

to encourage thrift and promote prosperity among persons who are, perhaps from want of funds, excluded from embarking on larger ventures; and while encouraging thrift it seeks to afford the utmost protection to those persons, and to secure the proper supervision of the accounts of any society which may be formed in accordance with its provisions. For such a Bill there has been a keen demand in certain quarters; and it is to supply this demand and other requirements which have arisen that the Bill has been introduced by the Government. I have pleasure in moving its second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 8.26 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 19th August, 1903.

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

PRAYERS.

URGENCY MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

MINISTER'S SPEECH AT ELECTION MEETING.

THE SPEAKER (Hon. Sir J. G. Lee Steere): The hon. member for Mt. Margaret has handed me a request, that he may be allowed to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of calling attention to the utterances of the Minister for Works at a meeting held in support of one of the candidates for the extraordinary vacancy caused by the resignation of the member for North Fremantle. Some members will recollect that last session I laid down a ruling, which I intended to abide by in the future, that I would not take the responsibility on myself of saying whether an hon. member who desired to move the adjournment of the House for calling attention to a matter of urgency should be allowed to do so, but that I would follow what I ascertained was the Parliamentary practice of asking the House whether it would give the hon. member leave to move, and that it was for the House to say whether leave should be given to move the adjournment for calling attention to a matter of urgency. The question is now that the member for Mount Margaret shall have leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of bringing this matter before it.

Question passed, and leave given.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret): The object of moving the adjournment of the House this afternoon is to draw attention to a Press report of a meeting held at North Fremantle, addressed by a candidate, Mr. J. M. Ferguson, at which the Minister for Works, according to the report, set forth that he, in support of the candidate, promised in these words certain works for North Fremantle. It is as well to read the paragraph:—

The Minister for Works (Mr. C. H. Eason, M.L.A.), speaking at North Fremantle last night, remarked that the dry-dock for Fremantle was one of the many subjects of ancient history which had been left to the present Government to take up and accomplish. They could depend upon it that the Government were going to make that dock. (Applause.) It was not going to be any toy dock; it would be a most modern dock, capable, he hoped, of accommodating the largest ship afloat. (Applause.) They proposed to get the services of Mr. Thow, an engineer from New South Wales, who was an

authority on docks, and who would confer with the Engineer-in-Chief on the subject. Borings were now being carried out in order to ascertain the best site for the dock, and that site would be determined in the first place, on the recommendation of the engineers, and finally by Parliament. The people of North Fremantle could rest assured that, wherever that site was fixed, their interests would not be neglected. No doubt the sooner they got the dock the better and, for his part, and for the part of the Government, they would get it without any farther delay. (Applause.) Speaking of the bridges across the Swan River, the Minister said he had no definite information yet as to where the site of the new bridges would be, but whatever site was determined upon, he saw no necessity to put North Fremantle to any difficulty in connection with the matter. As the site was by no means settled, he asked them to disregard all those idle rumours that were floating about.

In drawing the attention of the House to this matter I do it in the interests of what I consider to be clean and straightforward administration of the affairs of this State. We well remember that when the present Minister for Lands (Hon. J. M. Hopkins) was appointed and was likely to go before his constituents at Boulder, and there was a possibility of opposition to him, the Minister for Works (Hon. C. H. Rason) proceeded to the goldfields and there made promises amounting to, I do not know exactly how much, but sums of one thousand pounds downwards. I am given to understand these promises are being fulfilled. There was a promise of £1,000 for drainage purposes, £500 for asphaltting streets, £200 for the racecourse, also a promise that the subway would be completed as early as possible, and, farther, a promise that the furnishing of the morgue would be effected, without any consideration of the cost. I have no objection to the Minister travelling round—

THE PREMIER: I am glad you have no objection.

MR. TAYLOR: I have no objection to Ministers travelling round this State, because it is necessary, especially for the Minister for Public Works, who has the control of the carrying out of these public works, to do so; but I object to the times selected by the Government for the purpose. On every occasion when there has been an election since the present Government have been in office the Minister for Works or some other

Minister has gone to the constituency making promises of large amounts.

THE PREMIER: Do you say in every case?

MR. TAYLOR: Every case since the Government have been in power.

THE PREMIER: It is absolutely false. I made no promise at all, neither did the Minister for Mines.

MR. TAYLOR: I said the Minister for Works.

THE PREMIER: Try and be accurate. I know it is hard work.

MR. TAYLOR: You cannot throw me off like that. I said the Minister for Works made promises.

THE PREMIER: I want to switch you on to the truth, if I can.

MR. TAYLOR: I was not present at the meeting last night; but I missed the Minister for Works from his chair. Perhaps the Minister will say he was not at Mr. Ferguson's meeting.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, no. I was there.

MR. TAYLOR: Then I am correct so far. It seems refreshing for the Premier to know I am correct for once. He is so inaccurate himself, that he thinks others are the same. I suppose the Minister will deny going to Boulder.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, no!

MR. TAYLOR: I suppose the hon. member will deny going to Midland Junction and Guildford in support of the present Colonial Secretary, and canvassing?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot answer for your supposition.

MR. TAYLOR: Those are places where I say members of the Government went to support the candidature of those expected to sit on the Government side of the House.

THE PREMIER: May they not do that under the new régime?

MR. TAYLOR: I desire to have an expression of opinion from this House that it is not a desirable thing in the interests of clean Government to allow any Ministers to go about promising what savours of bribery to an electorate while a nominee of theirs or a Minister is standing. That is all I desire to have an expression from this House upon, and I hope there will be such an expression given this afternoon that it will not only prevent this from going on, but will pre-

vent any future Government or any Minister from going into an electorate to support a Government candidate by promises to the electorate of the expenditure of public funds. That is all I object to. A Minister is perfectly at liberty to go into an electorate and use his eloquence in favour of a member, but I say he has no right to go into an electorate and pledge the expenditure of public funds to secure the return of the candidate who intends to sit on the Government side of the House.

THE PREMIER: Are you supporting the other candidate?

MR. TAYLOR: Am I what?

THE PREMIER: Are you supporting the other candidate? I want to test your honesty, that is all.

MR. TAYLOR: Which candidate? There are three or four.

MR. HIGHAM: The selected Labour one.

MR. TAYLOR: I am naturally supporting the Labour candidate, but not by any bribes or any pledges to expend the country's money. I say I would support a candidate not on the proposals he may introduce in reference to local matters, but on general terms in reference to the Labour movement with which I am connected. I do not in any way pledge myself to support the candidature of a man on the ground that he would assist any local proposition or anything of that sort. I think it is not a wise thing, and on those grounds I move the adjournment of the House. As I said before, I hope there will be an expression given this afternoon that will prevent it in future. It is idle to say that a Minister of the Crown does not go there during an election campaign with some object. What was the object of a Minister going to Boulder the very week when an election was to take place, unless it was to exert his influence and use public funds to secure the return of the Minister for Lands? What was the object of the Minister in going to North Fremantle last night and speaking on the platform of a candidate who is supporting the Government, and promising that this expenditure should take place as early as possible, and that the people should have no fear on that score? The report is not a very extensive one. I can only repeat what I see in the papers, and I think that

the practice to which I refer is one that should be objected to. I well remember reading in the papers the charge the present Premier and members of the present Government used to make against Sir John Forrest on occasions of this kind. It was frequently hurled at his Government that it was "spoils to the victor." I am not going to make any of those charges, but I believe it is necessary that this Parliament should express an opinion against Ministers visiting electorates during a campaign and standing on a platform of a candidate and promising to spend public money right and left, to influence that electorate to return their nominee.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (North Murchison): I second the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason): Speaking for myself, I think I ought to be obliged to the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) for having called attention to this matter. It is perhaps unnecessary for me to say that he has wholly misrepresented the facts. That, I think, will be taken for granted. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] But it does seem to me strange that the hon. member who, only the evening before, had himself addressed a meeting at North Fremantle, should object to my doing so on the following evening.

MR. TAYLOR: I do not object to your addressing it. I object to your promising money.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will deal with that directly. If correctly reported, the hon. member said at that meeting he was indeed glad to find that a candidate whose candidature he went to support was not prepared to marry the James Ministry, if elected. My principal object in going to that meeting was to say to the people at North Fremantle that there were no valid reasons for forbidding the banns of marriage; and what is more, the people of North Fremantle—and perhaps that is the reason for the hon. gentleman's objection more than anything else—seemed to agree with me to a very great extent, and the prospects of that candidate whose election the hon. gentleman is so anxious to secure do not appear to be remarkably bright.

MR. JOHNSON: That is your opinion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is only my opinion. Perhaps that,

more than anything else, is the reason for the hon. member's venom. His excuse for bringing forward this motion is a professed desire to see clean and straightforward administration. A very nice judge of what is clean and nice and straightforward in administration! As to the member for Mount Margaret, I leave this House to determine the estimation which members will put on the hon. member in that respect; but he says I went to an election meeting and promised the expenditure of very large sums of money at North Fremantle for the express purpose of influencing the election. I made no promise of the expenditure of any sum of money at all. I referred to a matter which had been under consideration by Parliament and under consideration by the people of this State for many years past. All that I said the Government were going to do has been known to every member of this House. It was known by every member that the Government intended to do that which I said they were going to do. It was referred to in the Governor's Speech at the opening of the session as part of the policy of the Government for the session. Mr. Ferguson, the candidate on whose platform I appeared, made reference to the dock and made reference to the bridges; and he evidently had a very erroneous impression of what was going to happen, and so had the people there. It would have been impossible for me or for any member of Parliament who happened to be there and knew what the real facts were, not to have put what the real facts were before the people. I simply stated what has been the intention of the Government, a long and well-known intention, that we would go on with the construction of the dock; and in regard to the question of the vested interests of North Fremantle, I said I did not think the people there need be unduly alarmed. Mr. Ferguson had said, in addressing the meeting, that as many years had passed and the dock was still an unfinished question, in his opinion many more years would pass before anything was done. I tried to combat that impression, and pointed out that, in my opinion at all events, the work would be speedily put in hand. There was not the slightest vestige of a bribe; indeed there could be no question of a bribe in that remark. It could only

arise in the mind of someone who has an evil mind; and I wish to say right here that it is only the kite that smells carrion always.

MR. TAYLOR: Then you ought to smell it pretty often.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In regard to what happened at Boulder, I am accused of having gone there and promised all sorts of things in order to secure or to assist in the return of my colleague, Mr. Hopkins. The hon. member who makes that charge knows full well that he is misleading; he knows very well indeed that everything I referred to even there—the drainage of Boulder, the subway, and one or two minor roads—had all been discussed months before; and the drainage matter, so far from being settled by me on the spot as a sort of bribe, which the hon. member insinuates, was settled by the Minister for Mines. My visit to the goldfields had been arranged long before even Mr. Hopkins accepted office in this Government; and I went up there by arrangement made long before, to deal with the water supply. Whilst I was there the other questions were brought under my notice, and I dealt with them in the same manner as I should deal with them wherever the occasion arose, so long as I am a Minister of the Crown. I think it is hardly necessary for me to say that there has not been any attempt at bribery or to influence the electors either of Boulder or North Fremantle; and I am sure of this, that the electors of North Fremantle will not thank the hon. member for his evident belief that they are to be so bribed and tempted. It does seem very strange indeed that whilst it shall be open to men like the member for Mount Margaret to go about the country assisting those candidates whom they favour, and hurling all sorts of insinuations at the Government, making all sorts of charges against the Government in that perfectly reckless manner which is characteristic of the hon. member—[THE PREMIER: Hear, hear]—yet Ministers of the Crown shall be denied, if you please, even to appear upon platforms to vindicate their characters in respect of charges brought against them, or to mention those subjects which are the most burning questions in the minds of electors. This matter of the dock, of

which so much has been made, is not a North Fremantle matter simply. Indeed what would have been said of any Minister of the Crown if, in addressing a meeting at North Fremantle, he had made no mention of the dock? And what other mention, if I did mention the subject at all, could I have made than that which I did make? I held out no inducement, I held out no promise of local expenditure in any shape or form, and I challenge the hon. member to prove that I did so. I deny that I did so, and I challenge contradiction. I simply referred to an urgent public work of vast importance not only to North Fremantle but to the whole of Fremantle, and I referred to it in terms which I think absolutely justifiable, and which I am sure this House will agree with me were perfectly justifiable. I can only say that I repudiate and I reject with scorn, the utmost scorn that I am capable of expressing, any such dirty insinuations as have been made by the hon. member who moved the adjournment of the House.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mt. Magnet): When a matter of this kind is brought before the House, a disinterested person can scarcely hear it introduced without fearing the reasons which have prompted the person in bringing it forward. We know there are parties in this House, and we have had it brought clearly to our minds that within the last twelve months the game of "ins and outs" has been played in the Assembly. Our friend the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) was Premier for a very little while. The Ministry which he and his colleagues turned out of office used every endeavour to defeat the Ministers on their going up for re-election; and on that particular occasion the present Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) and the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) went through the North Murchison District solely to defeat the colleague of the member for Coolgardie, the late Mr. Moorhead, and we heard no protest from that section of the House known as the Labour party.

MR. TAYLOR: There were no promises made. There is no objection to attendance at meetings.

MR. WALLACE: As far as promises are concerned, it is all a question of a hearer's mind. I regret that on that

occasion the Minister for Mines, when he was just turned out of office, with very big possibilities of being returned, took advantage of his position as an ex-Minister to tour the country in the interests of our friend the member for North Murchison. The member for Mount Margaret was very anxious to accompany him. Not one word was said by the Labour party on that occasion. Whilst I agree that it is not fair that Ministers should do this, I like to point out inconsistencies, and I think it would have been far better if any other member than a member of the Labour party had moved this motion. If it is a sincere desire to put down Ministerial aid at elections, I will support it, but if it is a question of giving an opportunity of washing their dirty linen or airing their grievances in this House, I will oppose it most strongly. [Interjection by the PREMIER.]

MR. TAYLOR: You have the dirty linen.

MR. WALLACE: I am not going to enter into that business, but I am very much opposed to the adjournment of the House just for the trivial matter which has been brought before it by the member for Mount Margaret. Still I am very much opposed to Ministers visiting constituencies just about the time when elections are coming on.

MR. TAYLOR: That is all I moved the adjournment of the House for.

MR. WALLACE: Then I say it was rather unfortunate that the hon. member took this action. To-day I heard that there was another member who was ready to take this action; but the hon. member, ever ready to step into the breach, took up the cudgels on behalf of his friend, and made accusations against Ministers.

MR. TAYLOR: I made no accusations.

MR. WALLACE: It would have been better if the hon. member had moved the motion without backing it up by an apparent desire to heap contumely on the Minister who went down to North Fremantle because it happened that the candidate for whom he spoke was a supporter of the Government. It is very bad taste in my opinion, and it is a very great pity that we cannot fight these elections—

MR. TAYLOR: Without promises of spending public money.

MR. WALLACE: I am not going to adopt the course which I feel I should do, that being to follow the principle I would like laid down in this House or every House in connection with elections; but I shall vote against the adjournment simply because I can see it was no desire to purify the Government of this State or any other State that was the cause of the introduction of the motion, but merely a desire to air the grievances which exist purely in the mind of that particular gentleman, the member for Mt. Margaret.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): It is unfortunate that when an important question like this comes up we cannot consider it on its merits, and not attack the person who brings it forward.

THE PREMIER: What about his attack on the Minister?

MR. HASTIE: I will speak upon that presently.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Thank you.

MR. HASTIE: I was going to explain that it is hardly fair to say that the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) has been particularly selfish in getting in first on this occasion. I know he spoke to me on the matter, and asked me if I would take it up, and I told him that, as he was present in the constituency and had taken a part in it, it would be just as well if he initiated this discussion. The Premier asked me a question just now about why he made an attack upon the Minister. The reason is this. We have only got the report of the newspapers, and the *West Australian* practically says that the principal inducement brought forward last night to return Mr. Ferguson for North Fremantle was that certain things were promised which would benefit that electorate. The explanation given by the Minister for Works seems to me particularly satisfactory. No one who read those reports at all, either in the *West Australian* or the *Morning Herald*, would ever dream, unless his imagination were particularly good, that the Minister was acting in such a very innocent way. What the member for Mt. Margaret contended was practically this, that a Minister of the Crown should not be in a position to go

where there is an election on and practically promise that a large amount of the money of the people of this country shall be expended for the benefit of that particular electorate. That was all. I believe that this discussion will to a very large extent clear the air, and that is very important, for the particular reason that we have in this State, as is the case in all other States, very heavy penalties imposed on anyone who promises or whose friends promise at the time of an election to expend a large amount of money in the district. That is prohibited as regards the individual but if we are to believe newspaper reports it seems that members of the Government think they can go and spend other people's money. I wish that the explanation given by the Minister for Works to-night about the Boulder election had been made about six months ago, and we should not then have been ready to blame the Government for expending money which was not their own in order to influence the electors.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was made.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The explanation was made.

