this: I am absolutely in favour of the minimum rate of wage being 8s. a day, therefore members may say that I should vote for the amendment. I would rather never enter political life again than violate a principle that will undermine the constitution of the State. Perhaps I may have to pay the penalty for my action to-night in time to come; but if the board of arbitration, when appointed, does not bring in a report fixing the minimum rate of wage at 8s. a day, I shall be prepared to stand up in the House and move that 8s. a day be a minimum rate for the State railways. If the report of the board is not in favour of that principle then I shall urge upon the Government of the day to pay that wage. I give my hearty support to the Premier on this occasion, and he has given evidence in this Chamber to-night that he will become one of the greatest Ministers we have ever seen in Australia.

Mr. D. J. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): On the last occasion on which this question came before the House, I determined not to speak on it; but I found that when the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) offered some suggestions to this House that some farther consideration should be given the subject, they were received with a bad grace. I felt that if I spoke then, I should probably contribute some bitter feeling to the debate, and I thought to keep silence was the better course to pursue. That hon. member, if I gathered his meaning correctly, pointed out that there was a cleavage between two sets of people, one the Government as the employers, and the other the men who worked, which cleavage seemed to be widening day by day; and he suggested that some means of conciliation should be devised to bridge that cleavage, so that the line of demarcation might not be so broad as it was then. Now my position in this House is very difficult indeed, because my sympathies are with the men. I represent a constituency entirely composed of working men; and allow me to tell this gentleman behind me (Mr. Gordon), who casts reflections upon a friend of mine who also represents a working-men's constituency, that there are working men in my constituency whom I would deem it an honour to welcome at any time and all times to

my own house. They are not blackfellows; they are men as we are, with souls to save, and, I hope families to bring up in this State.

MR. GORDON: I referred to measures, not to men.

MR. DOHERTY: I cannot translate the hon. member's utterances; and if he will be dense in his manner of addressing the House, I am unable to assist him. I also speak with some little knowledge of this particular matter, because, when first I arrived in Victoria I found it very difficult to obtain employment. I was forced to take work on a railway line in that State, which was being constructed from Benalla to St. James, by the firm of McNeil, McDermott, and Bath. I had to take employment on that particular line in 1882, when the contractors were paying the men 7s. a day. I will admit construction work is much heavier than the work done by fettlers on our railways. But how did conditions in Victoria in 1882 compare with the conditions in Western Australia in 1901? For from 7s. to 10s. a week I could then live very well indeed. I could have every day three good meals of wholesome food; but I will guarantee that no man in this country can have three good square meals a day on from 7s. to 10s. a week. I had a surplus of from 32s. to 35s. out of my weekly wage; and when a man in this country works for 42s., his surplus will not be more than 5s. to 10s. a week. We know this is the Golden West, the Eldorado of Australia; and surely, when we are prosperous and when prosperity has come to our business people, they have not the right, nor should their conscience permit them, to withhold from these men earning a daily wage the small increase of one shilling per day. There is no justice in that; and, let me say, the members of this Government tell us explicitly that these men deserve 8s. per day. They make no error in that statement; they say these men are entitled to this 8s.; and why, then, do we withhold it from them? Is it because our pride is touched? Well, we all know that "By pride angels have fallen ere their time"; and why should pride stand in the way of justice being done to men who have not, perhaps, that constitutional law at their fingers' ends which was so ably placed before the House to-night by the

Premier? Another thing, I should be false to my pledges on the platform when I stood at the last election for North Fremantle, were I not to act as I am doing. I was asked whether I believed in a minimum wage, and I said, yes. I was asked, what did a minimum wage mean? I said, 8s. a day for eight hours' work. And I cannot possibly go behind my pledges on that occasion. I think these men deserve 8s. a day; and if the pride of the Government can possibly be thrown aside, I say the men should get the increased wage.

MR. F. CONNOR: Right or wrong?

MR. DOHERTY: No; there is no wrong about it. There is probably some wrong in the unconstitutional way in which the men have asserted their claims; but there is right and justice in the contention that they should receive this increase. It occurred to me that this House might possibly agree to a board constituted, say, of two gentlemen in Western Australia—the two right reverend Bishops of Perth, the Roman Catholic Bishop and the Protestant Bishop. If those two gentlemen were constituted as a board, without any umpire, simply to discuss the question between two representatives of the Railway Association, two representatives of the Government, and one representative of the gangers, I believe that within 12 hours the whole dispute could be settled, and there would be an honourable ending as regards the Government, a beneficial ending as regards the public, and a satisfactory ending as regards the workers. I simply throw out this hint. I should like the amendment not to go to a division; I should like the Government to accept the arbitration and assistance of the two gentlemen I have named; and I think the strike would then be settled within 12 hours. Let me say, the Premier's speech was one of the finest to which I have ever had the pleasure of listening. It was manly, straightforward, and decisive. He defended himself as he alone can defend; he defended his Ministers as only he could do; and he deserves the support of this House, could he but retire from the dignified position he thinks it necessary to hold, when he sees that the claim of the men is just. I hope the House will entertain the proposal for arbitration which I have made; but in

case of a division, I must vote for the amendment.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): The member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. Ewing) commented on the ignorance of this House when the question was being debated last Thursday evening; but I think that when I have finished, this House will know I was not ignorant of the situation. Having had to deal with the Commissioner of Railways (Hon. J. J. Holmes) in connection with a strike of lumpers at Menzies, about two or three days after he took office, on his return from the Eastern States, I know the position the Minister then took up, and his position to-day; and in justice to him, I must say the positions are relatively the same. And I think it only fair, in going so far back to strikes on the railways, that I should tell the House what passed between us. There was at Menzies a strike of some dozen lumpers for a rise in wages; and after the strike had continued for some time, I, being a representative of labour, went to the Minister and asked him whether he could make some concession. He said: "I should very much like to concede, Taylor; but if I do, I shall have the whole of the railway lines disorganised within a week." I said: "I do not think so." I then knew nothing of the dissatisfaction that existed in the department. He pointed out to me that numbers of men had made complaints that their wages were too small, and that they wished them raised; and he then told me that, to get over these difficulties, he was about to reclassify the whole service; that he could not raise any wages pending the reclassification; that he thought it would take about a month to reclassify the most urgent cases, but a somewhat longer time to reclassify the whole department. I told him I did not think the men would accept those conditions, that there were many people in the electorate I represent suffering from the strike of the lumpers at Menzies; and I tried to get over the difficulty by pointing out the necessity for granting their demand, which was that 10s. should be paid for a day of eight hours. Taking into consideration the purchasing power of 10s. at Menzies, and the purchasing power of 7s. or 8s. here, men were getting 8s. here for similar work; therefore I

thought the demands of the men were perfectly just, and I urged with all the power I possess that they should be conceded. The Minister told me he thought their requests were just, but he could not accede to them on account of the disaffection throughout the department. He felt sure the men would receive that wage when classification came about. I asked if I could go to these men and give them an assurance that their wages would be raised to 10s. when classification took place. He said, "Well, no;" but after a long discussion—I think the matter was discussed on two days—the Minister (whom I had never met before, and who was a total stranger to me) spoke in such an earnest way that I believed him. He said, "Well, what you can do, Taylor, is to tell those men that if they return to work they will get 9s. a day for eight hours' work, and when the reclassification comes about they will be perfectly safe in my hands. I believe their demands are quite fair, but my position is that I cannot grant a rise to one civil servant without there being a rise for all, and I intend to do it by reclassification." From the earnest manner in which the Commissioner told me the men were perfectly safe in his hands, I took it for granted they were. I went to Menzies and laid the case before the men, spending two hours persuading them to go back to work on the recommendation. I told them they would have 9s. a day for eight hours until the reclassification came about, which would be in about a month, and that they were perfectly safe in the hands of the Minister. They went to work on the understanding that if they did not get 10s. when the reclassification took place they would strike, and I said I would assist them to do so. Following up the strike of the "farm" labourers, you can see the Minister did not tell those men there was disaffection in the ranks, and that by raising the wages of those 10 or 12 lumpers at Menzies he would have a strike in the Railway Department; because the strike came about at the "farm" shortly afterwards. I negotiated with the Minister. I took a deputation to him from the "farm" hands on last Monday week, as I said in the House last Thursday. It is necessary for me to deal

with the matter again on account of certain statements that have been made by the secretary of the Railway Employees' Association (Mr. Guilfoyle). The outcome of that deputation was a board, that was then offered by the Commissioner of Railways on the floor of the House. I went down in company with Mr. Croft. You will remember that one of the strong points of Mr. Guilfoyle, with reference to the strike, is that this board was never officially offered or never offered to this association until last Friday night. I am in a position to state that Mr. Croft and myself went to Mr. Guilfoyle last Tuesday week, between 10 minutes past one and half-past, and told him the board was arranged and the manner in which it was arranged, and asked if the association would appoint a man on the board. This board was to deal with the "farm" labourers. The farm labourers were the first who came out, and they are now lost sight of. I never now hear a man speak a word for those men, whom every person was crying out for about a week ago. I also notice, touching on that question, that when the negotiations were proceeding between the Railway Employees' Association and the Cabinet to decide upon the second board, and that board was decided upon, the Railway Association left the "farm" labourers out in the cold, I, as a trades unionist, am sorry to say. Apparently the farm labourers were never considered, or, if they were, that fact was never made known through the agency of the Press or any of the conferences where the board was decided upon. We asked Mr. Guilfoyle if they would appoint a man on the board. He said, "No; we will have nothing to do with the board." Mr. Croft said, "Why?" Mr. Guilfoyle said, "We have proved our case up to the hilt." We pointed out the necessity of the board on account of the adjusting of the whole Railway Department, and also that a greater boon to the workers was that a section of the Government civil servants—that is, the employees in the Works Department—would have a say in the adjustment of their wages. Those men are a body of workers who are protected by no trades union in this State, or practically none. We pointed out the necessity of this board to adjust the whole of the civil service. We

requested him then to give us his word that they would appoint a man, and we asked him if he would call an executive meeting of the Association for us to lay that board before the Association for acceptance or rejection; but he refused. I asked him several times, and Mr. Croft, secretary of the Trades and Labour Council of Perth, asked him several times also. We then thought of taking the next best step and the only constitutional step there was to be taken in the circumstances, that of meeting the president of the association, a gentleman named Mr. Roche. I had never met him before, nor have I met him since. We laid the case before him, with a similar result. We told him we had asked Mr. Guilfoyle to call a meeting of the executive at the earliest opportunity so that the board could be laid before the executive, and said we felt sure they would accept it. He said he did not think to call a meeting of the executive. We said, "The secretary says he will not. Cannot you, as president, urge the secretary to call a meeting of the executive? It is absolutely necessary that the executive should accept this board or reject it. I hold that you as officers have no power or right to accept or reject any conditions offered to you in a crisis of this kind." It must be remembered that when this was decided on, there were no men out on strike other than the "farm" workers. This board was obtained practically for the "farm" labourers to settle their dispute, but the whole Railway Department was to be settled by the board also. He refused point-blank to call a meeting of the executive, and there was nothing then left for us to do. We had taken the only constitutional means that existed for reaching the executive authority of that great association, and Mr. Guilfoyle was not straightforward when he said this board was not laid before the association until last Friday evening. I say without fear of contradiction the board was practically laid before that association, or as nearly as possible, on Tuesday. Had he called his executive together, or had he told his executive, it would have been laid before them. But Guilfoyle and the president are answerable for the members of the Workers' Association to-day now on strike not knowing that

the board was offered on Friday. When I find by the reports in the papers that Guilfoyle says the board had not been offered until Friday, and when I find him capable of making such a malicious statement against a man as he made against the member for Kanowna—he stated in the public Press that the member for Kanowna had said last Thursday evening, during the debate in this House, that he was prepared to get a thousand blacklegs to assist the Government—I do not hesitate to say Mr. Guilfoyle, in those particulars, lies. To my mind there is no doubt about that. I sat in this Chamber during the whole of the debate, and I heard what the member for Kanowna said, and I did not hear him promise the Government a thousand blacklegs to take the places of the railway employees on strike. You will find it is no trouble for a man capable of making such statements as that, to lie about the board not having been offered. I have listened with interest to the various speakers on both sides of the House, and I have failed to see on what grounds—this is drawing the issue to a logical conclusion—on what grounds they can mix up the demand of these men with a rise or fall in wages. I say that the matter before the House does not affect wages: it is a matter affecting principle. I say the question is simply whether this House is in favour of the dispute being decided by a board of arbitration, or whether it is not favourable to that.

A MEMBER: It is favourable.

MR. TAYLOR: I have also heard hon. members speaking about the unfortunate position that we are placed in here to-night with reference to this strike. As a Labour member and as a worker myself, I do not withdraw from the position which I have taken right through this strike—a position which I hope to be able to maintain, and to be able to justify in the eyes of all unionists throughout the length and breadth of the State. I say the wages question is not affected. It is agreed on all sides of the House and even by the man in the street that those line repairers are worth 8s. a day: I maintain it is agreed by the whole of the community that they are worth 8s. a day. The question is whether the Railway Employees' Association shall dictate their terms of wages, or whether this

House will do so, or rather support the Commissioner in doing so. I also say that the member for East Fremantle emphasised that this was a wage question, a matter of wages.

THE PREMIER: The member for South Fremantle.

MR. TAYLOR: There are so many Fremantles. I refer to Mr. Diamond. He emphasised the wage aspect of the question. I tell this House that if it were a question of wages, no matter how high they might be, I would vote for the raising of them every time. But I say that when it comes to a matter of principle, I will vote for principle. I can vote for the motion of the Premier without losing my manhood, and without going back on my pledges to the wage earners who have sent me to represent them in this House. I will face them on this question. I will vote for the motion and I will face my electors on the question, and mine is a working constituency. There has been a great deal of stress laid on the reclassification scheme, and the long waiting for it. I say that this strike could have been averted altogether had Mr. Guilfoyle called his executive together. Had the board sat on Wednesday morning, as it was intended to do, there would have been no strike on Thursday night. The Railway Department would have been working, and working as well as it has ever worked, if not better. The men would have seen how fairly and squarely this board would adjust their wages; they would at once have felt themselves safe in the hands of their employers. I will make it clear to the House which way I will vote, and the reason why I will so vote. I look upon this, as I have said, as not a matter of a rise or fall in wages. I told this House last Thursday evening that I felt sure the Government was taking the right stand; and I still think so. When I made that statement I made it in all earnestness, and having looked at the case from every standpoint I have seen nothing since that time to cause me to alter my opinion. I dare say that if I did get before my constituents, if I were unlucky enough to go before them, I might fall over this matter, but I do not think so. Now, I say that any hon. member of this House who votes for the amendment votes against that great, and

grand, and glorious principle of arbitration which every labour leader of ancient and modern times has fought for. For that reason I will vote for the motion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. J. J. Holmes): Since I came into office my task has been a very difficult one. Difficulties have confronted me on every side. The last speaker has, in a small way, put a very few of those difficulties before the House this evening. I took office with one object in view; and that is, to do my duty as Commissioner of Railways, and to conserve the interests of the State. No sooner had I assumed office—I think it was on the very day that I did so—than telegrams were put before me announcing a strike at Menzies. A few days after trouble arose at Fremantle. Following on that there was a petition from six to eight hundred permanent-way men, one and all demanding an increase of pay. Farther, members of Parliament from various parts of the State were coming into my office hour after hour, and day after day, bringing requisitions for increases of pay from the employees in their districts. My colleague, the Minister for Works, was confronted with the same difficulty. He had a strike at the same time at Cunderdin. I think is the name of the place. The difficulty there was that certain bodies of men in constructing different sections of public works had met at this juncture, and so it came about that in the very same camp, at the very same time, there were men receiving 7s. 6d., 8s., 9s. 6d., and 10s. a day, all doing practically the same work. We immediately concluded that there was only one way out of the difficulty, and that was to classify the wages, both in the Public Works Department and in the Railway Department, and to do it simultaneously. We endeavoured, in the short time that was available, to formulate some scheme by which we might bring about a classification on our own account. Before any progress was made in this direction, however, matters became serious; and I saw that trouble was likely to arise. I considered that my first duty, before I increased wages, was to see exactly where we stood; and I may say here that the next thing which confronted me was an Excess Bill in respect of last year's expenditure, which was put before me. This Bill showed an