MR. HASTIE: If it was made I did not see it, and I certainly think it was not made in anything like the same style as the explanation made by the Minister at the present time. We have only the newspaper reports to read, and I know, as every member of this House knows, that they are not always absolutely correct in what they say. We have all believed that in very many of the constituencies in this State, if not in most of them, the principal thing in which the electors take an interest is not national affairs, but something that will specially improve their own districts. That has appeared to be very much so in this instance, for I notice that there are three candidates, and they devote their speeches mainly to local wants and very little to those of the rest of the State. I hope that if we discuss this question we shall discuss it on its merits, and not deliberately waste the time of the House by throwing motives from one side to the other.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): I regret very much that this motion was brought forward by a member who is a supporter of one particular side, as it necessarily places him in such a position

that he is not likely to appear so disinterested as one would expect most members to be in approaching such an important question as this. I have been often twitted with having too great regard for our Constitution, and I must say that this is an occasion where it shows the great advantage of adhering to our Constitution. It has been laid down by the law in England for the last 130 years that no Minister of the Crown is to interfere in parliamentary elections. Members may be certain that there was good reason for the passing of that law, and there is particularly good reason for its continuance in the present day. I will read to the House a short passage from *May* dealing with this particular question. The law was passed as far back as 1779, and has not been changed since then.

THE PREMIER: It is not the law.

MR. FOULKES: It is the law at home. It says it is "highly criminal in any Minister or Ministers, or other servants under the Crown of Great Britain, directly or indirectly to use the powers of office in the election of representatives to serve in Parliament." My friend says that there is a resolution of the House. I know from my own experience, having lived very many years in England, that it is not the practice of Cabinet Ministers to interfere in by-elections. Not only do the Government refrain from doing so, but also ex-Ministers. Of course when a general election is on, all Ministers are at liberty to take part in elections; but there is a great distinction to be drawn between Ministers interfering with a general election and Ministers interfering in a by-election, because, when a general election is on, they are called "Ministers" just for the time being, but really as a matter of fact their appointment as Ministers is not fully recognised owing to the fact that in some cases they may or may not be returned by their particular constituencies. Look at the awkward position now. I believe that the Minister for Works went to North Fremantle with the best of intentions, and I have no doubt he thought he was quite justified and quite at liberty to take part in this election; but as far as that goes I join issue. I do not think it is at all the right thing for any Minister to take part in a by-election;

for no matter how much he may refrain from referring to local topics, it is impossible to have one's mind quite free upon the subject, and impossible not to draw sinister conclusions as to the Minister trying to influence the electors of that particular electorate. The Minister for Works has told us that he took care to mention only those subjects that were the most burning questions in the minds of the electors. That is just the false position which the Minister unwittingly has placed himself in. Electors cannot help coming to conclusions; and members will find that if a Minister attends an election meeting, he is always liable to be plied with questions as to whether he is in favour of doing this work or that work. I look upon it that Ministers are practically the advisers of the Governor, and when a Minister goes to a constituency and is asked questions on certain public works, he may be tempted to give replies that will be satisfactory to the people in the particular constituency. This practice is found to place a Minister in a false position if he does not answer the questions put to him in a way satisfactory to the people in that electorate; because if he refuses to give satisfactory replies, it will tend to damage the candidature of the particular person whom the Minister is supporting. Looking at the matter all round, one can see that it is a false step to take, and is bound to place Ministers in a false position. I am not referring to this particular Ministry; for if the Federal Government will only leave us alone, we shall probably have a great number of Ministries in this State, and we shall find that those who now occupy the Treasury bench may, when another Ministry comes in, see more clearly the evil and the danger of a Minister taking part in a by-election. I was sorry to hear the exchange of personalities between the member for Mt. Margaret and the Minister for Works. It is not necessary to introduce personalities into an important question like this. I know that other members of the House do feel deeply on this question, and regret very much to see a Minister interfering in a Parliamentary by-election. I do not know whether the report of the meeting in the newspapers is correct; but in the *West Australian* report the Minister appears to have

referred only to those burning questions which particularly interest the people of North Fremantle in this election. Doubtless the Minister knew it would not be very interesting for the people at that meeting to hear about the Constitution Bill, or the Electoral Bill, or the Mining Bill, now before Parliament.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The dock had been referred to by a previous speaker.

MR. FOULKES: But there is a good deal of difference between a speaker who is a member of Parliament and one who is not a member. There is a great deal of difference between an ordinary member of Parliament going to an election meeting to make a speech, and a Minister of the Crown who is in a much stronger position in regard to promising public works. The newspaper report goes on to say that the Minister told the electors the dock was not going to be a toy dock, but would be a most modern dock capable of accommodating the very largest ship afloat.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Members of the House had been previously told that also.

MR. FOULKES: This is a Minister of the Crown speaking at an election meeting. I do not attach any importance to what an ordinary member of Parliament or a candidate may say, in making a promise of a large dock at North Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I had previously told members the same thing.

MR. FOULKES: There is a great difference between members in this House telling a certain thing, and a Minister of the Crown going to an election meeting at North Fremantle to address the electors. Members are sent here to obtain information with regard to certain public works. If Ministers continue carrying on this practice, it is bound to place them in a false position. I am glad to a certain extent that the question has been brought forward. We do not want to go to a division on it, and there is no need to do so. I have spoken to a good number of members in this House on the subject, and I can assure the Ministry that many members do honestly regret to see a Minister of the Crown going on a public platform and promising public works to

various districts. I believe the Minister for Works did this unwittingly. If he had any doubt in his mind, I feel sure he would not have carried on this practice. I hope the member for Mt. Margaret will withdraw his motion for the adjournment of the House; for I am satisfied that now this practice has been, perhaps for the first time, brought under the notice of the House, if Ministers were not before impressed with it or no notice had been taken of it by members of the House or any section of the people who did not approve of this practice, now that Ministers have had an expression of opinion from various members, I hope they will take notice of it. Ministers know, of course, that I speak as a supporter of theirs and am speaking on this question not from any party ties, but only from an honest desire to have our politics free from all suspicion of pressure or undue influence.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): I am glad the motion has been brought forward, because it gives members an opportunity of discussing the question. I will say at the outset that I am satisfied with the reply which the Minister for Works has made to the speech delivered by the member for Mt. Margaret. I am satisfied also that there was no attempt on the part of the Government to offer any bribe to the electors of North Fremantle; but I hold that it is most unfortunate that anything of this sort should occur in connection with an election, and I hope Ministers will take warning by the remarks of members on all sides of the House. I know that on a previous occasion I took violent exception to the procedure at a by-election when the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) was seeking re-election as Premier and supporting a colleague then seeking re-election as a Minister. The present occupants of the Treasury bench or a majority of them at that time saw fit to tour this country and deliver speeches wherever there was a by-election proceeding, and they did this to fight those who were opposed to them politically. I decidedly object to a Minister of the Crown interfering at any time in a by-election. I have always held that opinion, and always will hold it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: You should speak to those on the other side as well.

MR. THOMAS: I will criticise those who do what is contrary to my opinion, on whichever side of the House the particular members may sit. I must say candidly that the accounts in the newspapers do not read well. The member for Mount Margaret quoted from the *West Australian*, but the *Morning Herald* is equally as bad, if not worse. The *Herald*, in its account of the proceedings, stated:—

Mr. C. H. Rason thought that Mr. Ferguson was an admirable man to sit in Parliament. People were very fond of saying that the Government was bad, but they neglected to say where. The subjects that concerned North Fremantle most were the dock and the removal of the bridges. (Applause.) Mr. Ferguson had said that these matters were ancient history, and he seemed to think that they would remain so. He could say, however, that these things were not going to remain ancient; he could emphatically state that they would soon have the dock. It would not be a second-class thing, but one of the very best, and capable of taking the largest vessel afloat. He would also say that the Government had full cognisance of the vested interests of North Fremantle, and they intended to fully recognise them. Regarding the bridges, he saw no necessity to put North Fremantle at any disadvantage. Regarding the Fremantle drainage and water schemes, the Government had decided to introduce most up-to-date and comprehensive schemes of drainage and water supply for all the towns between Fremantle and Midland Junction.

Before I make farther comment, I wish to state that I am perfectly satisfied that the Minister in making those statements had no idea of giving any bribe to the electors of North Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Everything that is there was in the Governor's Speech.

MR. THOMAS: I do not believe for a moment that the Minister had any intention of offering a bribe to the electors of North Fremantle, because, as I was going on to say, in the Governor's Speech this paragraph appeared:—

My advisers regret that they are not in a position to place before you final reports on the subject of the construction of a dock at Fremantle. The work is essential; but the question of site is one of so great importance that, until farther reports are obtained, no final decision should be arrived at. Such reports may be available before the session closes, but in any case the matter will receive the earliest possible consideration, and due provision will be made in the proposed loan authorisations.

That of itself will absolve the Minister for Works from any charge of trying to bribe the electors of North Fremantle; but I repeat it is most unfortunate that this speech should have been made during a by-election, when the man whom the Minister is supporting declares himself that he is coming to this House as a supporter of the Government if the electors do him the honour of returning him. In the extract from the *Morning Herald* there is no mention of any public concern in this country other than certain works affecting North Fremantle. There is no mention of Bills which are now before this House, no mention of our Constitution Act Amendment Bill.—

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: They were referred to.

MR. THOMAS: They may have been referred to, but it is regrettable that the newspaper reports do not mention these or other subjects as having been referred to by the Minister at that meeting. It is particularly unfortunate that when people out-back take up a newspaper to see what has been said, they find that the Minister for Works made certain references at North Fremantle to matters of local concern and of a parochial nature, and made no reference to higher politics or to questions affecting the State as a whole.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do not blame the Minister for that.

MR. THOMAS: I say it is unfortunate, and I hope it will be a lesson to Ministers. I was on the goldfields when Mr. Hopkins was fighting the Boulder election, after accepting office as a Minister; and at that time innumerable comments were made by residents on the goldfields—in Kalgoorlie, in Boulder, in Coolgardie, and elsewhere—that it was an unfortunate circumstance that a Minister of the Crown should come into the district and give replies to deputations that waited on him in regard to monetary wants and in regard to roads and bridges for the district. I fully recognise, and I would repeat it once more, that nothing was farther from the Minister's mind, and nothing was farther from his colleagues' mind, than that he should go there and speak about these affairs in order to ask the electors to support the nominee of the Government; but at the same time it is unfor-

tunate that the Minister was tempted to follow on after the previous speaker and refer to the docks, bridges, and the vested interests of North Fremantle, where there was no occasion for him to refer to these matters. I hope this will be a lesson to the Ministers of this country, because we are only a small community, and that when by-elections are held, Ministers at any rate will absolutely refrain from supporting any candidates at these by-elections.

MR. T. H. BATH (Hannans): It is very regrettable that in dealing with this question, or in replying to the remarks of the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor), the Minister for Works should have tried to obscure the issue by making a personal attack on that member. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Wallace) has also tried to obscure the issue by saying that this action is similar to the action of other members in support of other candidates, and is similar to the action of ex-Ministers and Labour candidates at by-elections which took place some time ago. For my part I have no objection to any private member of this Assembly, or any gentleman who occupies office, going to assist a candidate whom he considers desirable; but according to the reports we see in the daily Press, which are the only guides we have to go by, the Minister dealt with matters of local concern whilst there are burning topics in other directions. That puts a different aspect on the question, and fully justifies the member for Mt. Margaret in bringing this subject before the House without being accused of vindictiveness or bias. It is particularly undesirable on the part of Ministers at present occupying Government benches, seeing that when they occupied seats on the Opposition side of the House they were particularly scathing in their criticism of previous Ministries for carrying out the same thing during their *régime*. I recollect that when the Right Hon. Sir John Forrest made his famous speech at Burbanks he stated that his Ministry would look with a favourable eye on those constituencies represented by members who favoured his party.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: He never said that.

MR. BATH: We recollect that the very members now occupying Ministerial office attacked him on that score both in

season and out of season. It was practically one of the questions on which they impeached him at the time when they moved the vote of censure.

MR. MORGANS: I know Sir John Forrest never said that, because I was at the meeting.

MR. BATH: We also remember that when, during the session of 1898, in the course of the debate on the Address-in-Reply, the late Mr. George Leake moved a vote of censure on the Government, he also impeached Sir John Forrest for having secured the support of the member who now occupies the position of Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) and the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) by promising certain public works in their electorates. At that time the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), the member for East Perth (the Premier), and the late Mr. Vosper spoke in condemnation of Sir John Forrest and his Ministry for those actions. At the present time, in a question of this kind, which is a burning topic in the election—because we have only to read the election announcements of the candidates to find that the matters of local concern such as the dock and the bridges are placed in the forefront of the candidates' programmes—it was indiscreet, to say the least of it, for the Minister for Works to make the remarks he did on those questions at Fremantle. As far as the merits of candidates are concerned, I was present at a meeting, and spoke on behalf of the candidate, and I say I had a perfect right to do so. I have no wish to condemn any member in this House for taking the same course, but it should be on the merits of the candidates irrespective of matters of local concern, and especially when the speakers are charged with the responsibility of carrying out these public works and of conserving the interests of the taxpayers in regard to them. Certainly the Minister for Works, in his explanation to-night, has placed a complexion on his part in that meeting that is not placed before us in the newspapers; but at the same time no member is justified in attacking the member for Mt. Margaret so vindictively as he has been attacked for bringing forward a matter of such urgent importance, and one upon which the members of this House have a right to express their opinions.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley): I think the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) certainly deserves our approval for having brought this matter up for discussion. I have listened attentively to the remarks made by other members, and to the speech delivered by the Minister for Works. I do not agree with the remarks by the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes), that what was done last night by the Minister for Works was done unwittingly. I do not think any member of this House believes that such was the case. In my opinion every member of the House must agree that the Minister for Works, when he left Perth to go to Fremantle, knew what his message was. He must have known what he was going to say and what would be the effect of his words. I think that the action taken by Ministers in the past and taken by the Minister for Works last night will undoubtedly be disapproved of by the general community of Western Australia. It may be said that in this case no bribe was offered, but I challenge the Minister for Works to read through the reports of the meeting that was held at North Fremantle last night and tell me, after he has read through those reports, if he can say that his words would not have a great effect on a number of voters who attended that meeting.

THE PREMIER: His arguments were so good, why should they not?

MR. PIGOTT: His arguments may have been good, but I do not see that there were any arguments at all. He simply made a definite promise that certain works should be done.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I made a definite promise that the Government were sincere in the promises they had previously made.

MR. TAYLOR: I doubt it.

THE PREMIER: You doubt everything. (To Mr. Pigott) What paper are you reading?

MEMBER: *Morning Herald*.

THE PREMIER: What is the good of reading that rag? Read an honest paper, not an Opposition paper.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are both substantially correct.

MR. PIGOTT: First of all the Minister said he thought that Mr. Fer-

guson was an admirable man to sit in Parliament. Would the Minister for Works have said that if Mr. Ferguson had been supporting the Labour platform?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

MR. PIGOTT: I am glad to hear it as far as it goes. To put the matter into a nutshell, would the hon. gentleman go to the next meeting at North Fremantle held by the Labour party in support of the other candidate, and make similar statements?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Except as to the candidate, yes, if necessary.

MR. PIGOTT: Except as to the candidate! I think the action of the Minister for Works in going on to that platform to support Mr. Ferguson was, to say the least, most improper. No member, and especially a Minister, should go to an election meeting of that kind and from the platform say the Ministry consider the candidate an admirable man, and that the Ministry intend to do certain things. It is all very well for the Minister to tell us these things had been promised months ago. We know that we have had works promised years ago and they have not been carried out to-day; but here it is distinctly made out that this man is a good man, and the Government are thinking of doing this if the electors send him into the House to support the Government.

MEMBER: Who said this?

MR. PIGOTT: That is practically the effect of the words used last night, according to the reports. I am not blaming the Minister for having done this, on account of the reason that similar action has been taken before. I do not approve of it, and I do not think any honest man does. Reference has been already made to the election of Mr. Hopkins when he received the portfolio of Minister for Lands. I know for a positive fact that right up to the day the Minister for Works visited Boulder another candidate was in the field; but when the Minister for Works went to the people of Boulder and said "Mr. Hopkins is an admirable man"—

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I never said a word of the kind. The hon. member is misrepresenting me, and he has no foundation for the statement.

MR. FIGOTT: Then the Minister said, "Mr. Hopkins is not an admirable man."

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not say so.

MR. FIGOTT: Whatever he said with regard to Mr. Hopkins—

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said nothing.

MR. FIGOTT: The Minister certainly said the Government meant to do certain works at Boulder. [Interjection.] The effect of the visit to Boulder was that there was no opposition to Mr. Hopkins. I fancy that if the Minister for Works had not visited Boulder at that time a contest would have taken place, and if a contest had taken place it would have been touch-and-go whether Mr. Hopkins would be returned.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: You had better go up there next time.