expenditure for the railway service over and above the estimate for last year amounting to £111,000. This confronted me, and I had to take it to the Cabinet, and I fancy we had to avail ourselves of the notorious "Form J" in order to get ourselves over the difficulty and provide that £111,000 excess. On the top of that, the General Manager of Railways informed me there was another £14,000 necessary to meet the deficiency; and consequently the Excess Bill of last year in connection with the railways amounted to £125,000. I concluded first that it was my duty to find out what the wages bill was likely to be on that basis for the current year. No time was given, and matters were rushed and becoming more serious, but I looked for some way out of the difficulty. I suggested to the Labour representatives a way out of the difficulty: there and then to bring a board into existence by which we would give labour equal representation and bring about a fair result. The member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor), who is an old unionist and one who has fought and suffered in the cause of unionism, admitted when I made that proposal that it knocked the only plank he had from under him, and he was bound to accept the proposal. This was my suggestion to meet the Labour party: a court of arbitration. I was prepared to bring into existence what the Conciliation and Arbitration Act did not provide for, and I took the responsibility upon myself to bring a board into existence to meet the circumstances of the case. It has been said that the members of the Government have estimated that eight shillings a day is a fair rate of pay for these men. The Government have not been given an opportunity to ascertain whether eight shillings or nine shillings or ten shillings is a fair rate of pay: we were rushed. The Government have not yet announced that eight shillings should be given, or that it is a fair rate; but we have never refused it. My reply to the particular deputation—it was a written reply to the secretary—was that until classification was brought about, the wages must remain as at present, but that when the classification board met and decided that such an increase of wages was necessary, the wages should be made retrospective. What more could any upright man expect than that? If I chose

to play the game of politics as some members used to play it, I could have given the men the eight shillings, and become the most popular man in the country to-day. But I realised, before making any advance of this kind, which would cost the country at least eighty to one hundred thousand pounds, my first duty was to test what the cost was going to be and to find out how to provide expenditure. I think we may pass by the question of the rate of wages and deal with the higher principle. To my mind the question of the rate of wages does not come into the question at all: it is a question of control. I realise that the railways of the country which cost nine millions of money are vested in me—I hold them in trust, not for any section of the community who go on strike, but for the 180,000 people who own them. I believe I am doing my duty in taking the stand I do. Notwithstanding what is said in the street that the Ministry are divided, I may state emphatically that the Ministry on the matter are solid, and are prepared to stand or fall on this question. The men in the department know that the other members of the Ministry are with me. Mr. Gregory has championed their cause many a time, and Mr. Kingsmill and Mr. Leake and Mr. Illingworth have championed their cause, and are prepared to do it now when we are approached in a right and proper way. If I am allowed to continue to control the department, I will see that justice is done to the men, no matter whether the men on strike return to work or whether they are men who come to help us out of the difficulty. The men I believe know that; they have confidence in me; they have confidence that they will receive justice at my hands, and I am satisfied on this point because I have gone out of my way to move about amongst these men, and never since the dispute has arisen has one offensive remark been made to me. The men have been misled, and we have been misrepresented: that is the cause of the trouble. I honestly believe that the men realise the position, and the leaders who are placed before them realise in us they have true and loyal friends, and the bulk of them at an early date will be back at work. I say it is not a question of wages at all; it is a question of might *versus* right. I

am satisfied that the stand we are taking is the correct one, and I am sure that the only satisfaction that the men have is that they believe they possess the might, and the leaders are inducing them to use it. Given an opportunity, although some hon. members may think otherwise, I believe I can control this great earning and spending department, and bring about successful results, if supported as I should be. Unless I am allowed to control this department, disaster will follow; and I say distinctly and emphatically, unless I am allowed to control the department and not the men's association, I am not prepared to go on. The position, I admit, is becoming serious; we have given the men until to-morrow to return to work; we have notified the association that if the men do not return to work then efforts will be made to fill their places. I do not think the men realise the position, because there are men in the service who have been loyal servants for years, and have records in the department in their favour which will stand with them and assist them in their promotion; but unless they accept the offer to return to work, other men will be put in their places, and their past services will be gone: they will have to begin afresh at the bottom of the ladder. If the men go back to work to-morrow morning they will be put back in their places, and they cannot expect us to do other than stand by those who have assisted us. We are calling for volunteers to assist us out of our difficulty, and I honestly believe the public of the State realise the position of affairs, and will come to our rescue and assist us out of the difficulty. It has been suggested that legislation might be passed to avoid difficulties of this kind. I say, no legislation this House could pass can prevent such a difficulty. You can legislate as you like; but if you countenance a thing of this kind with a body of men who are practically in control, as are these men, they can defy legislation, as they are doing, and can leave us at any juncture they may think proper. These men are bound under agreement to me, as Commissioner of Railways, to give me 14 days' notice before they leave the service.

MR. F. CONNOR: You should be on this (Opposition) side of the House. Opposition is more easy than Government.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: They have not done so. I have my redress. By the law of this country I can proceed against each and every one of these men, and upon each of them a penalty of £20 or one month's imprisonment can be inflicted. We have never attempted to do anything of the kind; we have tried to treat the men as kindly as possible. Apart from that, men have been picketing at different parts of the railway premises; and this also, I should like to point out, is contrary to law. We shall have to stop it now; we have countenanced it up to the present in order that we might bring about a satisfactory result. A man found picketing on any premises owned by the Railway Department is, by the law of this land, subject to a penalty of £25 or three months' imprisonment; and yet, until now, we have allowed picketing to go on in order that we might get out of this unfortunate difficulty as peaceably as possible. If the amendment be carried, its effect will be an indorsement of the men's action. It will put the men into control of the railways; and as far as the Ministry are concerned, we are satisfied we have done our duty, and we will immediately tender our resignations, and allow the men to take control, as seems to be the wish of some hon. members.

MR. DIAMOND: That is bunkum!

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond), who moved the amendment, gave I think only one reason in its support, namely that he was afraid of mob-rule: he was afraid of the result.

MR. DIAMOND: I never suggested such a thing as mob-rule.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: If such is the case, I am ashamed to be a Britisher, living in a British country.

MR. DIAMOND: I never said such a thing; never used the words; never suggested the words.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The hon. member suggested that the position was serious; that the men were in charge, and that the only possibility was to consent to their demands.

MR. DIAMOND: I never suggested anything of the sort.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: He suggested, farther, that arbitration was a way out of the difficulty. Well, we have been offering arbitration right through the piece, and the men have refused it; and yet the hon. member thinks he may justify the men by saying we can get over this difficulty now by giving the men what they want, and hereafter settling the question by arbitration, when it is by arbitration that we have been trying to deal with it all through, and that arbitration the men have refused.

MR. DIAMOND: They have pledged themselves to arbitrate.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The member for North Perth (Mr. Speight) has asked me what the officers of the department think of the situation; whether they think they can get through. The officers of the department realise, as I and this House realise, that the position is serious; but they are unanimous that unless they can get through now, if they cannot bring these men back to work and bring about a settlement as we suggest, and if the present demands of the men be conceded, then hereafter the departmental officers will be hopelessly in the hands of the employees. The officers of the department say distinctly that unless the Government succeed in this motion, hereafter the officers will lose control of the department. And I take it these are responsible officers. Some of them have been a long time in the service; some have been criticised severely, whether justly or unjustly; but, for the time being, they are the executive officers of the Railway Department, and I, as the Minister, must accept their advice. It has been farther suggested that supplies may run out, with disastrous results. I believe supplies are running out on the fields, and men and women are starving there. But surely we have enough Britishers in the country to go to the rescue, and convey food to the starving people on the fields. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) suggested that the amendment would settle the present dispute. With that I agree; but if we settle this present dispute by allowing a section of civil servants to dominate and dictate as this section is doing, what will be the result hereafter? Each and every

dispute will be settled in a like manner, and it is that which I wish to avoid.

MR. F. CONNOR: Right or wrong: stick to that point.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: If I had any respect for the hon. member, I should reply.

MR. CONNOR: Well, reply.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: But I think I can treat any interjections from him with the contempt they deserve. Coming to the suggestion of the member of North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty), that the Church should come to the aid of the department, I think it would be almost an insult to Parliament to suggest that two bishops should come to our rescue at this stage. Unless this Parliament is in a position to deal with such an important subject without the assistance of the Church as suggested, then the sooner we dissolve Parliament altogether, and leave the bishops to carry on the business of the State, the better.

MR. DOHERTY: I meant the bishops to be an arbitration board only.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The bishops of the Church have no knowledge of the difficulties which will arise; and, personally, I have refrained throughout from saying how long it will take the board of arbitration to arrive at a decision. It was said by the delegates who waited upon us that the whole thing could be adjusted in ten minutes; and naturally it could if each member of the board had made up his mind. The representatives of the men have, no doubt, made up their minds that the men are entitled to 8s. a day; but would the whole of the members be of that opinion? And the first difficulty which will meet the board is that the men in the service have already been classified; they are receiving different rates of pay; and when once the principle is established that the fettle, who is at the bottom of the grade, is entitled to a shilling increase, and he gets that increase, then each and every section of the railway employees throughout the service is justly entitled to make a demand for an increased wage. That increase, to 4,000 employees, means £200 a day.

MR. DIAMOND: They pledge themselves to arbitration afterwards.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The first difficulty which meets the board is that the railway employees are already classified. The fettlers are at the bottom; and as soon as we give the fettler 8s. per day we must raise the wages proportionately right through the service. The present classification has been made by those who understand the work, not by the bishops of the Churches.

MR. DOHERTY: I did not suggest a classification by the bishops.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: If one increase be given without inquiry, then an increase must be given throughout the service, which will cost the department from £80,000 to £100,000 per annum. I do not mind that, so long as I know I am expected to provide from £80,000 to £100,000 per annum. I can, without any difficulty, with a great revenue-earning department squeeze £80,000 or £250,000 out of the public, by means of increased rates, so long as I know I am expected to do so. But to enter upon my career with an uncertainty as to what my wages bill is to be, and at the same time to bring about a satisfactory result, it is too much to expect of me. I first proposed, given a fair chance—with the assistance of a board which could deal with it—to classify the whole of the men throughout the service, to decide their rates of pay, and upon that, determine the rates to be charged for the transit of goods and passengers throughout this country. I think there is no necessity for me to deal with this question farther. I should like indeed to thank members for the kindness they have extended to me throughout the difficult duties I have had to perform during the last week. It is of great assistance to have the confidence of so many members of this House. It may not be thought I deserve it, but I think one and all realise that up till now, at all events, I have never had a fair chance to do justice either to the department or to the number of employees under my control. I have, as I have said, a duty to perform, that being to protect the railways controlled by me. It would be much easier to give increases in all directions and make myself popular, but that is not the kind of politics I am going to adopt. I have accepted an important position in the Ministry of this State, and while I

remain a Minister I am going to do my duty, no matter what may result. In taking the stand I do, I think I am adopting a right one, which will result ultimately in the interests of the department and also in the interests of the men. I would, indeed, be glad to be relieved of the responsibility, but my colleagues have asked me to accept this position, and have put me into it, and while here I will, I repeat, do my duty, and I am satisfied that in taking the stand I do, I am pursuing the right course.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): When this question was previously debated in the House, I took occasion to suggest to the Government that it might be well to consider whether they had exhausted every means of conciliation. I venture to think that advice was not altogether bad; because since that time the Government have done what lay in their power to persuade the men their intentions were such as would lead to a fair, equitable, and reasonable settlement; and I now desire to say, as a private member and one who had very much sympathy with the men when the struggle began, that I consider the Government have done everything in their power to exhaust the resources of conciliation. They gave to the men the option of deciding what kind of board should be formed. The board is agreed to by the association, and then the association turns round and defies, I venture to say, the whole community, and tells us the decision of that board is not to be binding on either side. I believe it was farther said, notwithstanding that rebuff, that everyone who returns to work by to-morrow morning will be reinstated. But matters have now come to such a pass that it is for this House to consider whether these well-meant efforts at conciliation have not been received rather as evidence of timidity and of weakness on the side of the Government than—as I am sure they were meant—as evidence of good-will. A time must come in every dispute when conciliation ceases, and an action of another kind becomes imperative; and in passing the motion, which I think I may take it will be carried by an overwhelming majority this morning, this House will affirm the principle that there are limits beyond which neither Parliament nor Govern-

ment can go; that consideration for a section of the community cannot be allowed to overwhelm consideration for the entire community, and that if we were to give way now, we should be affirming the principle of government not on the grounds of equity and of justice, but merely brute force. I have never in this dispute understood the Government to say they affirm the men are entitled to this 8s. a day. The action of the Government, as I understand it, is that they neither affirm nor dispute that proposition. It would be an absurdity in terms to talk of arbitration when no difference of opinion exists. It is impossible to read that official statement published in the newspapers this morning from the permanent heads of the department, without seeing that those permanent heads have a very decided amount of doubt as to the precise sum those wages should be; and this House would be stultifying itself, and the Government also would be stultifying itself, if the advice of the permanent officials, those gentlemen in highly responsible positions, were to be utterly cast aside in a question of this sort, and the question not considered in a judicial and fair manner. It cannot be supposed that an arbitration board of the kind suggested would not be inclined to weigh both sides of the case and do even-handed justice. But what are we to suppose from the attitude of the men who, on the one hand, declare they are perfectly satisfied of the justice of their claim, and yet, on the other hand, even when they have suggested a board themselves, will not submit their claim to the arbitrament of that board? I join with the Commissioner of Railways in deprecating the suggestion—in however mild a way it may have been put—made by the member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) that a matter of this sort should be referred to a board of bishops. I venture to think the time for referring it to any board at all has gone by, because the multitude of suggestions made as to conciliation by means of one sort of board or another have met with absolutely the same fate, that being a flat rejection on the part of the association. I trust that if this matter comes up in the House again, I shall always be found standing by the side of the Government, and assisting

them by every means in my power to advocate not only this principle of arbitration, but also that the government of the country shall be conducted on principles not merely of blind force, but also, as I have already said, on the principles of equity and justice.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanoona) : I should like to have moved an amendment differing in two particulars from that brought forward, but I am satisfied from the way in which things have gone that such an amendment would not be carried. We have combined two questions here. The first question to consider is that the amendment asks us to affirm that the men shall have an increase of 1s. a day. But that is not the question tonight. The real question is whether we should emphasise our approval of the manner in which the Government have acted up to the present moment. I take it that is the position put before the House. Therefore I personally, and I believe most of my friends on this bench, will vote for that motion. But I should like to say this: if we had a straight-out motion as to whether we would recommend an increase of 1s. per day in the men's wages, we should like to vote for that.

MR. DIAMOND: You cannot vote for both, you know.

MR. HASTIE: I wish to point out that the fact of voting for this motion does not in any way indicate that we are against the increase of 1s. per day. The hon. member who interrupted me does not understand that what I stated is quite outside that question. He does not know everything. It is quite possible that we on this bench know something.