MR. FIGOTT: It is the truth of the matter we want to get at, and I hope every member of the House will voice his opinion on this subject, so that from this day forth we shall not find Ministers of the Crown standing on the platform at by-elections, and supporting members who are put up in the interest of the Government by saying they are admirable men, and (just to fill in time) asserting that the Government intend to spend a lot of money in the district. I hope we shall not have this sort of thing occurring again. It is most unfair to any candidate who may put up at an election in opposition to the Government.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): I desire to enter my protest against the utterances of the Minister for Works at the meeting held last night. I think all members will deplore the fact that the whole of those candidates contesting that vacancy, as far as we have heard up to date, have not gone away from local parochial matters. The whole contest seems to be centred round the dry dock and the removal of bridges, and I thought that when the Minister for Works went down to the meeting he would endeavour to get one of the candidates away from North Fremantle and try to get him to take an interest in the whole of the State, and not only in the four corners of that electorate. I think all will deplore the fact that the whole of these candidates have got hold of the handle of the town

pump, and even the Minister for Works went down to North Fremantle to give them a hand on that handle. I think, with other members, that the Minister for Works was wrong when he entered the electorate at Boulder, at the time the Minister for Lands was contesting that seat on becoming Minister. Had the House been sitting at that time, I should have entered my protest against the utterances of the Minister for Works. It is utterly wrong for Ministers to go to elections and promise certain sums of money to carry out certain works. Speaking of Boulder, it is correct, as the Minister has stated to-night, that the question he referred to had been discussed for some considerable time before the election took place. We know that the question of the subway at Boulder had been brought before this House time and time again by the member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), and there were other questions which we had heard of before that election took place; but the fact remains that before the Minister came those works were not carried out, and there was no definite promise that they would be carried out, that the money would be forthcoming, or that the Government would assist in carrying them out.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Was that true of the subway?

MR. JOHNSON: The subway was going on for some considerable time. There was money voted for it, and money spent on it, but the work was not pushed ahead as it should have been before the election took place. I knew perfectly well that the Minister for Works intended visiting the goldfields long before that election. He had written to me and told me he would be up at or about that time. I take it that had Mr. Hopkins not been contesting that election, the Minister would have given the same replies in connection with the different requests of that electorate; but the fact remains that it would have been better for the Minister for Works at that time to turn round to those who made the requests, and say that there was an election on in which the Government were directly interested, and he, as a representative of the Government, declined to say anything on the question until the election was fought out. I think that would have been the

proper course, and I was very sorry when I saw the utterances of the Minister at that time. Getting back to North Fremantle, there is another question about this. As far as we can read in the papers the Minister for Works did nothing else than speak of local matters. Of course he states here, and I believe him, that he did get on to other questions; but, judging from the papers—and we have only those to go by, because we cannot attend the meetings to hear all the Minister says—it seemed to me and to other members that the Minister did nothing else than deal with local matters, and did not endeavour to shift those candidates away from parochial and narrow ideas, especially in connection with the candidate whom he was supporting last night.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That applies to the Labour party, does it not?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, and they deserve it very likely; but none of those who supported the Labour candidate stooped down, I was going to say to the depth the Minister did last night, in getting on local affairs. I was not present, but I say that members of the Labour party who attended to support a candidate got on to something bigger than the local parochial wants of North Fremantle. I take it this motion will not be pushed. The member for Mt. Margaret brought it forward to protest against the system that has been going on, and to try and get the House to raise their voice against it in order that it will not be continued in the future. And I would like to point this out. The Minister takes strong exception to the hon. member bringing the question forward, but it must be borne in mind that the hon. member and a number of others in this House only had the newspaper reports, and I claim that, judging the Minister from those reports, he did utterly wrong in his utterances there last night, and he was not justified in going down to refer simply to local matters. He stated that he did get off local matters; but the member for Mt. Margaret did not know that until the Minister told him. The newspaper report did not give it, and consequently we judged the Minister from the report we read in the newspaper. In conclusion I enter my protest against the proceedings,

and I trust the Government will not continue them in the future.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): So many observations have been made in relation to the Minister for Works that I am very glad indeed to say I entirely indorse what he said at North Fremantle. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that what he said there was exactly what could be said by a man speaking on a public platform and advocating the claims of a candidate standing in the interests of the Government; and not one word did he say which could be construed by those who heard it into any suggestion of a bribe. We have often had a discussion in this House—not perhaps raised by substantive motions—as to the extent to which Ministers should interfere in elections. It is simply pedantic to discuss a question like that by the light of English experience, because we know the organisations they have there, and that a Minister may exercise just as much influence in an election by speaking in some other electorate than that where the contest is going on as he would by speaking in the electorate where the struggle is taking place. In substance it is the same thing. What we have to deal with is the position in the State of Western Australia. I think members will agree with me—except, of course, the member for Mt. Margaret and his pilot-fish the member for North Murchison—that it is much to be regretted that a discussion like this should crop up when an election is pending, and should be brought forward at the instance of a member who himself has taken a strong stand in this election and advocated very earnestly indeed the claims of one particular candidate. It must leave on the mind of every impartial member of this House—and certainly there can be no doubt in the minds of those who know the hon. member—an impression that the motion is brought forward, not for the purpose of vindicating a principle, but for the purpose of attacking the Minister for Works.

MR. DAGLISH: What about the other members who supported him?

MR. TAYLOR: I made no attack.

THE PREMIER: May I repeat myself? It is obvious to those who know the hon. member that the motion was brought

forward for the purpose of attacking any Minister or any other member of the House who had the audacity to go on the public platform to plead on behalf of a man standing in opposition to the Labour party. The suggestion here is that a certain promise was made, that a sort of corrupt influence was brought to bear. Members in this House, outside the Labour bench, know how absolutely foundationless that is. I do not think there is a member of this House who is not agreed that the Fremantle dock ought to be erected. No one here is opposed to it. It is a work we all recognise ought to be done. Not only that, it has been referred to on more than one occasion by myself, and the Governor's Speech at the beginning of this session contained the following:—

My advisers regret that they are not in a position to place before you final reports upon the subject of the construction of a dock at Fremantle. That work is essential, but the question of site is one of so great importance that, until farther reports are obtained, no final decision should be arrived at. Such reports may be available before the session closes, but in any case the matter will receive the earliest possible consideration, and due provision will be made in the proposed loan authorisations.

So members will see that in the Speech with which this session was opened there is a direct statement that provision will be made in the proposed loan authorisations for the construction of that work, the only question left open being the question of site.

MEMBER: The money was borrowed for it years ago.

THE PREMIER: Members who heard the few observations I made at the opening of the North Fremantle town hall, will remember that I pointed out then the action the Government were taking. I pointed out that we were endeavouring to obtain a report of three engineers, but that we were unable to obtain the three on account of the absence of one in New Zealand, but we hoped to overcome that difficulty shortly. Therefore, the attitude of the Government was well known to North Fremantle and to the whole State. But we were placed in this position. A great number of busybodies opposed to the Government go about saying the Government are not sincere, spreading

throughout the constituency of North Fremantle and every other Fremantle constituency an assertion that the Government which made those statements do not intend to carry them out. We can meet a man if, on the public platform, he makes a direct charge; but these sneaks make their suggestions in private conversation or perhaps at private meetings, and say the Government are not going to do this, they are not sincere, that they do not intend to carry the work out. These are the busybodies who do so much harm. I do not say the member for Mt. Margaret is one, but busybodies like that, who will not make charges on a public platform, go quietly about among a body of people and make these accusations and charges. I do not say the member for Mt. Margaret does so. I am dealing now, we will say, with some other case, and not that of North Fremantle. Persons go on to a public platform, and instead of stating their objection to the Government and giving reasons, make some bald statement and say "I am very glad the candidate is not married to the Government." You will find some people who, in supporting a candidate, go about surreptitiously to spread these stories and attack the Government in a most scurrilous manner by making secret charges against us. I do not say the hon. member did that.

MR. TAYLOR: But you are inferring it.

THE PREMIER: I am not talking about North Fremantle. I appeal to members, what are the Government to do in a case like that, when one finds these attacks surreptitiously made, and an opinion prevailing that the Government are not sincere? When they make statements like that, saying the Government do not intend to carry out the work, are we not justified in sending a Minister down to assure them that we are in earnest? And is it to be held a heinous crime if we endeavour to defend ourselves from these wilful and malicious misrepresentations, made by men who will not go on to a public platform and make them openly and specifically. If we are to be brought to book by motions of this nature, it opens up a very interesting question. Apparently in the future, if this is to be encouraged, whenever a member of this House belonging to a

party in the House, and supporting a candidate standing for election, wants to attack an individual member of this House who supports some other candidate, he can bring forward a motion of this nature. When are we going to have an end of these election campaigns? Are they to be carried on inside and also outside the House? If the member is anxious to affirm a principle, he knows well enough that the principle is not of so precarious a nature that it must be declared within 24 hours. After the election the principle can be affirmed if necessary, and after the election we are more likely to be able to take a fair and impartial view than we are during the course of the election, when perhaps we are more or less interested. But does not one grow rather tired of this cant that comes from certain members of the House?

MR. HOLMAN: It comes from your own.

THE PREMIER: Listen to it! Members saw quite recently a paragraph in the paper to the effect that a certain body of men intended to move the Court against the Commissioner of Railways. Of course the Government are in that case the Commissioner of Railways, as we are responsible. Is it not a strange fact that this inspired paragraph should appear when an election is going on, a very striking fact? It was an endeavour to influence the Government in view of the election, and as such, equal to any corruption. The Government may apparently be so influenced, but no other person may use influence to defend the Government. It is only the Government who may not defend themselves.

MR. TAYLOR: I think that was decided long before this seat was open.

THE PREMIER: Pardon me: that has not been decided, and no one knows it better than the hon. member.

MR. TAYLOR: It was decided nearly a month ago, I understood.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member, then, does not know anything about it. There is a dispute pending now between a body of railway servants and the Government, and that body of railway servants happens to have a very large influence at North Fremantle; but while the Government are not to be at liberty, according to the hon. member, to make any statement

in regard to the intentions of the Government at a time when an election is pending, other parties may make what statements they choose for influencing the result of that election. I have no doubt whatever that the candidate who is supported by the Labour party, if he gets returned to this House, will be assisted by the member for Mt. Margaret in trying to get local works for North Fremantle. According to the hon. member, whatever he advocates, whatever he puts before electors on a public platform, is right; but whatever the Government may do in putting their views before electors is wrong. Whatever suggestion of a promise, whatever statements we make of our intention to carry out our promises, will be made with an improper and corrupt motive, according to the hon. member. I think members here can draw their own inference. If the Government had desired to be corrupt, they could have taken the opportunity of making a settlement of the pending dispute, and doing so at a time when it might influence an election; but we declined to do this. The suggestion was practically thrown out that, unless we came to terms, there would be opposition in the election for North Fremantle.

MR. TAYLOR: I never heard of that.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member tells me that he does not know anything about this dispute in connection with a big organisation like that, of course I must accept his word. I can speak strongly on the issue raised by this motion because even the hon. member, who does not stop at much, cannot accuse me of having used the opportunity of an election to make terms or offer bribes. If I have been emphatic on one thing, I have been most emphatic that I would make no promise that might influence an election. That accusation can never be levelled against me. I endeavour to do that which I believe to be right, and I do not care a rap whatever may be the result of this election or of a body of elections. But when the allegation is made against the Government that they are not sincere in the policy they have brought forward, the Ministers or any of them have a right to go on the platform and openly meet those charges. When this quiet influence is brought to bear at North Fremantle and elsewhere, attacking the

Government on the ground that they are not sincere in the platform they have put before the Parliament and the country, we have a right to go to the country and vindicate our sincerity, and we intend to seize every chance of doing it. Whether it pleases or displeases the hon. member or anyone in this House, we intend to use all the opportunities that are open to us to place our views before the country, and vindicate ourselves against those who assail us, and assail us in this manner.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison): I am glad the Premier has addressed the House on the motion, because his speech may correct an inclination on the part of some members to deal too severely with the Minister for Works and Railways. We members are inclined to forget that the Minister for Works is always armed very strongly in innocence. We must make allowance for his ignorance of the arts of the political wire-puller; and I should be the last to suggest that the Minister is a novice in political wire-pulling—not merely a novice, but he does not know anything about it. When he went to North Fremantle the other evening, I feel convinced that the last idea in his head was the idea that he was going to attempt to thrust Mr. Ferguson, the Government candidate, down the throats of the North Fremantle electors. No. The idea that was in his mind no doubt was the very natural and proper idea that there were at least two subjects on which the people of North Fremantle were anxious for a little more information. It is true they were ancient questions; and although ancient, and although hope deferred in regard to them might have made the electors of North Fremantle somewhat sick against the Government, that only made it the more necessary, when an election contest was proceeding, that the electors should know that whatever candidate was returned, whether Mr. Ferguson or another, it would make no difference to the Government because they were determined in regard to those two subjects. If the Labour candidate were returned, they were prepared at length to do their duty to North Fremantle by constructing that dock which has been so long pending, so long forshadowed; not merely by the present

Administration, but even by an Administration going so far back as the time when Sir John Forrest was in power. I can quite understand that it is highly necessary, particularly on the eve of an election, to make the time-worn assurance that, after waiting so many years, the dock at Fremantle is to be constructed. Otherwise, conceive the error into which those electors might have fallen! They might have fancied that the promise made by the present Government was the same sort of promise as made by their predecessors, and that if the electors returned a Government supporter, there was no more chance of that dock being constructed than there was in the time of the Forrest Administration. So that in the interest of maintaining the James Ministry in power—

[Interjection by the PREMIER.]

MR. NANSON: Of course the Premier believes himself strongly that the welfare and progress of Western Australia are all bound up in maintaining the James Government in power; and knowing that, can we doubt the anxiety and intention of the Minister for Railways in going down to reassure the people of North Fremantle, whose faith must have been sadly shaken by the repeated promises, never accepted on maturity, though I do not know that any date was fixed as the due date for the acceptance of these promises. Of course there were other subjects the hon. member might have dealt with in addressing the electors of North Fremantle. It would have been interesting if he had referred to the Constitution Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: He did.

MR. NANSON: I am glad he did so, and I am glad he told the electors of North Fremantle that, owing to circumstances which he need not specify, the great question of constitutional reform (now on the eve of a general election) was almost precisely in the same position as it was some two years ago, when the country was also on the eve of a general election. The question of all questions to the people of North Fremantle no doubt is whether this dock is to be constructed. I had almost forgotten to mention another question they are deeply interested in. I believe the people of North Fremantle have been a little bit sore on the question of that secret pur-

chase of land along a certain route, with a view to the removal of the Fremantle bridges; and surely here was justification for the Minister going down, and labouring under an impression that, as many members of the present Government were responsible for that secret purchase, it might easily happen that unless he went down to explain, the electors would not return a Government nominee, but would return the present *bête noir* of the Government, the Labour candidate. I can well remember the time when the Government and their Labour friends were allies; but at the present day their relations are somewhat strained. I do not know whether they have concluded another alliance; but if they have not concluded one, apparently they are negotiating one in another quarter.

MR. FOULKES: Have they concluded an alliance?

MR. NANSON: If the hon. member will overcome his incurable habit of speaking one way and voting another, we shall be happy to entertain the proposal. Although I deeply sympathise with the Minister for Railways, although I feel for him in the awkward and embarrassing position in which he is placed from the best of motives, still although it gives me some grief to do so, I am compelled to state that I am bound to give this motion my support. I do so in the first place because I think even an innocent Minister may be a danger; and sometimes an innocent Minister is so full of innocence he cannot imagine that people with evil minds will see bad motives where he in his innocence can see nothing but good. I fear that a Minister of that kind may do a great deal of harm. He may, by making statements of the kind that are open to more than one construction, do something to foul the political stream in this country; therefore, in order that there may be no question as to what is a proper course when an election is pending, I think the House should pass this motion, not as a vote of censure on the hon. member, for we recognise his innocence in this House—at any rate we know him well, if North Fremantle does not know him well. And while we would be the last to censure the hon. member, yet we hope, by passing this motion, it will be understood that although his motives as a politician are

high, the motives of all politicians are not equally high; and we should pass the motion also in order that this incident at the North Fremantle election may not be regarded as a precedent; because if so regarded, it might become highly dangerous to members on this (Opposition) side of the House.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (North Murchison): It comes very well from the Premier to make the statement he has done this evening in reply to the motion. It brings to my mind a somewhat similar case in which I happened to be interested. At that time the very same influence was used at an election for North Murchison as is being used in the present election at North Fremantle. And at the time I refer to telegrams were sent containing 275 words, franked through by the Government to assist the candidature of a man who was opposing me. It seemed very remarkable that the same man who was then in question (the Minister for Works) was the henchman of the Premier of that time, a sort of secretary or whip to that Premier; and it seems strange to me that the Premier at that time (Mr. Morgans) denied any knowledge of those telegrams being sent.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do you infer that I had any knowledge of them?