MR. DIAMOND: Your experience is so much greater.

MR. HASTIE: So far as I know, no one denies that the men deserve more. We have all practically agreed that the men should get an increase of pay amounting to 1s. per day, and the only point in dispute is as to the better way to give it to them. Some people say: "Give them this shilling right off to settle this question, and never mind the future." From my experience in these matters, more especially in this country, I feel absolutely certain that if this demand for 1s. per day increase be granted in the manner that the strikers

ask, then within the next fortnight we shall have four or five strikes on our hands. I feel absolutely certain of that, and for this reason more than any other. How have we hitherto settled disputes of labour with the Government in this country? In every case, I believe, the Government of the day have been bluffed into granting the demands of the men. And even if it be granted that we will adopt conciliation afterwards, we have to consider that we have practically nothing to show that we shall be able to do so. It is all very well to say that this does not follow. I accept the pledges given as being an expression of the minds of those who give them for the present moment; but I do not think that the pledges of the association will in the future be of any greater value than that attributed to the pledges given to their electors by some members who sit in this House. And for this reason: those members all say that they have a right to put their own interpretation on the pledges they gave to their constituents. And so will the strike party, the strike executive, demand the right to interpret the meaning of their pledges. It will be found, I fear, that this association will take strong action afterwards. I believe that the men should get an advance; but I also believe that many other members of the service ought to get an advance, and I believe that this is the only way to settle the difficulty satisfactorily. The question before us to-night is very largely a question of deciding how these men are to get their increase, how we are to give them that rise in wages. On the one hand we have been asked to say that the Government or Parliament ought to give them the shilling, and on the other hand we are told that it ought to be given them by a Board of Arbitration. I believe that every member of this House wishes arbitration to be adopted at the earliest possible moment. We have all of us adopted the principle of arbitration, and we are all ready to abide by decisions in accordance with it. We have come to this, so far as I can see at any rate, that there is no way of treating this question except that of affirming the principle stated in the resolution proposed by the Premier, and of doing our best to see that railway communication is continued in the future.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I think I expressed my opinion on this matter pretty forcibly in the early part of the evening. I say this question is a question of right and wrong, and it devolves on us to say whether these men have a right to the increase in their pay or whether they have not.

A LABOUR MEMBER: No, no.

MR. TAYLOR: They have a right.

MR. F. CONNOR: We cannot get away from it. It is no use beating the air in discussing this thing. It is no use going into side issues. The single question is: are these men justified in asking for 8s. a day to live on and to keep their families on, or are they not justified?

MR. TAYLOR: Certainly they are.

MR. F. CONNOR: Now I want to pin down the Labour party to this. Are they in favour of these men getting 8s. a day?

MR. TAYLOR: We are unanimous on it.

MR. F. CONNOR: Well, then, what are you discussing? Are you going to vote with the Government?

SEVERAL LABOUR MEMBERS: Yes.

MR. F. CONNOR: The hon. members of the Labour party are going to vote with the Government, and yet they say these men are entitled to the increase. It is a clear-cut issue.

MR. TAYLOR: Not so.

MR. F. CONNOR: Will the hon. member tell me why it is not clear cut? I ask, are these people entitled to 8s. a day or are they fairly paid at 7s. a day? Perhaps hon. members will kindly follow me. If I am in order, I wish to try to pin the Labour party down to this. I want to ask the Labour members of this House whether or not they are in sympathy with the men, and whether they are going to support the amendment which says that these men cannot live on 7s. a day. The men say they cannot live and support their families on 7s. a day. Are the Labour members in sympathy with these men, or are they not?

SEVERAL LABOUR MEMBERS: Yes; certainly.

MR. F. CONNOR: Both the late Government and the present Government have said that they are entitled to the 8s. a day. Now when the present Government say to the men, "You are entitled to it, but you cannot get it," why then

the men say, "We will endeavour to get it; we will use every power we have to get it." That is the position before this House. Now let us consider the position of the hon. member who was returned to this House as the tribune of the Railway Department, the member for East Fremantle. I say he was returned as the tribune of the Railway Department. He is the great man who, sitting in opposition to the late Government, said, "I can find a flaw in everything that you do, because you sit on that side of the House and I on this." I wish him to understand the position. That hon. member when he sat on this (Opposition) side of the House, said, "I can find a flaw in everything you do. I can do everything better than you." Now the hon. gentleman comes into power, and what does he do?

A MEMBER: He finds the "flaw."

MR. F. CONNOR: No; he found no "flaw," but he created a strike. I attribute this strike purely and simply to the member for East Fremantle. He created this strike, I say. Are we benefited by that? Is the country benefited by that? Are we benefited by the fact that the hon. member who sat over here saying, "I know everything better than you," now sits over there and says, "These men are entitled to the extra money, but I won't give it to them"? Because he did say that. He takes that position as a member of the Ministry of this State. I congratulate him on his accession to office: it is a great achievement for a young man, a comparatively young man, to attain that position. He has attained that position, he sits there now, and I congratulate him on the fact. I congratulate him on it, and I congratulate him on the situation. I hope he enjoys the situation. I myself in his place should not enjoy it, but the position in regard to this question is as follows—and I will reiterate it again and again—are the men justified in demanding 8s. a day? I challenge—I have said this before I and say it again, and I do not care how often I say it—I challenge the Premier, I challenge the Commissioner of Railways, to say that the men are not entitled to it. Then, if they are entitled to it, if it cannot be denied that they are entitled to it, why not give it to them? Why not do away with all this great trouble? I will ask

the question of hon. members who sit on the cross-benches. It is impossible for them to answer.

A LABOUR MEMBER: What about the ultimate cost of yielding?

MR. F. CONNOR: Never mind that. This is a question of right and wrong. I have taken my stand on the question of whether the men are right or wrong. Again, have they a right to this increase of a shilling a day, or have they not? Again, if they have a right, why not give it to them? If you say they have not a right to it, explain why they have not? I think the machinery the men made use of was wrong; I think the strike was to be deprecated in every possible way; but what were the men to do? If their position is wrong, let me ask, is the position of the Ministry here any more legitimate? They cannot deny that the men are right in this instance; neither can it be denied that the men are wrong. I say that the Ministry are wrong; that is the position. Eight shillings a day is not more than a fair living wage to men who have to keep families; therefore I say the Government might possibly waive their dignity. The clear-cut issue is this: A section of the men demand that they shall be paid a living wage, and the Government have not denied that the demand is just, but have refused it. The Government should have acceded to the request as long as the demand was just.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): I say without hesitation, the men deserve eight shillings a day, and I have thought that for a considerable time; still I maintain that the "farm" hands who are out on strike at Fremantle at the present time should have their case decided. The hon. member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) is the champion at the present time of the fettlers. A little time ago he was the champion of the "farm" hands, but he has forgotten them now.

MR. DIAMOND: The "farm" hands have nothing to do with the question at all.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON: I wish to ask the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor)—I think he said he has been a member of this Chamber for ten years—has he just come to the conclusion, or has he just satisfied his mind, that the

fettlers in the Railway Department are working at a rate which they cannot live on. He has been in this Chamber for ten years, and he has just found out, when these men come out on strike, that they are not receiving a living wage. If the hon. member had done his duty, he should have brought this matter before the last Ministry, and then the men would have been working at an increased rate now, and there would have been no strike. The position of the Labour party is plain in this matter, but I regret to say we are not altogether solid. We take a stand in this matter that is a just one, and the only one which true unionists can take. We are believers in arbitration and conciliation; we have fought for arbitration and will continue to do so. The difference between the Labour party and the executive of the Railway Association is that the Railway Association are working for the fettlers only: they forget that the "farm" hands are members of the association, and that they should be fighting for those men as well as for the fettlers. The "farm" hands are not in a position to hang up the railways because they only number about 60, still these men should not be forgotten; but because the fettlers are in a position to lock up the railways they are to receive early attention, yet the "farm" hands were on strike first, therefore the position of the executive of the men's association is unjust. The executive should try and get the wages demanded by the "farm" hands first, and then deal with the fettlers. I am not here as an advocate for settling the trouble piecemeal.