MR. HOLMAN: Not the slightest; the Minister for Works is too innocent to have any. I was going to show that the very same principle that operated in the election I refer to is in operation at the present time; and although we have a Minister who says it is only a kite that always smells carrion, he is in the best position in this House to give a reply to that question. I hope that in future he will try to get away from the smell of carrion, and will allow some other members to express an opinion that, when he gets up and infers that the member for Mt. Margaret or any other member smells carrion, it is impossible to follow the trail of the hon. gentleman unless they get smitten. The Press throughout the State remarked on the attitude of the Minister for Works when he went to the goldfields during a recent election, and granted those requests while the election was pending. Ministerial visits have been made to other parts of the State since that time, but on no occasion have any requests been granted in the same

way as during the trip to Boulder when an election there was pending. We find that during that visit grants were made in aid of the racecourse, although the same were absolutely refused during the whole of the previous period of the Ministry. When the present Ministry were returned to power, it was on the cry that they were going to run this country on a commercial basis. But the basis on which they are running the country is a long way from being in the best interests of the people, at the present time.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I regret that the debate has degenerated sadly, and it seems to me that the cause of that lies at the door of the Ministry; because the Minister for Works and the Premier, instead of leading the House in this debate by giving a tone and dignity to it, have themselves led to the introduction of a very unseemly tone, and adopted very undesirable tactics while the discussion was going on. I do not think anything that was said before the Minister for Works spoke warranted the accusation made by him against the member for Mount Margaret; and at all events if wrong did begin with him, assuming that the Minister for Works was justified in complaining, there was a proper and dignified way to make a complaint in regard to any statement reflecting on him. I have always expected to get some guidance in a right direction from the Treasury bench, and I have thought other members should look to the same quarter without being deceived. The Premier's remarks were particularly unhappy; and it is very significant that although the strongest speech made was by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pigott), the Premier devoted no word to that member, while at the same time he used some very offensive remarks which he directed against the member for North Murchison (Mr. Holman), who had not spoken on the subject; while the leader of the Opposition, who had been very outspoken, was for some reason entirely unmentioned, either because he was regarded as being from his position unworthy of criticism, or because there were other personal motives for leaving him severely alone. The Premier chose to make certain accusations in regard to the Labour party and the North Fremantle election which were absolutely

unjustifiable. I do not think it is the business of any member or any candidate to refer to matters that are likely to go before the Arbitration Court. That court is established and is there to have questions referred to it by employers or employed. The statement made by the Premier that a move was made for having a case stated against the Commissioner of Railways, for election purposes, is unworthy of the Premier. He stated that it was necessary for the Minister for Works to go to North Fremantle to vindicate the sincerity of the Government, which had been impeached privately. I have never personally impeached the sincerity of the Government. I have always endeavoured to criticise them, and even when I have done so in a hostile spirit I have done it without malice of any description. I think that when members of this House have criticised the Government, they have done it in kindness; yet the Premier says his sincerity has been impeached. It may have been so inside and outside the House, and it may have been necessary to send a Minister to North Fremantle to vindicate the sincerity of the Government; but how is that sincerity vindicated? It has been alleged in some quarters that the Government were not sincere in bringing in the Constitution Act Amendment Bill. The Minister for Works went to North Fremantle to remove that impression, and he says in reply to the allegation that the Government are not sincere in desiring to have an amendment of the constitution, "I can assure you we are going on with the Fremantle dock." That is the real position. The assurance has been given to the electors of North Fremantle that the vested interests in North Fremantle are not going to be interfered with.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I spoke also of the Electoral Bill and the Constitution Bill.

MR. DAGLISH: The Minister very probably did speak of them; but they were so unimportant, the references were regarded by the meeting as being so unimportant, that they absolutely escaped the reporter's note book. The main point in the Minister's speech as reported in the Press is the reference to the roads-and-bridges question. In regard to that, if the Minister went to vindicate

the sincerity of the Government, then he went to point out that year after year past Governments had promised to set to work on the Fremantle dock, and year after year those past Governments had absolutely failed to fulfil their promises, but that now the Government in power intended to go actively into operations at once. Not only that, but detail was actually given to the electors that was not in the possession of members of this House ; for instance the detail that it is proposed to get the services of Mr. Thow, an engineer from New South Wales, who is an authority on docks. This intention has never been made known to Parliament.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has been made public before.

MR. DAGLISH: How is it that the candidate running in the interests of the Government was not acquainted with that fact? The whole trend of the Minister's speech is : "You have now at last in power a good Government, a sincere Government, a Government that is not one of promises, but a Government that will perform where others have only promised. Therefore it is to your interests to keep this good Government in power, and the way to do so is to return a certain candidate who is pledged to support this Government." I recognise in that an absolutely wrong position for any Minister to take up. I admit the right of the Minister to go where political principles make a battleground at an election, and to go and fight for political principles on which the existence of the Government may depend ; but I deny the right of any member of the Ministry to go and hold out these promises to the electors with the object of influencing votes. I regret this should have occurred, and I regret farther that the Ministers should have set so bad an example in the present discussion.

At 6-28, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. TAYLOR (in reply) : When the House rose for dinner, I was about to reply to the arguments of the Minister for Works and those of the Premier on the motion for the adjournment of the House. In moving the motion, I was perfectly cool, and I may add most

moderate. I have been accused by the Minister for Works and also by the Premier of taking action with the very worst intentions, and words of which I did not make use have been attributed to me. The debate did not get past the Minister for Works until that hon. gentleman started to wash dirty linen, and he desired to place me in a similar position. I leave it to the House to say whether in bringing forward my motion I did anything but simply read an extract from to-day's issue of the *West Australian*. I did not enlarge on the report ; I simply read a bare statement of facts. Farther, I quoted from the same journal's reports of speeches made during the campaign, or the supposed campaign, of the member for Boulder (Hon. J. M. Hopkins) when standing for re-election on assuming office as Minister for Lands. I made also some references to the election for the province which the Colonial Secretary (Hon. W. Kingsmill) has the honour to represent. I claim that of all the speeches delivered to-night, mine was of the least duration and showed the least heat. The heated nature of the subsequent discussion resulted from the manner in which the Minister for Works conducted his defence. The Premier, in defending the Minister for Works, said that no other member of the Cabinet had ever gone around at election time promising, I suppose sops, or some other word to that effect. The Premier, however, did not deny that the Minister for Works had done this. I have never accused any other member of the Cabinet of such conduct. I simply set forth from the newspaper reports that the Minister for Works had taken such a course on two or three occasions. If the newspapers accurately reported the hon. gentleman, it is plain that he promised in constituencies where a Ministerial candidate was standing a certain expenditure of public money, with the object—I say this now, though I did not say it before—of influencing electors, so that they might vote for the Government nominee or for the Minister standing for re-election. In moving my motion I made it clear that I recognise the right of any member of the House or any Minister of the Crown to go on an election platform to speak in support of any candidate whom he considers a fit and proper person for election to Parliament. I do object, however, to any

Minister using the funds of the country in order to assist a Government supporter to reach this Chamber. To make this plain was my only object in moving the adjournment of the House, and it is the only object I have in view now. The strong language of the Minister for Works, the manner in which the hon. gentleman thought fit to slate me, his statement that I had ulterior motives, and finally the expression he used early in his speech that the kites always gather where they smell carrion, lead me to point out that such language comes badly from the Minister for Works. I have heard it frequently said that those who live in glass houses should be the last to throw stones; and certainly the Minister for Works, living in a glass Cabinet, should see that all the stones around are well out of his reach, lest in an evil moment he should throw a stone and find his tabernacle crashing around his feet. The Morgans elections are fresh in the memory of the House and the memory of the people of this State. We know too well the attitude of the present Minister for Works during that campaign, and we know also the hon. gentleman's attitude during his ten years in this Parliament. He should be the last to make a remark of that kind to me. I wish to tell the hon. member that my character and career in politics, both inside and outside this Chamber, extending over 10 years in this State, and reaching back over a period of 20 years in Queensland and New South Wales, in which States I was a member of organisations with a roll of 20,000, will bear the test of investigation better than will the hon. gentleman's character and career. The hon. gentleman talked about smells. Why, Ministers now sitting close beside him had to move to the extreme corner of the House in order to escape the odour emanating from the hon. member when he entered the Leake Ministry. Time has clarified him somewhat, and the Premier can now sit beside him. The Treasurer, too, shifted away with the present Premier to sit in the Ministerial corner, whilst the present Minister for Lands removed himself to the chair now occupied by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish). We saw those gentlemen with their nasal organs pointing towards the ceiling of the Chamber as they fled from the seats at the back of the Treasury bench. Now

we find this paragon of political virtue, the member for Guildford, the Minister for Works, talking about smells. I defy the hon. gentleman to attribute to me any dishonourable action, either in political life or in any other walk of life, not alone in this State but in any part of Australia. Before talking of fishy smells, the hon. gentleman ought always to think of himself. If we had the testimony of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), that of the member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan), once Minister for Works, and that of the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson), we should know the nature of the political honesty displayed by the present Minister for Works during the Morgans Ministry's campaign. Was not the hon. member prime henchman to Mr. Morgans during that campaign? and as soon as Mr. Morgans was defeated, did not the hon. gentleman go over to the enemy? He went over, joining the Cabinet and the party which he had been opposing. At what price? I have said it in this Chamber before, though I have refrained from saying it during the term of office of the hon. gentleman as Minister for Works. I made the statement only once—on the occasion when I first took this chair.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That statement was as false as your present statement is.

MR. TAYLOR: There is nothing false about my statement.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is absolutely false.

MR. TAYLOR: The facts are too well known, and they have been known for too long a time. I say again, knowing your political character and career as you do, you should be the last man to raise anyone's voice against you. I have no desire to be hard; I am letting you down as lightly as I can. Naturally I am of an even temper, one who does not care about ruffling anybody; otherwise I assure you I do not know how strongly I should resent the statements made to-night. I have to reply to the Premier's statement relative to an arbitration case. The Premier practically accused me, in his forensic, eloquent manner, of being concerned in an alleged plot for citing a case to the Arbitration Court, with the object of creating a feeling on the part of the railway employees living in North

Fremantle, with the object of securing their votes in the interests of Labour. I deny the accusation. The Premier knows too much about the Arbitration Act not to be aware that the unions themselves have to take a vote before a case can be cited to the Arbitration Court. I have had no part in the business. If a case should be cited—I do not know whether one will be cited or not, but accepting the Premier's statement as accurate, if a case be cited—I know absolutely nothing about it, nor have I even been consulted in any way as to the citation. Farther, I say that I feel sure any citation would not be made with a political object. All of us know full well that the railway employees of this State have had grievances for the last six years, and that those grievances are now being remedied, thanks to the close and complete organisation of the employees and to the assistance they have received from members of this House. That statement I deny with reference to the arbitration case. I notice the Premier's defence of the Minister for Works. It really puts me in mind of a story I heard many years ago on a sheep station. There was a man caught red-handed killing a sheep—at that time sheep-stealing carried seven years—and when he was taxed with the offence, he said "Well, look here, I did it in self-defence. It might have bitten me." That is really the argument the Premier used in the case of his hon. friend the Minister for Works. The argument of that intellectual colossus the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Wallace), when he rose to condemn me, simply hinged on similar abuse by other Ministers. He stated—it might not be in these words exactly, but this is tantamount to what he said—that he would have been pleased if any other member than myself had moved in this matter, but he felt absolutely sure that it was impossible for me to move the motion unless I had selfish and vindictive motives. That I completely contradict. The hon. member also accused me of jumping somebody's claim in moving the adjournment of the House. I made known this morning to my friend the member for North Murchison (Mr. Holman), as soon as I read the paper at breakfast time, that it was necessary that the adjournment of the House should be moved on this question,

that it was a crying shame that the politics of this country were drifting to such a low ebb that Ministers were going to repeatedly follow the action at Boulder and in the province which the Colonial Secretary represents. I said it would go on if it were not checked, and my reason for desiring to have this discussion before the House to-night was that I had no proof that the other Ministers would not go down to North Fremantle to-morrow night and every available night between this and the declaration of the poll, and promise an expenditure of the money of the people of this country, to secure whom? To secure the Government nominee. I am not sure that the election has not kept two of them away to-night, for I see there are three vacant chairs. I know the Minister for Lands (Mr. Hopkins) is in his electorate.

MR. WALLACE: There is a Labour candidate speaking to-night.

MR. TAYLOR: I am glad to hear it. I have no proof that there are not two Ministers at North Fremantle to-night to pledge farther docks and farther bridges and offer other sops to secure the return of their nominee. To prevent that, I moved this motion, and I feel satisfied and confident that I have the opinion of this House in favour of my contention that it is a deplorable state of affairs when Ministers will stoop to that kind of thing. The Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) looks up under his eyebrows in his usual form, as much as to say "Dare say anything against the Cabinet with which I am associated!"—as though they could possibly be wrong! I am not going to say anything of that hon. gentleman.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: You can say all you like.

MR. TAYLOR: It is this way. There is no doubt that was the object of the visit of Ministers to those places. As I said before, a Minister is perfectly justified in going on to a platform to speak, but he ought to have the common decency and political honesty to refrain from touching on local matters where the expenditure of money is concerned. We know that has a tendency to influence votes. I am sure that the Minister for Works, in his usual eloquent manner, could show reasons innumerable why no man in this State

who was not a supporter of the Government should be returned to Parliament, without saying "I will build these docks and shift these bridges. The Government have not yet decided where they will be, but the cry is to go on with the works right away." The Minister could have done that without going to Boulder and saying they will push on the subway which has been in course of construction for years, with such vigour as would surprise the people of Boulder, if they returned a member to support the Government. That sort of thing is deplorable, and I am sure this House feels as I do in that particular. I would like to point out that every member in this House who has spoken, with the exception I believe of the Premier, the Minister for Works, and the member for Mount Magnet, has condemned the attitude of the Government during this campaign, in going to electorates and proposing to spend money in those electorates. Knowing that, I will not press this to a division. I have been urged by some of my friends to divide the House on it, but I feel sure the House is with me, that I have an expression of opinion from this House without a division. I also promised a member that I would not press it to a division. That member is absent. I am a man of my word, and I will not press the motion to a division, knowing that I have gained my object. I feel confident that no matter what Government may sit on those benches they will never risk the tactics of the present Government when an election is on. If they desire to go and speak, they will go and speak on politics in a clean and straightforward manner. I hope this motion will have the desired effect, and that we shall have cleaner and better administration in this State in the future. With the leave of the House I desire to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

QUESTION—JANDAKOT, EXPENDITURE ON ROADS.

MR. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Works: What amount of money has been spent within the last ten years on roads at Jandakot and other areas which the proposed Jandakot Railway will serve.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The expenditure during the last

ten years on roads serving the area, which would also be served by the proposed Jandakot Railway, amounts to £1,000. In addition to this, the local road board has expended small sums.

QUESTION—LAND SELECTION, SPECULATORS.

HON. G. THROSELL asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Whether he will cause inquiry to be made as to the satisfactory working or otherwise of the amended Agricultural Bank Act. 2, Whether, if it is found that the expenditure of loans on reproductive improvements has largely fallen off, he will take steps to discourage the granting of loans for other purposes than *bona fide* and reproductive improvements. 3, Whether the Minister is aware that land selection for purely speculative purposes is rumoured to be largely carried on in certain districts of the State. 4, If on inquiry he finds such to be the case, whether he will adopt measures for checking this abuse.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Premier) replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter will receive consideration. 3, He has heard rumours to that effect. 4, Yes.

QUESTION—LIQUOR LICENSE, ABUSES.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked the Attorney General: 1, What convictions, if any, have been obtained at the Cue Police Court of persons selling fermented and spirituous liquors without a license during the past four months. 2, What convictions, if any, have been obtained at the same Court of persons holding either wine and beer licenses or hotel licenses selling contrary to the terms of their licenses within the past two months. 3, If there have been any convictions, what penalty was imposed in each case. 4, Whether it is a fact that in a case in which Italians were convicted the police had to produce their revolvers in the execution of their duty. 5, In the event of the above questions, or any of them, being answered in the affirmative, what steps the Government proposes to take to remedy the unsatisfactory state of affairs in this respect in the districts of Cue and Day Dawn. 6, Whether it is a fact that the sergeant of police stated in

open Court that witnesses had been offered £200 to leave the district before giving evidence.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: The Resident Magistrate, Cue, had been communicated with in regard to supplying the information required in the above question, but the information had not yet been received.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PLATFORMS, SOUTH-WEST.

MR. HAYWARD asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether there are passenger platforms at Mordella, Yalup Brook, and Wokulup, on the South-Western Railway. 2, What amount of revenue was derived from each place during the last 12 months.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Mordella and Yalup Brook, yes; Wokulup, no. 2, The information cannot be supplied at so short a notice, and owing to the first two places being unattended sidings the amount of revenue earned would not convey a correct idea of the traffic. 3, I would suggest the hon. member should, if he thinks desirable, move for a return showing the tonnage of goods and number of passengers.

QUESTION—NORSEMAN GOLDFIELD, REPORT.

MR. THOMAS asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Whether he will lay upon the table of the House a report embodying the impressions of the Norseman Field formed by the State Mining Engineer after his recent visit. 2, Whether he will have an inspection made and reports prepared by this gentleman and the Government Geologist.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, The State Mining Engineer has furnished no report on the Dundas Goldfield. He examined portions of this goldfield, but considered that it would not be desirable to publish a detailed report until after a topographical map had been made by the Geological Department. 2, If possible a geological examination of the Dundas Goldfield will be made by a member of the staff of the Geological Survey before the end of this year.

QUESTION—RAILWAY LIGHT RAILS, SALE.

MR. THOMAS asked the Minister for Railways: Whether, in view of the fact

that several railway extensions are contemplated, he will refrain from selling any of the 45lbs. rails now on hand.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: Due regard will be had to the requirements of the railway extensions contemplated, but all rails sold have been for the purpose of extending private lines, thus providing for increased traffic and revenue for Government railways. The proceeds of such sales pass into the Treasury and become available for the purchase of new and heavier rails if necessary.

QUESTION—FREMANTLE SHIPPING BERTHAGE.

MR. F. REID asked the Premier: 1, The reason why the *Senator Versmann* was moved from her berth at Fremantle without due notice. 2, If on account of shortage of berths, what would be done if three or more ships should arrive on the same day. 3, Who was the stevedore for the inward cargo.

THE PREMIER replied: The ship *Senator Versmann* was not removed from her berth at Fremantle without notice. After notice of removal she was given every facility to complete taking in her partial loading of timber, and her removal consisted simply of being moved one length along the wharf to admit of two newly-arrived vessels coming into discharging berths. When the *Senator Versmann* completed her loading she was hauled off to the River Buoy, where she lay until her departure from Fremantle. The stevedore of the inward cargo was Captain R. Laurie.

QUESTION—RAILWAY TRUCKING AT WALKAWAY.

MR. STONE asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether the Government intend to provide trucking yards at Walkaway, as promised by Ministers, for the receiving and forwarding of stock. 2, If so, when they would be erected, and what was the cause of the delay.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The department has under consideration the question of the most suitable site; a decision will very shortly be arrived at, and the erection will then be proceeded with.

QUESTION—WAGES FORTNIGHTLY.

MR. STONE asked the Attorney General: Whether the Government would take steps to enforce fortnightly payments to all wage-earners employed by companies in this State, as to those employed on Government works.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: The Government have no power to take such steps.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY FOR GERALDTON.

MR. STONE asked the Minister for Works: Whether the Government intend to have the country around Geraldton examined and reported on as to the best means of obtaining a water supply for that town. If so, when.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The country has already to some extent been examined (in 1894 and 1899), whilst quite recently the question has been again under consideration by the Working Railways Department. The Engineer-in-Chief will be asked to give his opinion.

QUESTION—RESIDENT MAGISTRATES, HOW RETIRED.

MR. YELVERTON asked the Attorney General: 1. What compensation was granted to Mr. Lionel Davies, Mr. A. M. Piesse, and Mr. Fred. Barlee on the abolition of their various offices as Resident Magistrates. 2. Whether any leave was granted to those gentlemen, or any of them, in addition to compensation. 3. If so, what length of leave, and whether it was on full or half pay. 4. For what length of time those gentlemen had respectively occupied their offices as Resident Magistrates. 5. What length of time they had respectively been in the Government service. 6. What were their respective salaries during the time of such service and at the date of the abolition of their offices.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1. Mr. Lionel Davis: this officer was a Warden, and merely held the position of Resident Magistrate in conjunction with that post. Mr. A. N. Piesse: £750, and six months' leave of absence on full pay. Mr. F. Barlee: £250, no leave of absence. 2 and 3. See No 1. 4. Mr. Lionel Davis, 5 years and 7 months; Mr. A. N. Piesse,

3 years 1 month; Mr. F. Barlee, 1 year 9 months. 5. Mr. Lionel Davis, 12 years 9 months; Mr. A. N. Piesse, 23 years 8 months; Mr. F. Barlee, 1 year 9 months. 6. Mr. Lionel Davis, as Resident Magistrate, nil; as Warden, £600; Goldfields allowance, £100, travelling £52, quarters. Mr. A. N. Piesse: £400, forage £50 and house. Mr. F. Barlee: £400, forage £50.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Royal Commission on Forestry, Progress Report. Fremantle Harbour Trust, Report of first half-year.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

EARLY CLOSING BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by the PREMIER, read a first time.

DOG BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by the MINISTER FOR WORKS, read a first time.

NORSEMAN GOLDFIELD (NOTICE).

MR. THOMAS had given notice of the following motion:—

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

He said that in view of the fact that there were certain reports and certain information which he wished put in the possession of members before asking them to agree to the motion, he desired to postpone the motion.

Motion postponed for a fortnight.

PAPERS—STEAMSHIP SUBSIDY, FREMANTLE—GERALDTON.

On motion by MR. WALLACE, ordered: That there be laid on the table of this House all papers relating to the negotiations for a steamship service between Fremantle and Geraldton, and *vice versa*, including details of agreement between the "Julia Percy" and the Government.

PAPERS—CLAIM, MR. J. O'MAHONEY'S.

On motion by MR. DAGLISH, ordered: That all papers relating to the case of

Mr. James O'Mahoney and his claim against the Government be laid upon the table.

RETURN—LANDS (MIDLAND) HELD BY ABSENTEES.

HON. G. THROSSELL moved: "That a return showing all agricultural lands in blocks of 5,000 acres and upwards, alienated by the Midland Railway Company and held by absentees, be laid on the table of the House." The object he had in view was to ascertain whether considerable areas of land in the concession of the Midland Railway Company were held by absentees; and if such was proved to be the case, he intended later to ask the House to support a motion affirming that a measure should be brought in for insisting upon conditions of compulsory improvement in regard to lands held by absentees.

Question passed.

RETURN—RAILWAY SAVINGS BY THE COMMISSIONER.

MR. TAYLOR moved: "That a definite detailed statement be laid on the table of the House showing the saving, either monetary or otherwise, made by the Commissioner of Railways since his appointment."

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Although the Government would have no objection to supply members with any information they reasonably required, he pointed out that this motion asked for a definite detailed statement, but it was not apparent on the face of the motion what detail the hon. member actually required. Did he mean the money which the Commissioner had saved?

MR. TAYLOR: No; the saving in the working of the railways since the Commissioner's appointment.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That did not appear on the motion; but if the hon. member would inform him more definitely, he would endeavour to supply the return.

Question passed.

RETURN—RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVES IN USE.

On motion by MR. BATH, ordered: That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing:—1, The num-

ber of locomotives of each class now running on the Government Railways. 2, The initial cost of each class of locomotive. 3, The load each class of locomotive is capable of hauling on the ruling grades of the Government Railways. 4, The coal consumption of each class of locomotive per train mile. 5, Particulars of the class of locomotives on which the soft coke or spark-arresting funnels are used. 6, The cost of running each class of locomotive per train mile.

RETURN—WIDTH OF TIRES, FAILURE TO ENFORCE ACT.

On motion by MR. JACOBY, ordered: That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing which roads board districts and municipalities have failed to enforce the provisions of the Width of Tires Act.

RETURN—WATER USED ON RAILWAYS.

On motion by MR. BURGESS, ordered: 1, The amount of water carried by rail from Chidlow's Well Reservoirs to Midland Junction, Perth, and Fremantle, from 1st July, 1902, to 30th June, 1903, for railway purposes. 2, The cost to the Department for same. 3, The quantity of water carried by rail from Coolgardie water pipes at Northam to stations on the Great Southern Railway, from 1st July, 1902, to 30th June, 1903. 4, The cost of conveyance of said water, from 1st July, 1902, to 30th June, 1903.

MOTION—TICK REGULATIONS, TO RESCIND.

MR. J. J. HOLMES (East Fremantle) moved:—

That, in the opinion of this House, the Tick Regulations as enforced at Fremantle should be rescinded, and that all cattle for shipment from Wyndham to Fremantle should be dipped at Wyndham prior to shipment, and re-dipped on arrival at Fremantle and then liberated.

He said: I should much prefer that this motion could have been considered whilst the Minister for Lands (Hon. J. M. Hopkins) was in his place in the House; but, unfortunately, he is absent on the goldfields. As private members in this House have an opportunity only once a fortnight for bringing questions forward or ventilating grievances, I must seize this opportunity of placing my

views before the House, and it will then be in the power of the House to adjourn the farther consideration of the question if desired. This we all admit is a matter of great importance affecting the general prosperity of the State. I am satisfied that this House is seriously anxious to decide this very difficult problem which has engaged the House during the last six or seven years. Hitherto it has been dealt with by select committees of this House. A select committee was appointed in 1898, another in 1900, and another in 1902. Strange to say the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) was the chairman of the committee on each of those occasions. [Interjection by Mr. HARPER.] If the question goes to a select committee this time, I shall do my best to prevent that hon. member being chairman. I hope the House will bear with me, and I ask members to deal this time with the question in a direct manner without shelving the responsibility on a select committee. I have no desire to criticise the action of select committees which have considered the question in the past, nor do I desire to criticise the manner in which select committees are appointed in this House, though if I did so desire there is ample room for criticism, particularly in reference to the select committee that dealt with the question in 1902. The motion last session was opposed by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott), who spoke strongly against it, by the member for Mount Magnet (Mr. Wallace), and by the member for the Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher). Only two other members spoke, yet a few minutes after the motion was carried four of the members who had spoken against it were appointed a select committee to deal with the question. Therefore I want the House to decide the question this time, without referring it to a select committee. There is no necessity for me to point out that in East and West Kimberley we have some of the finest pastoral land within the Commonwealth, capable of producing not only meat supplies for the goldfields and for the Perth-Fremantle markets, but capable of producing store and breeding stock for all of our valuable lands in the South-Western Districts, and also capable of producing beef in large quantities

for export. I have given this matter serious consideration, and though I am not wedded to the motion, I am convinced of this, and have experience of the last six or eight years to justify me in saying, that there is no necessity whatever to dip cattle either at Wyndham or at Fremantle. I know that we have an opposition party to the proposal in this House, and in order to get my motion carried—as the Premier says, when you cannot get a whole loaf take half a loaf or whatever you can get—I propose to meet the case by dipping both at Wyndham and Fremantle. If there were any risk to be run, I contend that I have as much to lose as any man in the House, because I am largely interested in pastoral country south of Geraldton.

MR. BURGESS: Are you interested in cattle?

MR. HOLMES: No; and the reason why I am not interested in cattle is that I have no opportunity of buying cattle so that I may stock my station.

MR. BURGESS: Other people get them.

MR. HOLMES: The South-Western, Eastern, and Northern districts are hungry for store and breeding stock at the present time. This season is one of the very best those districts have ever known; in a week or two there will be an abundance of grass in every direction, but no stock to consume the grass; and why not? Simply because of the existence of absurd tick regulations, which will not allow the cattle from East Kimberley district to come here and consume the grass. I have not the eloquence of certain members, and perhaps it is not always interesting to listen to what I have to say; but I believe that I may claim, without being egotistical, that I can think out a question and deal with it fairly, squarely, and openly. This question is an important one; it has engaged the attention of select committees for the last six or seven years; and I now ask that it shall be dealt with by the House. There is no necessity for me to prove that tick existed in East Kimberley in 1896. If any member question the statement, then proof will be forthcoming. From the beginning of 1896 until November, 1897, cattle were shipped from East Kimberley to Fremantle without any restriction whatever. In November, 1897, they were absolutely prohibited from coming to Fremantle. It will thus

be seen that after having been brought down for nearly two years, it was discovered that the East Kimberley ticks, which were believed to be harmless, were virulent; and the prohibition followed. Now, early in 1898 a Mr. Hancock, an officer attached to the Queensland Stock Department, was loaned by the Queensland Government to the Government of this State, and that officer reported on the matter. Hon. members will kindly bear with me in my effort to prove that we were absolutely wrong in our contention as to what would happen if the ticks were introduced into this part of the State. Strange as it may appear, one of the most prominent opponents at that time to the coming of the tick cattle to Fremantle was myself. I opposed the introduction in 1897 for the simple reason that the Queensland stock expert—

MR. TAYLOR: Had you any pastoral country or cattle in Kimberley then?

MR. HOLMES: Yes, I had; and it did not make the least difference. The hon. member must not judge my politics from the standpoint of his own.

MR. TAYLOR: That's right. You are always talking about butchering.

MR. HOLMES: I refrain from bringing my business into this House. If the time comes when I have to bring my personal affairs into the House, I shall either put my shutters up or resign from politics.

MR. TAYLOR: Look up *Hansard*.

MR. HOLMES: I have no time for the member for Mount Margaret. In some countries certain people are put in Parliament; in other countries they are put in gaol; and still they are not satisfied.

MR. TAYLOR: You are lucky not to be in gaol now.

MR. HOLMES: Mr. Hancock, the Queensland expert, gave the following evidence in 1898:—

Question: Whether in the event of cattle being brought south from East Kimberley and slaughtered on one of the islands several miles from Fremantle would there be any danger of the pest spreading to the mainland?—Answer: Should such a course be pursued it means courting disaster and establishing a tick farm in your backyard.

Hon. members will note that Mr. Hancock was asked what would be the result if cattle were permitted to land, not at Fremantle, but at one of the islands

adjacent to Fremantle, and his reply was as stated. The answer continues:—

I wish it to be clearly understood that the tick infesting the East Kimberley cattle, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, is virulent, and possesses the fatal power of disseminating tick fever to any of the bovine tribe it attacks. The islands on the Queensland coast became infected by other agents than cattle, and on Flat Top Island the whole milking herd belonging to the lighthouse keeper perished from tick fever. In this case we have certain knowledge that no stock passed from the mainland to the island to carry the pest. The same agencies that carry ticks from the mainland to the island will also bring them from the island to the mainland.

There had been an outbreak of tick at Fremantle in the previous January, 1898; this evidence was taken in July, 1898. The next question and answer read as follows:—

How can you account for ticks not reappearing near Fremantle since the January outbreak?—I can only attribute it to the agency of cattle placed in the infected paddock for short periods only, awaiting slaughter, acting as living traps for ticks, which were destroyed by the salting of the hides. The fact of ticks not having been seen since the January outbreak is not of sufficient importance to warrant even the belief that Fremantle has become clean; sufficient time has not elapsed yet to prove such a desirable consummation.

On that evidence I based my opposition to the coming of tick cattle to Fremantle. The select committee to which I refer, and before which Mr. Hancock gave evidence, reported to the House on the 18th of August, 1898. I propose to read now from that report. I am sorry to detain the House, but I wish to follow the question right through. Paragraph 2 of the report of that select committee, of which I was a member whilst Mr. Harper was its chairman, reads as follows:—

So far, human agency has been powerless to either exterminate or to prevent the spread of this parasite.

Paragraph 4 reads:—

All the coastal districts of Western Australia appear to offer suitable conditions for the life of the cattle tick, although its congener, the camel tick, once numerous, seems to be disappearing.

Paragraph 13 reads:—

It is therefore obvious that the system of quarantine can only be maintained so long as sufficient supplies can be obtained at a reason-

able price outside the quarantine areas ; when that condition fails, supplies must be drawn from inside quarantine areas.