MR. DIAMOND: The "farm" hands were not members of the association when they struck.

MR. JOHNSON: They are to-night. I would like to ask members who know so much about the Railway Association, what about the officers in charge of wayside stations on the goldfields who are working twelve hours for 7s. or 8s. a day: are they not entitled to an increase? Why not redress their grievance at the same time as that of the fettlers? I am here as the champion of the employees, and I want an increase for the whole of the employees who are championed by us. The position taken up by the Commissioner of Railways is a just one. At the time that the fettlers came out he

had the trouble with the "farm" hands to deal with, and if he had settled the matter with the "farm" hands he would have had the fettlers out, and if he had settled the fettlers' strike there would have been other disputes with the guards and the porters: these men would have been continually striking. But the Minister said "I will not have that: I will settle the whole difficulty by a board which shall classify the whole of the service; I will make their decision retrospective." How can we as unionists cavil at that? The decision is just and we will accept it: a majority stand here to-night prepared to go on in that way. We are believers in arbitration, and a majority of us will support the motion.

MR. H. J. YELVERTON (Sussex): I do not propose at this early hour of the morning to refer at great length to the question, but in dealing with the subject the other evening in the course of my remarks on the Address-in-reply I said I believed the position taken up by the Government was a just one, and that I hoped that they would be supported by the members of the House. I regret that prophecy is not to be fulfilled; still I hope the Government will be supported by a large majority of members. So far as I am concerned, speaking as one who has had considerable experience as an employer of labour for 25 or 30 years, and having had to deal with considerable bodies of men, I may say that I have always found in my dealings with men they have been reasonable when they are treated fairly; at any rate that is my experience. I do not think that at present any labouring man in the country who ever worked for me could say I treated him unfairly. When I say I am about to support the Government in this matter, I trust the working men will still be with me on the question. I have heard it said many times this evening that the fettlers and line repairers on the railways are entitled to an extra shilling per day. I am going to say that I am not yet convinced on that question, because I know on the sawmills and in the forests of the country—I am speaking of a matter I understand—the wages there at the present time are eight shillings a day for nine hours, and the fettlers—and I have watched their work—who it is said are entitled to eight

shillings a day, do not have to work so hard as the men in the forests and at the sawmills, and at other great industries in the country which are backed up by private enterprise. If the fettlers are entitled to eight shillings a day, then these other men are entitled to a much greater increase; while I know with regard to the timber trade, the business will not stand an increased rate of pay. Therefore I say I am very much in doubt whether the fettlers are entitled to the increase demanded. But, putting aside altogether that question of wages, for I say that is not before us this evening, the question is whether we shall give way to the demands made by this association; whether we shall allow it to rule this country, or will adhere to our intention to support constitutional government. That is the position, I take it; and I believe it is a just one; and upon this question I shall this morning support the Government, and will not support any amendment whatever. Unless the Premier alters the terms of his proposal, I shall adhere to that resolution, and will support him. I have said quite sufficient to express my views on the subject, and I intend to abide by those views and to vote with the Government.

MR. J. M. HOPKINS (Boulder): I am much pleased to see that this has not been treated as a party question; and I rise more particularly to say that my opinion is entirely in opposition to the opinions expressed by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond) and by those other members who have supported the amendment, when they state that the men have exhausted every constitutional means of having their grievances remedied. I say they have not done so, and I shall endeavour to prove that before I finish.

MR. F. CONNOR: Prove it.

MR. HOPKINS: I am sorry indeed to think we are having a strike on our railways. I am sure it is a matter of regret to every person throughout the length and breadth of Australia; and in the minds of most of us it aims a blow at one of our most cherished ideas, that is of reserving to the State the right of building and controlling the railways. It is occurrences like this which tend to bring the people round to thinking it would be much better if the railways were

placed under a company like the Midland Company, whereby there would be no strikes at all. That is one of the consequences which is apt to accrue from such strikes. As to the men being entitled to an increase of wages, I may say I have been a public man for over three years past, and during that time I have had the honour of being the mayor of the town of Boulder, which pays its labourers 11s. 8d. per day, while the Government labourer is working, very often at more laborious work, within a stone's throw of the municipal labourer, and earning only 7s. a day and an extra shilling as a gold-fields allowance; and I believe it is the intention of the Ministry to rectify these anomalies. I may ask the House if they really think the men will accept the overtures that have come from the member for South Fremantle, and that we should throw out this Ministry with a view of having that hon. member on the Treasury bench?

MR. DIAMOND: It is not a question of throwing out a Ministry.

MR. HOPKINS: Or are we to throw out the Ministry in order to bring in the member for the "black North"—I beg pardon, East Kimberley? We are not to be hoodwinked in that manner. I say the member for Northam (Mr. G. Throssell) undoubtedly made a mistake. When this question came before the late Premier (Mr. Throssell) it was for him to deal with it finally, so far as his term of office was concerned, and to decide, either one way or other, yes or no. But we find that, three days after the question came before him, he goes out of office, but writes a private communication to the men, wherein he says: "Gentlemen, you have proved your case up to the hilt;" or in other words, "You have your labour to sell, and we are paying you 7s. a day for it; but it is worth 8s." That is a nice position for the Premier of the country to take up.

MR. RASON: He did more than that.

MR. HOPKINS: We may reasonably illustrate the position by supposing that Mr. Throssell takes his wool clip to Dalgety & Co., and they tell him it is worth 8d., but he says he will accept 7d. for it.

MR. DIAMOND: You are grossly misrepresenting the hon. member.

MR. HOPKINS: There is no person more sensible than I of the difficulties that will accrue, more particularly to my own constituents. I recognise that if this strike be continued, the mines must close down—that is absolutely certain; and I think every industry of this country will follow, and that probably the first men to “go broke” will be the city merchants. I am perfectly satisfied the country will be devastated if this strike continue. I appreciate the remarks of the member for North Perth (Mr. R. Speight) when he referred to the position in which we were placed when the men threatened to strike. I agree with him that it was very advisable to know who were the masters of the situation. Now, the principle of an arbitration board is found in the motion made by the Premier to-night. I am one of those who have been elected to maintain that principle. I have here telegrams, which I have already placed before the Premier, from my own constituency, wherein my constituents ask for my assistance towards getting the men an increase of a shilling a day. They already have my assurance that they will have my assistance to see that the men get, not 1s. a day, but that their “screws” will be raised to a rate in accordance with the rate of pay ruling in the districts in which they happen to be employed.

MR. GEORGE: Then there will have to be higher railway rates paid in your district.

MR. HOPKINS: From the wording of these telegrams and from the meetings held, I am convinced that up to the present time the people on the fields have not heard the two sides of the question. It is, to my mind, one of the most serious problems that has ever darkened the horizon of Australia. It is indeed a serious thing to know that one-fourth of the entire population of this State is, at the present time, cut off; its supplies are cut off, and there are no means by which those supplies can be efficiently replenished. It is very serious to think that 400 or 600 railway men should take upon themselves the responsibility of going on strike to bring about such dire consequences. [A MEMBER: 400.] Very well; 400. There are two sides to this question. The men have their labour to sell; and it was right

for them to make application, in the ordinary course of business, for a rise, if they consider they were entitled to it. I understand they made an application to have their wages increased. They followed that up by a petition to the General Manager, and from the General Manager it went to the Minister, and from the Minister to the Premier. I think with an ultimatum that they would go out on strike on a certain date; and, after going on strike to try to force the hands of this Parliament, trying to induce us to violate our own ideas of constitutional government, they then start to prepare a petition for presentation to Parliament; but this is the course they should have adopted before they went on strike. I am perfectly convinced that if the railway employees had come to the Minister and gone from the Minister to the Premier, and then, not having had their grievances rectified in a manner which they thought fair and square, had presented a petition to Parliament, that petition would have been fairly and squarely dealt with by both sides of this House. I undertake to say that when the question of passing those wages comes before the House, and whatever this board may do, I for one will feel, when the Estimates next come before us, that it will be my pleasure and my duty to see that every person in the employ of the Government is getting a rate of wages equal to the rate paid in the district where that person happens to be employed. The hour is early, and I shall not speak at any great length; but we shall be here again to-night discussing the question. On Thursday night last I thought it would have been preferable had we dealt with this matter in committee, with the Press excluded, and had we done that we might have formulated a proposal which would have met the wishes of both parties. However, I am here to-night to represent my constituency, a constituency which has a great deal at stake. I say I cannot, in the face of my election pledges, go back on the proposition moved by the Premier. I give that my very hearty support, and simply say that I now look forward to the time when I shall have an opportunity of doing my share towards seeing that these men do get a reasonable remuneration for their labour; and I hope it will not take me 10 long years to be convinced

of the justice of their claim, as it has taken the member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor).