In September, 1898, in defiance of that report, this House decided that these cattle should be shipped to Fremantle from East Kimberley in quarantine under certain conditions. The first shipment arrived in January, 1899, and the cattle have been arriving continuously ever since, with the exception of the summer months, when it is impossible to transport cattle. What has been the result ? The cattle, instead of being landed on one of the islands adjacent to Fremantle and being slaughtered there, have been landed at Fremantle itself. The steamers are not permitted to come alongside the wharf, but have to lie off opposite the quarantine yard. The cattle are jumped overboard, and are swum ashore. In many cases the cattle do not land within the quarantine area or yard, but outside it, and hon. members can well understand that cattle, after spending 10 or 12 days in the steamer's hold coming down from Kimberley, are anything but manageable, and that accordingly there is no hope of every odd bullock which escapes being brought back. Accordingly, for the last six or seven years tick cattle have been roaming about the Fremantle bush and mixing with the clean herds, with no unsatisfactory results so far as tick are concerned. Again, I must point out that originally the quarantine yards at Fremantle were surrounded by practically nothing but posts, with perhaps a top rail and a few wires to keep the cattle in. The town herds and milking cows could be seen—I believe they are to be seen even at the present day—ducking their heads through the wires in order to eat the hay and fodder supplied to the tick cattle inside the yard ; and there have been no unsatisfactory results. I know of an instance where my firm sold some cattle to Mr. Richardson, who is stationed on the Serpentine, 15 miles from Fremantle, which cattle, on being driven to be delivered at Mr. Richardson's place, picked up two tick bullocks that had escaped from the beach at Fremantle, and the drover finding it impossible to get rid of those two bullocks delivered them with the clean cattle. My firm believed at that

date that the result would be practically to ruin Mr. Richardson's estate ; so we promptly telephoned him. He asked who were the owners of the tick bullocks, and we replied " Messrs Connor & Doherty." Thereupon Mr. Richardson said, " Ring up Connor & Doherty and ask whether they will sell me the two tick bullocks ; if so, I will keep and fatten them." Messrs. Connor and Doherty, however, wanted the bullocks—they were short at the time. The cattle were driven back from the Serpentine to Fremantle into the quarantine yard and subsequently killed. Again we have the experience regarding a number of cattle that were dipped at Fremantle and sent to Rockingham, some sixteen miles south of Fremantle. Mr. Richardson was to be the purchaser, but as there was some doubt—although they had been dipped—as to whether they were to be released from quarantine, they were driven back from Rockingham to Fremantle into the quarantine yard, and subsequently sent away up the Midland Railway, and they are now being held there without any sign of tick. I should like here to refer to the Chief Inspector's report on this question in 1899, when this matter was engaging the attention of the Assembly and receiving a good deal of consideration. In his report of 1899 the Chief Inspector says:—

Since the removal of the prohibition against East Kimberley stock, 7,692 tick-infested cattle have been brought to the Owen's Anchorage quarantine yards, from which large numbers have been trucked to the Eastern Goldfields for slaughter. I am pleased to say that, up to the present, not one instance has been brought to my notice of tick having been found outside the yards to which the cattle have been consigned. Although one firm was prosecuted for illegally removing a number of cattle from the quarantine yards on the Goldfields no ticks were found upon them.

In May last two inoculated steers were brought from East Kimberley, and have been kept in the quarantine yards at Owen's Anchorage with each successive shipment of tick-infested cattle, and, although repeatedly subjected to the closest inspection, only one tick on each has been found. When it is remembered that thousands of mature female ticks fall off the cattle in these yards daily, the fact of these stores remaining so long free from the pest shows conclusively that the exposed situation of the yards, together with the sun, drift sand, and other conditions, are not favourable to the propagation of ticks.

That brings me to the report of the select

committee in 1900. Clause 2 deals with the evidence of Mr. Nathan, the inspector at Coolgardie :—

The evidence of Mr. Nathan, however, which is in accordance with experience elsewhere, seems conclusive that a dry climate, such as that of Coolgardie, is an efficient destroyer of tick life in all phases, and your Committee are of opinion that it would be desirable to test this exhaustively, being of opinion that, should it prove as satisfactory as seems probable, a means would thereby be found by which East Kimberley cattle, after a strict quarantine in the dry area, might be safely distributed throughout the colony, and thus materially aid the production of meat near centres of consumption.

Clause 4 reads :—

Your Committee are of opinion that a greater degree of completeness is necessary in the arrangements at the quarantine yards at Owen's Anchorage, inasmuch as only an open timber fence divides the infected cattle, when landed, from stray cattle of the neighbourhood. Your Committee are of opinion that there should be a double fence, and all stock prohibited from the land within the fences. The fence of one of the yards is also insecure in consequence of sand drift.

The select committee made this report recommending an additional fence after clean cattle here at Fremantle had been associated with tick-infested cattle for three years. That report is signed by "Charles Harper, Chairman." Now we come to the report of the select committee of last year, 1902, of which Mr. J. J. Higham was Chairman, and Mr. Harper, Mr. Pigott, Mr. Wallace, and Mr. Butcher were members. I would like here to read some utterances of members opposed to the matter being referred to a select committee. Those members then argued that the existing restrictions should be enforced, but they subsequently accepted seats on the board of inquiry, and made their report to the House. Prior to that report it was the intention of the then Minister for Lands (Dr. Jameson) to experiment in dipping these cattle and liberating them, and as the Minister was in the Legislative Council, the Treasurer (Hon. J. Gardiner) explained to the House what the Government intended to do. This is what the Treasurer said on behalf of the Minister for Lands :—

The advisory board—

It is an advisory board of the Government on all questions concerning agriculture, of which I think Mr. Harper is a member and Mr. Richardson, the Hon.

E. McLarty, Mr. Gell, and a couple of others are members.

The advisory board went into the matter fairly well, and made a recommendation that there should be experimental dips constructed, that cattle should be dipped immediately on arrival at Fremantle, but they should go on to clean ground and remain there for a fortnight or three weeks, be dipped again, and if found clean be released. If this experiment was successful, it was proposed to establish a dip at Wyndham, and allow the time the cattle were on the vessel to be the length of the quarantine—the time from Wyndham to Fremantle.

In connection with this matter the Government made some inquiries, and they wired to the Inspector of Stock at Brisbane as follows :—

Efforts being made remove restrictions movements tick-infested stock from East Kimberley. Do you consider dipping on arrival Fremantle, ten days' quarantine and second dipping before release sufficient safeguard against spread? Fremantle quarantine area composed white driftsand incessantly moving, bounded galvanised iron fence; no vegetation or cover for tick.

The Chief Inspector of Stock in Brisbane replied :—

Strongly recommend twice dipping at intervals eight days prior to shipment, cattle placed on board immediately after second dipping. If Queensland dip used, no need to quarantine cattle on arrival Fremantle.

The Minister went on to say :—

There had been a number of opinions expressed with regard to the question of the spread of the tick owing to cattle coming in under the present regulations. The most interesting he had heard was from Mr. A. R. Richardson, who for some years was Minister for Lands in this State.

Mr. Richardson, I would point out, owns the nearest grazing land to the quarantine area at Fremantle. His grazing land is situated from 12 to 15 miles from the quarantine area. He was at one time Minister for Lands in this State, and he is a man whose opinions anyone would respect. The last thing he would do would be to make any misleading statements. He says :—

Seeing that for now about four years or nearly tick-infested cattle have been allowed to land at Fremantle and also trucked right through our agricultural and pastoral districts to the Eastern Goldfields, and farther that the provisions and precautions at the quarantine slaughteryards at Owen's Anchorage to prevent the tick spreading to clean ground and clean cattle, have been all along most imperfect, most unscientific, and altogether in-

sufficient, and yet no spread of tick in the South-Western district has resulted, I am of opinion that there is a very trifling danger of the disease making headway, even though the quarantine regulations were very considerably modified.

The Minister went on to say :—

As the result of the advice of the advisory board, a dip was being constructed at Fremantle and would be completed in a fortnight's time. The Minister for Lands had stated that what the department purposed doing there was to dip the cattle when they came in, and quarantine them practically for a fortnight; dip them again, and if on inspection the cattle were found clean, they would be permitted to go in to the settled districts of the southern portion of the State.

That was the intention of the Minister in October, 1902, when this matter was referred to a select committee, and that select committee brought up a report which to my mind proves conclusively that the cattle ought to be liberated, but for some unknown reason, some unexplained reason, the policy of the then Minister for Lands (Dr. Jameson) had been reversed, and nothing more has been done in the way of dipping and liberating these cattle. I will deal first with the select committee's report, and afterwards with the statements made by members who subsequently agreed to act on that committee. The report of the committee is as follows :—

Although not actually proved, there can be but little doubt that tick distributed through any local district would incubate, and, with hosts at hand, would farther increase. Whether they retain the virus to transmit tick fever in country not malarial is open to doubt; and this is a matter which might be thoroughly and carefully experimented. The evidence we have before us tends to prove that they may not retain the virus, and, in this country, would probably disappear without serious detriment, although the evidence in the United States is in the opposite direction. We are therefore of opinion that the regulations should not be relaxed, but rather be more strictly enforced, inasmuch as it appears that laxity in administration prevails, both at Owen's Anchorage and on the Eastern Goldfields. At the former, sufficient care does not appear to be exercised to prevent clean cattle from coming into contact with those in quarantine. It is alleged that on the Eastern Goldfields the cattle sent for immediate slaughter are permitted to travel throughout these districts without restraint; and although the risk is small, the evidence being to the effect that the tick will not breed there, a possibility remains of infecting districts farther north occupied by pastoralists. With reference to the dip con-

structed at Owen's Anchorage, it appears that no system of dipping can absolutely guarantee the destruction of every tick on a beast; and we would recommend that a series of experiments be tried on infected cattle, followed by isolation and repeated examination, to test this process before regulations for permitting release of these cattle are considered.

I would like now to refer to what the hon. members had to say when the subject was before the House, and then I will leave the report.

MR. BUTCHER: Read Mr. Stevens' evidence.

MR. HOLMES: The hon. member will be at liberty to read any evidence he thinks fit. In the debate Mr. Wallace, who was afterwards appointed a member of the select committee, referring to this question, objected strongly to the manner in which select committees were appointed, and said that if in future the existing system was to continue in this House, he would exercise his vote as he thought proper. Mr. Hayward also spoke, and I quote his remarks because he is a representative of the South-West Districts. He said he was in a position to state that no objection existed on the part of cattle-owners in the South-West Districts to the admission of East Kimberley cattle subject to the restrictions prescribed, as it was not considered there was any fear of tick being introduced into the South-Western Districts. Mr. Butcher, who was also appointed to the select committee, said the reason why the Southern Districts had remained free from tick was to be sought in the thoroughness with which the quarantine regulations had been observed in the past. He also said that if this was so, he knew what the recommendations of the select committee would be. Of course the hon. member was about to be appointed to the select committee, and he was expressing his opinions before hearing evidence. Mr. Harper, who became chairman of the select committee, said in the debate :—

It was to be hoped that the House would refuse to appoint a select committee, and that in a short time, instead of discussing means by which the stock regulations might be relaxed, steps would be taken to render them more stringent.

So much for the expressions of opinion by members who were afterwards appointed to the select committee, and

who practically decided this important matter before the House appointed them, and before they heard the evidence which was afterwards given before that committee. This is an example of the manner in which this important question has been engineered for the last six or seven years, and it is a disgrace to some members concerned.

MR. PIGOTT: What is your objection?

MR. HOLMES: Read between the lines, and you will see. Amongst those who gave evidence on the question in 1898 was Mr. E. T. Hancock, the expert theorist, as to the carriage of tick from an island to the mainland, which has proved a fallacy. We have his evidence, as given in 1898, that 6,000 fat cattle were available in East Kimberley. We have his evidence that the whole of East Kimberley was ticked up at that date, and that tick was raging. Yet what do we find to-day? Cattle are increasing in East Kimberley district, which was said to be ticked up in 1898.

MR. PIGOTT: They are all immune.

MR. HOLMES: We find to-day that the bulk of our supplies for the goldfields and for the metropolitan areas come from East Kimberley; and no less than 17,000 head of cattle will be shipped this season from East Kimberley to Fremantle—this from an area that in 1898 was said to be absolutely ticked up, where it was also said the percentage of deaths would be enormous, and that the tick was bound to spread throughout the country. In the report made by the select committee of 1898 we have this opinion expressed: "Human agency is powerless to prevent the spread of the parasite." We know from experience that cattle have been trucked at Fremantle during five or six years, that ticked cattle have been trucked for the whole of the goldfields right through the Eastern districts, and that there has been every opportunity for tick falling off and distributing throughout those districts. We know the trucks have come back without being properly cleansed, and other clean cattle have been put into them and sent to other parts of the State; yet there is no adverse result from the introduction of the tick cattle into Fremantle during the last six years. We have also the fact that camel tick, which is of a similar species, did at one time smother the

camels on the goldfields. I am informed on the best authority that camels on the Eastern Goldfields are now absolutely free from tick, and that the tick which existed there have disappeared altogether. We have the opinion of the select committee of 1898 in their report that "when outside supplies have failed, we must draw from the quarantine areas." Well, we have reached that stage now, and we ought to draw from the quarantine areas. The select committee's report of 1890 states that it is probable that if experiments were tried, it would be found that tick would be harmless, and that the meat supply would be materially cheapened. This brings me back to the point that although we have been bringing ticked cattle here for six or seven years, there has been no practical test by those controlling the Stock Department as to whether tick would exist or not in the Southern districts.

MR. CONNOR: Yes; there have been three tests.

MR. HOLMES: The hon. member with myself and others in the trade know from practical experience that there has been every opportunity offered to tick the districts through which these cattle have passed, if it were possible to do so. We know from our daily experience that every opportunity has been offered, and that tick will not exist in this part of the State. But I contend that it is the duty of the Government to make a systematic and proper test, so as to arrive at a definite decision. We had an attempt made at a test last year by the then Minister for Lands (Dr. Jameson), who introduced a system of dipping; but that gentleman has been called away to South Africa, and nothing done since; and so the thing goes on. We have had promises of experiments, promises of tests, but nothing definite decided. There have been changes of portfolios, and for some unexplained reason the matter has been hung up. What I want now is that the House shall decide the question at this stage. The report of the select committee of 1902 stated there was a doubt as to whether the tick contained the virus. That committee also recommended that experiments should be tried to decide this point, but nothing has been done. It should be easy for the Government to buy a few clean cattle, mix them with

other tick cattle, and experiment with them. If the Government object to the expense, there are men in the trade prepared to lend them clean cattle on the condition that the Government feed them, and when they have failed to produce tick they can return them to the owners. The principal point I want to make in connection with the last select committee's report is this. The committee found that the available surplus cattle from West Kimberley will be used for stocking the country between West Kimberley and the Murchison. The fats will be shipped by steamer from West Kimberley, and the surplus stores will be used for stocking up the country between West Kimberley and the Murchison. The report concludes by telling the squatters and those interested in the development of the pastoral industry south of the Murchison and south of Geraldton that there is no hope of getting stock for the southern districts except from East Kimberley, and that the absurd regulations must be enforced to prevent that. The paragraph of the report dealing with that reads:—

The evidence before us goes to prove that, although West Kimberley contains rather more cattle than East Kimberley—126,980 and 112,930 respectively—

MR. PIGOTT: This is rather a surprise.

MR. HOLMES: The figures are those for last year.

—very few store or breeding cattle are likely to be available for the mixed farmers in the districts between the Irwin and the South Coast, as the graziers between West Kimberley and the Murchison can readily and profitably absorb all available supplies for some years to come, the only supplies likely to be available for the South-Western districts being a comparatively small number culled from those sent as fats, or included to complete a cargo when fats are insufficient at Derby.

Here we have distinct evidence that the pastoral districts South of the Irwin and the Eastern, South-Western, and Southern Districts can hope only to get stock from East Kimberley. The report continues:—

Your committee recommend that a series of experiments, on lines suggested by Mr. Weir, be promptly carried out, to ascertain to what extent, if any, the locally-bred tick retain the virus of the original parent, and that in their experiments very close observation should be given to the effects of infestation.

We have evidence that the only available

supply of store and breeding cattle for the districts south of the Murchison and south of Geraldton is East Kimberley, and for that reason I move that the present absurd restrictions be rescinded. I should like members in considering the question to refer to the evidence taken by last year's select committee, and particularly the evidence of Mr. A. R. Richardson, a former Minister for Lands, a man who is an authority on the subject, and who ought to be capable of giving a reliable opinion. I am bound to say that our experience establishes without doubt that tick will not live anywhere out of malarial country.

MR. HARPER: What?

MR. HOLMES: Our experience of this State goes to prove that. I know the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) will tell us what happened in South America, but I prefer to go on experience gained here.

MR. HARPER: What about the rest of the country north of Fremantle? What is your experience of that?

MR. HOLMES: My experience in what direction?

MR. HARPER: As to tick.

MR. HOLMES: I believe there is very little difference between the conditions at Fremantle and the conditions at Geraldton and the Murchison.

MR. HARPER: Oh!

MR. HOLMES: I believe the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Pigott) objects to cattle being liberated at Fremantle if they are allowed to pass north of the Murchison. However, we can devise some means by which the cattle may be kept south of the Murchison. A dividing line may be drawn and penalties may be imposed for taking tick cattle north of that line. I desire to meet the wishes of the member for West Kimberley in the matter. In fact, in order to engineer this through, one has to meet the wishes of almost everybody who has an axe to grind. Every member seems to have some bogey of which he is more afraid than anybody else is. I have a great respect for the opinions of the member for Beverley, but I am bound to say that he is a little bit of a faddist. He has a great objection to tick coming to Fremantle, and he also had at one time a great objection to apples coming

to Fremantle. However, apples have come for the last four or five years.

MR. BURGESS: And they have brought the codlin moth.

MR. HOLMES: I think the imported apples must have dropped a codlin moth, and it has developed into the member for York. The member for York, however, will not lead me away from my point, which is that tick cattle have been landed at Fremantle for the last ten years.

MR. CONNOR: For the last ten years?

MR. HOLMES: For four years under restriction. During the first two years the cattle came without restriction, then they were prevented from coming at all for two years, and during the last six years they have come under absurd restrictions with a quarantine line defined by a wire fence, the clean cattle being on one side of the fence and the tick cattle on the other side.

MR. CONNOR: The tick cattle are on both sides of the fence.

MR. HOLMES: I feel bound to say that our experience has established that, without doubt, in such a climate as that of Fremantle and generally the climate south of Geraldton, tick cannot exist. It is a fact that no disastrous results have accrued from the introduction of the tick cattle; in fact, no injury has resulted to the surrounding herds. Only one class of this community benefits, or is likely to benefit, from the maintenance of the restrictions; and that class consists of owners of clean cattle, who are located principally in West Kimberley.

MR. PRIGOTT: The West Kimberley people do not mind if tick cattle should be allowed into Fremantle.

MR. HOLMES: I should be the last to do anything which would be the means of introducing tick cattle from East Kimberley into West Kimberley. The climate and conditions of West Kimberley are such that quite possibly tick will live there just as they do in East Kimberley. I shall oppose the introduction of tick cattle from East Kimberley into the southern districts by road, because it is quite possible that under such circumstances the tick might be brought from East Kimberley to West Kimberley and from West Kimberley to the DeGrey. Doubtless, as tick got a little farther south, outside the tropical area, there would be

no farther trouble. However, in bringing cattle down stage by stage the tick would probably reach the DeGrey. Therefore I enter my emphatic protest against the introduction of cattle from East Kimberley to West Kimberley by road. I ask that the cattle be dipped at Wyndham and shipped to Fremantle, where they may be swum ashore, re-dipped, quarantined, and thereupon liberated. This, to my mind, affords a solution of the difficulty without risk of disastrous results.

MR. PRIGOTT: Will you tell us what good results will follow?

MR. CONNOR: The good results will be cheaper meat for the people.

MR. HOLMES: The member for West Kimberley knows as well as I do that the Kimberley districts being situated in a tropical region get their rain in the early part of the year, and therefore get their cattle fat in the early part of the year—I believe the Kimberley cattle are ready for shipment about March. The South gets its rain and its grasses at the end of the year. Now, from March onward for eight months cattle can be shipped from Wyndham to Fremantle, and I contend that during those eight months of the year it will be possible to convey 12 months' supply to these parts. No matter how good cattle may be when they leave the station, a large percentage of them will be only stores when they reach Fremantle.

MR. PRIGOTT: What loss of weight do you estimate from the voyage?

MR. HOLMES: I do not exaggerate in the least in saying that the loss of weight is fully 100 pounds per bullock.

MR. PRIGOTT: Per bullock sold into consumption?

MR. HOLMES: From the time the cattle leave the station until they reach the slaughter yard they lose 100lbs. It is the flesh that wastes, and not the bone. I am perfectly right in estimating the flesh of the bullocks to be worth 6d. per lb., and in therefore estimating the loss in value at fully 50s. per head. The point I wish to make is that during the eight months of the year which allow of the shipment of cattle from Kimberley a sufficient supply can be brought down for twelve months' consumption. The best of the cattle can go into consumption immediately, whilst the others can be put on the land

here to fatten meantime. I hope that argument is sufficient to convince the hon. member. Moreover, there will be the farther result of a cheapening of the price of meat.

MR. WALLACE: That was said when we knocked the duty off meat some years ago.

MR. HOLMES: Hon. members may impute motives if they like.

MR. PIGOTT: I want to know how the cheapening of meat is to be brought about.

MR. HOLMES: Hon. members will impute motives. The people of this State have been kind to me in connection with the business in which I have been associated. I desire to deal with this subject from a generous standpoint, and I beg to say that if members have any sympathy with the people, or if they came into daily contact with the poorer classes of people residing in these towns as I do, they also would sometimes feel sympathetic. In the early part of last year we found a man earning 8s. per day walking into one of the shops and buying 4½lbs. of meat, the price being 4s.—a half-day's pay. Perhaps that man had a large family. That kind of thing went on in December, January, and February of last year when the Kimberley supply fell off, and it will go on again next year. The Kimberley supply will keep us going up to about the end of November. If the kind of thing to which I refer goes on we shall be raising up a generation of people who will be able to point back and say that they were starved in their youth. The member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) laughs, but at one time we could not give them apples to eat. Now, however, owing to the stronger party in this House, we have been able to give them apples cheap, and I propose that we shall be able to give them cheap meat. I hope the House will believe what I say, and if members do not, they can appoint a committee to inspect my books, which I am satisfied are kept as well as any books in the State. During the three months I mention the firm I represent was losing week by week, and yet the price of meat was 11d. per lb., 4½lbs. costing half a day's pay. Notwithstanding that, we complain that the working man is becom-

ing unreasonable and making a demand which he has no right to make. The price of meat at one season of the year, owing to this absurd restriction, is such that it is impossible for the poorer class of people to buy it, or if they buy it they cannot pay for it. Look at the matter from the other side of the question. Say I have an axe to grind—judge it from any standpoint you like—it can be proved conclusively that the only time that it is possible for those engaged in the meat trade to make any profit at all is when they can supply meat cheaply. I do not often speak, but this time I am going to speak until I am understood, even if I have to repeat myself half-a-dozen times. Let us take the price of a bullock. Under ordinary conditions a bullock ought not to cost more than £10. No matter how the price of meat fluctuates it does not affect the price of the hide, and we can safely put the value of a hide at £1. If the butcher pays £10 for a bullock and gets £1 for the hide, that £1 is 10 per cent. on the transaction; but if he buys the bullock for £20, he still gets about £1 for the hide, this being only five per cent. on the transaction. The result is that he has to squeeze an additional five per cent. out of the carcass, and it is the public and not the butcher who pays it.

MR. PIGOTT: Does the butcher ever pay as much as £20 for a bullock?

MR. HOLMES: Yes; but not from Kimberley. The whole of our supply of cattle should be brought from Kimberley, two-thirds of them, the best of them, put into immediate consumption, and the one-third sent out on to the land to fatten, for supplying this market during the four months that we cannot ship from Kimberley. Owing to restrictions which exist to-day fully one-third of the meat that goes into consumption is not fit for consumption. It is not diseased, but it is poor, miserable stuff, without any substance; it is the store stock and such like that should be sent out on the grass to fatten, but owing to the restrictions which exist these cattle are penned up in the yard, where we can do nothing with them but slaughter them. The result is that they are slaughtered and put into consumption, and palmed off on the public. If these restrictions were removed, we could send them out to fatten and

there would be an altogether different state of affairs. I would like to be pretty clear on this point. At Kimberley they get their wet season and their grass in the early part of the year. Down here we get our wet season by the middle of the year and we get grass at the end of the year. But we want our supplies. That is the whole thing. The development and possibilities of this State are great, if members will only work together and enable us to avail ourselves of our own supplies and realise them in our own way. It is the duty of the House and every member of the House to do what they can in that direction. The other scheme to deal with the question is, I will admit, that of having freezing works at Wyndham. That is a matter which ought to demand the attention of the Government. The Government should take it in hand and deal with it promptly, but it is a matter which, I take it, will cost them £40,000.

MEMBER: Sixty thousand pounds.

MR. HOLMES: It is a matter that should be controlled by the Government, because if anyone else controls it there will be a monopoly for the man who puts his money into it, and once it becomes a monopoly there will be no possibility of the public or anyone else, other than the shareholders, deriving much benefit from it. It is the duty of the Government to take this matter up, but if they intend to do it it will take them some months to make inquiries, and I honestly believe that if they commenced to put the work in hand and gave the matter serious consideration, it would be fully two years before we could get any result whatever. We cannot afford to wait for this. The matter is becoming one of urgency, and it is the duty of the Government to experiment on clean cattle at Fremantle at once. If they find tick will not live there, as we contend, it will be their duty then straight away to give effect to my motion. As to freezing at Wyndham, I admit there is a great deal to be said in its favour; but this is a question not only of our meat supply, for the stocking of our land in the South-West has become a matter of urgency, and it is the duty of all who have the welfare of the State at heart—and I contend that members have—to deal with the question promptly and support me in

the motion I propose. Queensland has had a very great deal of experience of tick. It was in Queensland that the tick made its first appearance in Australia. I understand that in Queensland now they are dipping and transferring cattle from tick-infested areas to clean areas, and allowing cattle once dipped to be distributed over clean areas of the State.

MR. CONNOR: Also South Australia.

MR. HOLMES: Also South Australia. Surely with this experience we can afford to do likewise, and I hope members will assist in that direction. We shall be told that New South Wales will not allow Queensland cattle to come into her territory. But what are the conditions of New South Wales? They are somewhat similar to those of East and West Kimberley. You must bear in mind that there is also petty jealousy between the States, although they are federated. The cry of "one nation one destiny" has been exploded, and there is, as I say, petty jealousy between the States. It may be quite possible to transfer tick by road from Queensland into New South Wales, that is within the tropical area. It is the petty jealousy of New South Wales which is keeping the cattle out of that State, and there is petty jealousy on the part of owners in West Kimberley, we will say represented by the hon. member, and a few other districts, who, because they want to get high prices, are keeping these East Kimberley cattle out of our Southern district. I am given to understand that a section of hon. members would object to having cattle dipped at Wyndham and put into the ship's hold, and allowing the time of quarantine to go on between the port of Wyndham and the port of Fremantle. This is a very important matter in the handling of live stock. If we allowed the period between the time of shipment at Wyndham and the time of arrival at Fremantle to count as quarantine time, that would very materially facilitate the introduction of these cattle down here at a cheap rate. I understand there is this objection to the cattle being dipped at Wyndham. The proposal of some members is that the cattle should be dipped at Fremantle, held there for a week or two, and then dipped again. The objection made is that cattle dipped at

Wyndham and put into the ship's hold will suffer considerably owing to the dipping. The evidence I think is exactly to the contrary. It is not the dipping that affects the cattle injuriously, but it is the exposure to the sun immediately after the dipping; the caustic soda and other chemicals being affected by the sun's heat, and so injuring the cattle. It can be arranged, and I believe Dr. Jameson did provide, that the dipping should be done in yards near the jetty at Wyndham, that the cattle should be dipped and walked straight to the ship's side, put into the hold, and remain in the hold free from exposure to the sun till they arrive at Fremantle, where they would be jumped into the sea to swim ashore, and there be dipped again and liberated. I say, put cattle through a dip at Wyndham and straight into the ship's hold, thus protecting them from the sun's rays, and utilising the period between Wyndham and Fremantle as a quarantine period, would be the best means of preserving the condition of the cattle. They could be redipped at Fremantle and put under shelter if it was necessary to hold them there, or they could be sent out after the dipping where there is shelter under the trees or shelter from the sun's rays. The principal objection to dipping at Fremantle is the holding of the cattle there after coming off the good country, and preventing the owner from sending them to good country again to keep them in condition till required for consumption. If we could get them from the good country at Wyndham and put them on good country in the South-West, without holding them a fortnight at Fremantle, that would be a good arrangement, because by utilising the period between the two ports as a quarantine period, it would add greatly to the satisfactory handling of the cattle. The point I want to clear up is the abandonment of the experimental dipping at Fremantle. Select committees have recommended this, as I have shown. The Minister for Lands last year decided that the dipping should be gone on with; but for some unexplained reason it was abandoned. Dr. Jameson told those of us in the trade that it was his intention to experiment with two or three shipments of cattle from the North with dipping at Fremantle, and if satisfied with

the dipping it was his intention to let the cattle go immediately after. That decision has been reversed.

MR. CONNOR: The dipping was effected.

MR. HOLMES: That makes it the more difficult to explain the abandonment of the dipping. As I have said, it is easy for the Government to get a few clean cattle and experiment with them. The season is past for this year, I admit; but we want to be in a position before the end of December to say that next year we can make arrangements for our supplies of cattle from East Kimberley, put our fats into immediate consumption, and our stores on good land in the South-West. I guarantee that there is country within 200 miles of Perth where, if you sent cattle out early in August, I mean young, well-bred cattle, you could bring them back in December fat. Even if members are not prepared to dip the cattle and liberate them straight away, yet if they declare an area within 10 miles of Fremantle as a quarantine area and hold them for a week or 10 days for a second dipping, there would be a distinct advantage. To bring cattle from a hot climate and arriving at Fremantle in a cold, rainy season, jumping them overboard to swim ashore and then leaving them standing in cold and windy weather, is nothing less than cruelty to dumb animals, and it is surprising to me that the inspector for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has not stepped in long ago. But the question is of such importance that it becomes necessary for the House to deal with it seriously and promptly, in order to bring about an effective reform that I hope we all desire and consider necessary. It has been suggested in one of the morning papers that in the course of this debate reference would be made to the retirement of the Chief Inspector of Stock from the service, and that advantage would be taken to ventilate the grievance in connection therewith. I do hope members of this House will keep matters of that kind out of this debate. If the Chief Inspector has been dealt with harshly—though I do not admit it from what I know at present—yet if he has a grievance, I hope hon. members will bring it up separately; and if the Chief Inspector has been harshly treated, hon. members who move in that matter will get support from me. But

do not mix up that with this question. In conclusion, I thank hon. members for the attention they have given me. I know I am not an interesting speaker, that I do not possess the eloquence of some members; but I have a conviction and I have facts and figures which will take some explaining away. I have done my best to put them before the House, and have tried to deal with the matter fairly and temperately, my only desire being to do the greatest good to the greatest number. I contend that to liberate the cattle in the way I suggest will bring about that result. I do ask, in conclusion, that the House will deal with this matter this time, and not refer it to a select committee, a packed select committee as was the case last time. I am satisfied that the majority of members are with me on this point, and I am satisfied also that we will this time bring matters to a successful issue. I repeat, we have to bear in mind that the duty of developing the resources of this country devolves on us; and we all admit that among the principal industries at the present time demanding the earnest attention of members are the agricultural and the pastoral industries. I know of nothing that will more materially affect the welfare of this portion of the State than to allow cattle breeders in East Kimberley and the far North to supply this market with fats, and supply people on the land in the South-Western districts with the stores and breeders they require; and I know nothing that will do more to provide a good, cheap, wholesome supply of meat, grown in our own country for our own people, than the adoption of this motion.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I second the motion.

On motion by Mr. BUTCHER, debate adjourned.

MOTION—TIMBER WASTED, HOW TO UTILISE.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley) moved :

That, in the opinion of this House, much benefit might result if a substantial reward were offered by the Government for the discovery of some practical method by which the waste timber from the sawmills of this State may be utilised by its conversion into some commercial product or products.

I will explain shortly to hon. members why I have proposed this motion. It is

that during my late travels as a member of the Forestry Commission it has been brought home to me that there is immense waste of power in the timber that is burnt at the sawmills. Roughly speaking, about half the logs that are carried into the mills have to be put into the fire; so that at each of these mills there is an enormous furnace burning night and day, which is producing an enormous amount of motive power if we can only turn it to account. That is the point I wish to urge, to ascertain whether or not some means can be found by which this power now wasted can be utilised for the benefit of the State. Hon. members will recollect that a few years ago Sir William Crookes, one of the leading scientists of the world, stated that in a comparatively short period the world would be very short of the dominant fertiliser required in the production of wheat, and consequently the food of the Caucasian race would run short; that the present means of obtaining this are limited, and that unless some new stores be obtained, disaster must follow. He went on to show that by utilisation of power this can be obtained from the air, in which there is abundance of nitrogen. I will read a few lines written by him to show how important he considers it:—

As far back as 1892 I exhibited, at one of the *soirées* of the Royal Society an experiment on "The Flame of Burning Nitrogen." I showed that nitrogen is a combustible gas, and the reason why when once ignited the flame does not spread through the atmosphere and deluge the world in a sea of nitric acid is that its igniting point is higher than the temperature of its flame, not therefore hot enough to set fire to the adjacent mixture. But by passing a strong induction current between terminals, the air takes fire and continues to burn with a powerful flame, producing nitrous and nitric acids. This inconsiderable experiment may not unlikely lead to the development of a mighty industry, destined to solve the great food problem. . . . To generate electricity in the ordinary way with steam engines and dynamos, it is now possible, with a steady load night and day and engines working at maximum efficiency, to produce current at a cost of one-third of a penny per Board of Trade unit. At this rate one ton of nitrate of soda would cost £26. But electricity from coal and steam engines is too costly for large industrial purposes. At Niagara, where water power is used, electricity can be sold at a profit for one-seventeenth of a penny per Board of Trade unit. At this rate nitrate of soda would cost not more than £5 per ton. But the limit of cost is not yet

reached, and it must be remembered that the initial data are derived from small-scale experiments, in which the object was not economy, but rather to demonstrate the practicability of the combustion method, and to utilise it for isolating argon. Even now electric nitrate at £5 a ton compares favourably with Chili nitrate at £7 10s. a ton; and all experience shows that when the road has been pointed out by a small laboratory experiment, the industrial operations that may follow are always conducted at a cost considerably lower than could be anticipated from the laboratory figures.