MR. F. WILSON (Perth): I have listened with some considerable attention to the remarks which have fallen from previous speakers, with the hope that I might hear something fresh in connection with this great dispute, the strike now existing. I confess that when listening to the remarks of the member for Guildford (Mr. C. H. Rason) and the member for Subiaco (Mr. H. Daglish), I was unable to understand how they could, whilst admitting that the action of the men was decidedly wrong, wish to reward them for having taken that wrong action. In a dispute, no matter whether it is a question of wages, hours, or any other point between two parties, employer and employed, if one side gives way and grants the request of the other, the matter is settled and settled once and for all, and on the easiest basis. I wish to point out that this unfortunate strike among the railway hands has undoubtedly reached an acute stage. We have a position thrust upon us now in which we have to decide whether the Government and the Parliament of this State shall be supreme, whether the railways and other public undertakings belonging to the State shall be controlled by the responsible Ministers of the Crown, or whether they shall be controlled by a section of the civil servants represented by this union. The question has narrowed itself down to that position. The Premier could have adopted no other action than that he has taken to-night. There is no man who could sit longer in the responsible position the Premier holds here, and carry this load upon his shoulders, when Parliament was in session, without coming to the House and asking to have his action either indorsed or condemned; and I consider the speech he made to-night, placing the matter clearly before hon. members, was one of which he might well be proud, and I congratulate him upon it. It was moderate in its tone and yet determined in its delivery; and I say had the Premier taken any other action, had he allowed this grave matter, which we all deplore, to continue without submitting it and getting a definite decision from this Parliament as to whether his actions should be indorsed or otherwise,

had he permitted himself to be swayed and influenced by such members as the member for South Fremantle (Mr. A. J. Diamond) and others into giving way to the men's demands, without insisting upon the matter being considered by arbitration, which he so fairly proposed some time since, he would have lost the respect not only of the members of this House, but also the respect of the people of the State, and of the very strikers themselves. To say this demand has been conceded as just on all sides is, I think, making a statement that is not true.

MR. F. CONNOR: Do you deny it?

MR. WILSON: Emphatically I deny it. I say that I and others, and I venture to assert hundreds and thousands of people in this State, have never yet considered the justice of the demands made. It has yet to be proved that the wages the men are receiving are too small for the work they are giving to the State. I do not insinuate by this that the decision will be against the men—I am rather inclined to think it will be in their favour; but I would remind the House that there are thousands of men in this State to-day working for the wage these men are receiving, namely 7s. a day, and there are men working on railways here who are getting only 7s. a day for the same class of work. But I do not wish to advance that as an argument that this demand of the men should be declined out of hand. By all means let the matter be fairly considered and dealt with by a tribunal for which these men have agitated so long; by arbitration, the only fair tribunal which could settle a dispute of this character. The member for South Fremantle advanced as an argument why the Government should give way, that the Chamber of Commerce at Kalgoorlie had decided, after due consideration, that it was in the best interests of the State that the men should receive the advance. I wish this House to understand there were present at that meeting of the Chamber of Commerce which considered this question 15 members, of whom eight voted for the motion and seven against it. The motion was carried by a majority of one, and I have it on the authority of merchants in this city and responsible people in Kalgoorlie that the

decision of the Chamber of Commerce does not by any means represent public opinion.

MR. F. CONNOR: You have no right to say that.

MR. WILSON: I say it emphatically, and I defy the hon. member to dispute the accuracy of my statement.

MR. CONNOR: I dispute it absolutely.

MR. WILSON: I hope this House will support the Government in the motion submitted, and I say that in my humble opinion one of the conditions of arbitration on any lines must be that the men return to work forthwith. They have taken up a wrong position, and I believe the majority of the men are beginning to find that out for themselves. They must understand clearly that men who are employed in the service of the State are in an absolutely different position from men who are serving private firms. They are servants of the State, and it is not right, and I say it is an almost unheard of thing, that the whole railway system of any country should be paralysed by the action of civil servants refusing to continue in their employment. If the Government are wrong in refusing the requests of these men, there is a proper and constitutional method of obtaining redress. I have yet to hear that the men have ever attempted to approach this Parliament in a constitutional fashion for the purpose of seeking redress of their grievances. I venture also to assert, without fear of contradiction, that if this Parliament considered that the men's demand was just, and if it had been brought before Parliament in a proper manner, the men remaining at their work and not paralysing the railway system of the State as they have done, then the members of this Parliament would not have hesitated to cast a vote adverse to the Government of the day, and turned them out of office on account of their action in refusing the advance. But that is not the position. The position is that the men have adopted a "stand and deliver" policy, saying: "You must grant this advance or else we do not care what may happen to the rest of the population. We are going to stop the running of the railways; we are going to make the 186,000 people who live in different parts of this State suffer because you will not at once accede

to our demands." Is that a right stand for any small section of the community to take? I venture to say that no right-thinking person in Western Australia can support such a contention. I would like to point out that in this great question we have the eyes of the other States on us. I know full well that the action of the present Administration is being watched in the Eastern States. They are anxiously waiting to see the result of this strike in Western Australia; they are waiting to see how our Government and our Parliament are going to handle this difficulty; and should we show any signs of wavering, should we for one moment surrender the privileges and the powers of this House, or allow any section of the community to dominate and overrule the right of this House to control the public estate, then you may depend on it that it will have a very bad moral effect right throughout the Commonwealth. In that aspect alone we have a duty to perform not only to the people of Western Australia, but also to the whole of the people of the Australian Commonwealth. It is our duty to show that we will insist that Parliament shall be supreme, and that these men must not adopt a "stand-and-deliver" policy towards the Government of the day. I hope that the reasonable and just principle of arbitration which has been contended for so long by these different unions and by members of this House, having been conceded to the men, will be adopted by them. And here I wish to join issue with the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Diamond), who said that this House had shut the men out from arbitration.

MR. DIAMOND: I said Parliament had shut them out.

MR. WILSON: Parliament has done nothing of the sort. Parliament did not shut these men out from arbitration.

MR. DIAMOND: Parliament did shut them out.

MR. WILSON: The men shut themselves out from it.

MR. DIAMOND: They did not.

MR. WILSON: They shut themselves out in having clerical workers, or members of the clerical staff, mixed up with

other workers. Hence the reason why they could not register under the Arbitration Act. Is Parliament to blame for that, and is that any reason or justification for their taking up this high-handed position? Not at all. If the men are closed out from the operation of the Arbitration Act, I say the Government have "gone one better" by offering, and again offering, and reiterating the offer, to create a special Board of Arbitration to consider and settle this dispute once and for all. I think that the arguments which have been advanced here to-night against the Government proposal are childish. I say, farther, that they are unpatriotic, and calculated to do injury to the well-being and the peacefulness of the State. I do hope that hon. members will think twice before they oppose this motion, knowing full well that it means the supremacy of Parliament in all affairs which affect the well-being of the State and the control of the public property.

MR. J. RESIDE (Hannans): I am sorry that the occasion has arisen for my addressing the House once more on the situation. The last time I spoke it was with the strike impending, and I then expressed the opinion of this party as unionists and labour men on the situation, in order to prevent what we considered would be a national calamity. Our advice was disregarded. Again standing here as a worker, and as a representative of workers, and as a unionist, I say to every man, to every worker, that although I find myself in a peculiar position here, a position that appears to be antagonistic to the men who sent me here—I have been promoted by those men, I have fought their battles in the past, but I have been promoted by my fellow-workers to the position of politician; and therefore it is from a political standpoint I must view the situation. And I say this is not a question of wages. The justice or the injustice of the men's demand is not under consideration to-night before this tribunal of the representatives of the country. I say the question is solely one of principle; and when I say that I have fought in the forefront of the labour ranks for the principle of arbitration, that I have fought for the time when strikes

would be a thing of the past, and that I have said all labour disputes ought to be settled by the principle of arbitration, and when I consider that arbitration is one of the planks of the Labour platform, how can I consistently refrain from supporting the motion which is now before Parliament? I say this is the position the Labour party finds itself in to-night; and as far as I am personally concerned I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to bring about a settlement of this strike. It was through my personal intervention that the members of the Ministry and the executive of the strikers were brought together. I really thought at one time that a settlement of the difficulty had been arrived at. The parties were, indeed, within an ace of it. When it was found that they tripped over various conditions, I was bitterly disappointed. At the conference held at the Premier's office on Monday morning several propositions were laid down, and one of them was that a board should be appointed. That board was then practically agreed on. The parties also were agreed on the number of members the board should have, the persons who should be appointed members, and the manner of electing the chairman. All these things were agreed on. But then the question arose whether the decision of the board should be binding. The men said they were not agreeable to accept the decision of the board as binding. That was taken as one of the conditions to be referred to the Cabinet, as the Ministers at the conference would naturally have to refer to the Cabinet for ratification or otherwise of the conditions. The second condition was that the men should return to work before the award was given. The third condition had reference to reinstatement of the strikers. The Cabinet on considering these questions decided, it appears, that the award must be binding, and that the men must return to work before the board delivered judgment. The third proposal that the men should be reinstated in their old positions and that no one should suffer for their actions during the strike, was agreed to. There was a difficulty in arriving at exactly what was intended by the Cabinet, and I took it upon myself to see that this matter should be cleared up,

and I was quite certain that it was to be dealt with to the satisfaction of members of the executive. However, there was the situation; and as far as I am concerned, I consider that the executive have not acted in a proper manner. I consider that they have not done what they ought to have done. I myself advised them to accept the board, and to accept as binding the decision of that board. For I considered that they had nothing to fear, as their position seemed to me so just and strong that really the decision of the board could be anticipated. I said, with the idea of inducing the executive to agree to the decision of the board being binding, that they ran no risk, and asked, "Therefore why not accept it?" I asked them as a worker to do this, and I told them that if I were not sure that the course I suggested was advisable, I would not recommend it. Afterwards, when the decision of the Cabinet was unsatisfactory to the executive, they seemed to throw out a good many hints of suspicion and trickery. Thereupon I said that throughout the negotiations I had watched the Premier very closely and had judged him as far as I could, and that I considered he was acting in a fair and straightforward and manly way. There was no trickery about him. I said I considered the executive should show more confidence than they did in the justice and sincerity of the Cabinet. They appeared to see in the Government proposals some suspicious features, some trickery; they seemed to be afraid that they were going to be trapped into something or other; and consequently they had not that degree of confidence with which they should have approached the situation. The great mistake in connection with the strike was that of the executive in not submitting the question of the board to the men. The executive should not have taken the responsibility of deciding the situation as they did. They had taken a ballot on the question whether, if the line repairers did not receive the extra shilling by a certain date, the association members were to strike. But the offer of a fair and equitable Board of Arbitration completely altered the situation; and they, as leaders of the strike and as men in positions of responsibility, had then an opportunity of referring the question back

to the men, instead of themselves deciding to reject the offer.

A MEMBER: The men are satisfied, though. That is the answer to that contention.

MR. RESIDE: The Executive said that the time which would be required for taking a second ballot was too long and would delay matters too much; but I consider that it was not absolutely necessary to go through all the formalities of a ballot. I know, of course, that on account of the wide ramifications of the association a long time would be required for taking a ballot. I say on the one hand the executive have shown too much suspicion, and not enough tact, or the strike would have been settled before this. As far as I am concerned, as I said to-night I am called on to take up a certain position, and I am going to do it. The secretary of the W.A.G.R. Association was too hasty when he made the remarks regarding Mr. Hastie. As I said before, if I am doing wrong in the action I am taking, I must stand by it. I think I would be inconsistent if I did not support the principle of arbitration which is offered. Anyhow I will take the risk, and when I go back to the people on the goldfields I shall be able to explain my action. I know the seriousness of the position, and I know the seriousness which this strike will place the people of the goldfields in. Their supplies will be cut off, but I say that the people will look after themselves when the time comes. I know that the men will come to reason and see that the strike is settled. The whole facts of the case have not been placed before the men, because if that had been done the men would accept arbitration. The case is so strong that I do not fear that the decision of the board will not be in favour of the men. The whole matter should be got over at once.

Amendment (to concede the strikers' claim) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	7
Noes	36

Majority against ... 29

AYES.

Mr. Connor
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Doherty
Mr. Reid
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Rason (Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Butcher
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Gardiner
Mr. George
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Harper
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Hastie
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hicks
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Jacoby
Mr. James
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Kingmill
Mr. Leake
Mr. Monger
Mr. Morgans
Mr. McDonald
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Oats
Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Reside
Mr. Smith
Mr. Speight
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Wallace (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question (to support the action of the Government) put, and passed on the voices.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 2:30 o'clock a.m. (Thursday) until the afternoon.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 11th July, 1901.

Address-in-reply, Presentation—Paper Presented—
Question: Railway Station at South Quay, how sanctioned—Question: Caves in South-West, to protect—
Question: Lighthouse at Cape Naturaliste, to erect—
Question: Engines and Wagons, Purchase from Contractors—Question: Drainage Board, Canuing—
Question: Explosives Magazine, site—Question: Railway, Owen's Anchorage to S.W. Railway, survey—Question: Military Contingents, Saddles Defective—Loan Bill, £3,500,000; first and second readings (adjourned)—Return: Indent Orders sent—Return: Indebtedness, particulars—Return: Sparks on Railways, Claims for Damage—Return: Agricultural Areas in S.W., particulars—Return: Expenditure in Departments (5)—Return: Revenue from Lands and Railways—Motion: Saw-Milling, Eight Hours, to legislate—Motion: Rabbit Incursion, to carry out recommendation (adjourned)—Motion: Prospecting Parties, to assist—Motion: Asiatics Competing in Trade, to prevent (Amendment passed)—Motion: Branding Stock, to legislate—Motion for Papers: Kurrawang Wood Syndicate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—PRESENTATION.

At fifteen minutes to five o'clock the SPEAKER, accompanied by honourable members, proceeded to Government House to present the Address-in-reply to the opening Speech of HIS EXCELLENCY; and, having returned, the SPEAKER reported that

HIS EXCELLENCY had been pleased to reply as follows:—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,—I thank you for your Address-in-reply to my opening Speech, and for the assurance of your desire to deal with all questions that come before you in such a manner as to promote the advancement and welfare of this State.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL TREASURER: London Agency, statement of operations.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION — RAILWAY STATION AT SOUTH QUAY, HOW SANCTIONED.

MR. McDONALD asked the Commissioner of Railways: 1, Whether the Railway Station on the South Quay, Swan River, Fremantle, had been erected without Parliamentary sanction; and, if so, by what authority the work was executed. 2, Out of what funds the