He quotes Chili nitrate at £7 10s. per ton. In this State nitrate of soda costs about £13 per ton; so it is observable that if nitrate of soda can be utilised to advantage in this State we can afford to give even more than £7 10s. per ton. With regard to the value of nitrate of soda the author quoted the experience of Sir John Lawes and Sir Henry Gilbert on their experimental field at Rothamstead:—

This field was sown with wheat for 13 consecutive years without manure, and yielded an average of 11·9 bushels to the acre. For the next 13 years it was sown with wheat, and dressed with 5 cwt. of nitrate of soda per acre, other mineral constituents also being present. The average yield for these years was 36·4 bushels per acre—an increase of 24·5 bushels. In other words, 22·86lbs. of nitrate of soda produce an increase of one bushel of wheat.

THE PREMIER: What book are you quoting from?

MR. HARPER: *The Wheat Problem*, by Sir William Crookes. If we carry that in our minds and see the possibility of what may be done in this State by the use of nitrogenous manure, which is difficult, almost impossible, to obtain, we shall recognise what a vast sphere there is on our lands for the development of agriculture over and above what has been already demonstrated. Now the process of production seems to be that by the passing of an electric current through common salt one obtains nitrate of soda, also the bi-product chlorine, which is a valuable article much in use. We have millions of tons of salt in our salt lakes in the eastern country, and we have this enormous power running to waste at the mills. Not only is there waste at the finish, in the mills, but there is also waste to the timber left in the forests, and that waste is extremely destructive to the forests themselves. If it could only be demonstrated that by some process we could utilise the waste of the

mills supplemented by the waste in the bush, we should be enormously increasing the value of our forests and of our lands, and obtaining a product of which any balance not required might be exported. This may, of course, require a great deal of labour and expense to demonstrate; but I think the matter of such importance that I strongly urge on the Government the advisability of offering a really handsome sum to the person who may demonstrate a practical method of manufacturing this desirable product, and so increasing the value of our wheat-growing lands. The result would be enormously beneficial to the Government themselves, since it would raise the value of the Government's estate, as well as enormously heightening the power of production by utilising the salt which now lies in such abundance in our eastern country. I hope I have said enough to indicate that there is good ground for an attempt to be made in this direction, and I therefore beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND (South Fremantle): I have pleasure in seconding this motion. I understand it includes sawdust. The motion is not very clear. Waste timber from the sawmills is referred to—does that include sawdust?

MR. HARPER: I am speaking of the whole of the waste.

MEMBER: Sawdust and everything.

MR. DIAMOND: If that is understood, I earnestly support the motion. For some years I have been of opinion that something ought to be done to utilise the enormous amount of waste timber at mills. I have read for years past of the use which is made in the United States of the sawdust and other waste products from timber mills by way of compressed blocks and otherwise. I welcome the efforts of the hon. member to bring the matter before the House.

On motion by MR. BUTCHER, debate adjourned.

MOTION—MUNICIPAL SUBSIDY, HOW TO DISTRIBUTE.

THE TREASURER (Hon. James Gardiner) moved:—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable to adopt a more equitable method for the distribution of the sums voted by Parliament from time to time as subsidies to

municipalities, and that the sums so voted shall include all works within the municipality which are of a municipal nature.

That in reference to all sums from time to time voted by Parliament as subsidies to municipalities, this House is of opinion that—

- (1.) The subsidy payable to a municipality shall be deemed to provide for all works of a municipal nature within the area of the municipality.
- (2.) The method of distribution be placed upon a more equitable basis, and have regard to the amount raised on the general rate.

He said: I may observe that this motion is moved in redemption of a promise given to the House last session, that I should endeavour as far as possible during recess to formulate a system of grading municipalities. I think the House agreed, and I am sure that those of us who have been brought into contact with financial administration will agree, that it is wise, so far as the administration of subsidies is concerned, to have that administration on an automatic and equitable basis. The present system, I venture to say, is far from satisfactory inasmuch as it leads frequently to an inequitable distribution of both grants and subsidies. In addition, it places members of Parliament in many instances in a highly unfair position. To-night we heard the desire expressed that everything connected with Parliament should be absolutely clean and aboveboard; consequently I think I can claim the support of the House on this particular motion, because its object is to place members and the Treasurer also in the position of being able to say that this particular subsidy or grant is distributed on an automatic and equitable basis. There are not only in this House, but in other Australian Houses, members who put the State first and their constituencies afterwards; and it is particularly galling to such members to find that requests from their municipalities which they decline to put before the Government are urged by other members for other municipalities who probably are not so conscientious or else are more importunate; the result being that the constituents of the former class of member are only too ready to point out to him that the very thing they have asked him for, and which he has declined to bring forward, has been

granted to a municipality in another member's constituency. This is most unfair to members, and unfair also to the Treasurer in more ways than one. In this particular we may be able to resist pressure or we may not be able to resist pressure. My desire is to put it beyond the power of members, either individually or collectively, to exert pressure in this particular way. It may be asked, why should we alter the existing system? It has been pointed out to me, since I suggested this, that all municipalities had received grants; and it was asked why we should alter the system until such time as the newer municipalities had practically caught up to the privileges enjoyed by the old. Whenever reform is asked for, it is absolutely necessary that there should be a clean, broad line drawn; and that should be the line of principle. If we can apply a principle in many instances it will be found an extremely fair guide to follow. It must be admitted that in the past municipalities have been encouraged rather to lean on the Government than to rely on themselves. The object in starting a municipality, the evidence that there is necessity for a municipality, must be the fact that there is sufficient rateable property within the boundaries proposed to provide for necessary municipal works. Indeed, Section 9 of the Municipal Institutions Act practically demands that such shall be the case, that there shall be within the boundaries of a municipality at least sufficient property, rated at 1s. in the pound, to return an income of £300 per annum. On looking at the list which I have prepared at some considerable trouble, members will find that among the first 15 municipalities named, 12 should never have been permitted to become municipalities at all. How this has occurred one cannot understand, but in the past I do not think sufficient care has been exercised in going into the matter. In the return which has been laid before members there are 16 municipalities, and according to the Act itself there should be only three, because on their present rating the majority are rated at 1s. in the pound: in some cases it is more. The municipality of Norseman and the municipality of Southern Cross ought not to be municipalities at all. There is not the slightest

doubt anomalies exist. It does not stand to reason that all municipalities should receive 15s. in the pound subsidy, and it is manifestly unfair that municipalities like Perth or Fremantle should receive precisely the same subsidy as much smaller municipalities, such as Bunbury or Cue or Coolgardie receive, yet they are receiving 15s. in the pound, and one finds, so far as the large municipalities are concerned that they are not content with receiving their substantial subsidy, but the largest requests we have to consider are from the very large municipalities. Then we see that the present system gives little or no encouragement for rating. In the scheme I place before members, it will be seen we give every encouragement for rating. You will see we fix a minimum in each class and a maximum, which is obtained by granting a larger sum for every additional penny for which municipalities tax themselves. We are doing this, and if members examine the return placed before them they will see in many cases the municipalities will receive much larger subsidies than they receive under the present system, because the Government say, "Once we give municipalities a subsidy, that is absolutely all we should do within the boundaries of that municipality." All municipal works must be constructed by the municipality itself with the rates raised by that municipality, plus the subsidy which the Government allow. Last year we expended within the boundaries of municipalities I think, roughly speaking, about £30,000, and members will see that under the process of grading we anticipate on the present rating of these municipalities that we would have to provide £60,897. Last year the Government subsidy was £50,000, but I think it actually exceeded that amount by about £1,000. When we come to the grading of the municipalities, it will be observed that we have striven to do the work on something like a scientific system, and although at present some of the municipalities are not entitled to a subsidy at all, because they should not be municipalities, we are taking them into consideration in the present position, seeing that they have been formed. Looking at the grading, members will see when the Bill which it will be necessary to

pass giving us power to do this becomes an Act, the municipalities must have a minimum revenue of £300 and a minimum general rate of 1s. in the pound to entitle them to a subsidy. That of course is in accordance with Section 9 of the Municipalities Act. At present whenever a municipality is started it is considered a fair thing to come to the Government for any sum of money from £300 or £400, to £1,000. Amongst last year's grants for forming municipalities there was one of £300, and the total revenue from the rates derived in that municipality amounted to £97, yet the municipality got £300 from the Government for forming that municipality. I am sure that it is the wish of the House that this kind of thing should cease altogether, and that we should have some equitable basis to go upon which will take away from the Government and from the Treasurer the power of saying "This municipality shall benefit and that one shall not." It should put all municipalities on a substantial basis, while giving all encouragement to municipalities which rate themselves. We have divided the municipalities into five classes. The fifth class is where a municipality has a revenue not exceeding £500, and it will receive a maximum subsidy of 25s. in the pound. The minimum subsidy on 1s. rate would be 7s. 6d. in the pound, and for every additional penny they rate themselves the subsidy goes up 1s. 3d. in the pound. I think members will see that is a fair way of grading them, giving every encouragement to municipalities to rate themselves up to the maximum so that they will obtain the maximum subsidy. If members will peruse the columns of the return, it will show conclusively how a municipality stands on its present rating, and how it would stand if rated up to the maximum. Take Beverley, which has a rate of 1s. in the pound at present, the total subsidy received is £80. If that municipality will rate up to the maximum, the amount will be £120, and the amount of subsidy on the present rate would be £70. But if the municipality rated up to the maximum and received the maximum subsidy, the amount would be £150. That applies to all municipalities whose revenue does not exceed £500.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: This system would apply to municipalities in existence? Or would the rate in regard to the £300 maximum apply to future municipalities?

THE TREASURER: In reply to the member for the Williams, seeing that we permitted these municipalities to be formed, we are trying to bring about amalgamation—and I believe the member for Kanowna was instrumental in trying to bring about an amalgamation of Paddington and Broad Arrow—with the result that we may have a better state of things. If members will peruse the return, it will be seen that in many instances there are municipalities which should not have been granted any money.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Many of them were formed under the old Act.

THE TREASURER: Some of them are very much older than others. If members look at the income received they will be surprised at the cost of administration: that is one of the strongest arguments against permitting these small municipalities to exist. When we come to the fourth class, it will be seen the maximum subsidy is 22s. 6d. in the pound, and a perusal of the figures will satisfy members that whilst we do not propose to do any work within the boundaries of municipalities of a purely municipal nature, still occasions must arise in every municipality where there are roads leading into it which it would be hardly fair for us to ask municipalities to bear the whole of the cost of. These conditions must suggest themselves in various isolated instances, but the object is not to do any work of a municipal nature within the boundaries of municipalities. If members peruse the figures of the fourth class—take Albany, they only rate at 1s. 4d. now for the general rates, and it goes without saying there are no loan rates, only general rates—Albany raises now £1,790; and as the present subsidy is only 15s. in the pound, that would be practically only about £1,200 or £1,300 on the subsidy of 22s. 6d. If they rated to the maximum they would receive £1,740. It will be saying to the municipalities, "If you agree to rate yourselves to the maximum, you will have considerably more than is spent by the Government within the boundaries of municipalities. If you care to rate up to 1s. 6d., your subsidy

will enable you to do everything within your municipality without going to the Government." When we put on the Estimates a sum of £60,000—that will be a little more this year for reasons which I will explain later on—the liability of the Government begins and ends with that subsidy. The fourth class are those municipalities which have a revenue of £5,000 or under. Then we come to those which have a revenue of £10,000, and in this class there are only two, Boulder and Kalgoorlie. If we take Kalgoorlie for instance—Boulder rates up to the maximum of 1s. 6d. in the pound—the only remedy for getting a larger subsidy on the rate would be to raise the rating on the municipal value. In Kalgoorlie for instance, just to show their present rating, they impose a rate of 1s. 4d. in the pound, and the total amount received is £6,784. If they rate up to 1s. 6d. they will get £7,632. Under the present circumstances it would be 15s. in the pound, which would be £6,784; but if under the proposed grading, by which they would get 20s. in the pound, they rated up to the maximum they would receive £7,632. I find that to one of these municipalities—there are only two, and I will not mention which one—we paid £5,800 in subsidy. I find the special grants which they asked for this year would total quite as much as the subsidy, which would be another £5,800. I do not think the State has the right to pay practically 30s. in the pound when the municipalities themselves are not rating up to what they can rate, namely 1s. 6d. in the pound. Now we come to Fremantle, and it is the only one which has a revenue of £20,000. There we propose the rate shall be 15s. in the pound, which practically means that Fremantle will be exactly on the same basis as it is to-day. I see by some correspondence which has taken place that the Fremantle municipality anticipated that their rate would be reduced, but we put it at 15s. in the pound, and following the same custom—the principle will apply to other municipalities—no municipal work of any character whatever will be done within the municipal boundary. Now we come to Perth; and Perth will be the greatest sufferer under this scheme, seeing that it will come under the 10s. subsidy, having a rate of only 1s. 3d. in

the pound. The Government have thought this matter out; and seeing that we are making a great alteration, we consider it wise to put Perth for this year only in the second class; consequently Perth will receive a subsidy of 12s. 9d. in the pound instead of the 15s. which it is now receiving. It must not be forgotten that I am demanding that the Perth municipality shall return to the Government out of their subsidy the £6,000 which I maintain they got from us illegally. We are deducting that from their subsidy by instalments extending over three years. We say they had no right to that portion of the subsidy; they practically refused to comply with the Act with regard to loan rating; and we ascertained that they were making up their general rating from their loan rate, and were therefore overdrawing their subsidy. It has been an acknowledged principle that we should pay the subsidy upon the general rate only; and when I found out the truth I insisted that Perth should refund to the Government this £6,000 out of the subsidy. While we are introducing necessary legislation as to the rating, we intend that the Perth municipality shall for this year come under the 15s. subsidy, and will get 12s. 9d. instead of 15s. That will probably increase our indebtedness under the third column to about £63,000 this year; and then, when they rate right up to their maximum, it will be seen that the liability of the Government will be about £79,000. It is at present £50,000. So by doing this we are behaving very generously to the municipalities, and are giving them every encouragement to help themselves. Our reason for bringing this motion before the House is to elicit an opinion from members as to whether this grading is upon a just and fair basis, and whether this is a wise course for us to pursue. My personal opinion is that wherever we give subsidies it will be wise to see that they are put upon an automatic basis, so that members when approached by their constituents with a view to Government grants can reply "If you do so and so you are entitled to so and so;" and members will no longer be asked, "How much can you get for us from the Government?" With regard to new municipalities which may in future be

formed, members will see at the foot of the printed statement that we do not purpose giving them grants such as have been given in the past. We say to them, "We shall be prepared to give you £2 in the £ on your first year's rates." We consider that a sufficient inducement. If there is enough rateable property within the boundaries of a new municipality, then we reckon that if we give £2 for every £1 which they raise themselves we are behaving fairly generously. Thus, if the municipality had enough rateable property to bring them in £300 under a 1s. rate, they would have £900 with which to start business. That in itself is a very fair sum. I think it much better that both the Government and members of Parliament should be placed in a position to say, "That is exactly what you can receive—no more and no less," than for members and the Government to be badgered by the municipalities. Frequently the Government have been approached by members who say, "We want a grant; this is a new municipality; in the past you have granted large sums to new municipalities; here are instances." Consequently what has been done in response to a former application is very frequently a guide to Ministers as to what shall again be done on the application of the same member.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Do you propose to pay when the rate is struck?

THE TREASURER: That is getting down to technicalities. I presume we could make arrangements as to that.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then you will have no money for the first year if you pay in that way.

THE TREASURER: I do not see that at all. All the municipalities have a rate now.

MR. BATH: The hon. member is speaking of new municipalities.

THE TREASURER: Oh! Then I think the difficulty he mentions is one we can easily arrange. We can give an advance and subsequently adjust it. I thought the hon. member was speaking of municipalities generally. That is practically the position of things. This scheme for grading has caused much trouble to work out; and I trust it will be satisfactory to members. The list is supposed to include every municipality; but there is one not to be found in it, because when it was

compiled the municipality had not made any claim in respect of rates. I refer to Kookynie. But this grading applies to all municipalities of the fifth, fourth, third, second, or first class, as shown in the list. I should like members freely to express their opinions. The Government are not dogmatic on this question, but think this a system which will appeal to members, and will let them and the country know exactly where their liability begins and ends with respect to subsidies or grants to municipalities. I have pleasure in moving the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): I second it.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): I have listened with great interest to the remarks of the Treasurer, and am quite convinced that his proposition is based on a principle which should be adopted. His proposals may, on farther consideration, be somewhat modified; but, on the whole, I think when we come to consider his explanation they will be acceptable to the country generally, and to those particularly interested. As to his remarks concerning applications made from time to time by various municipalities, I quite agree with him that the scheme will prevent much difficulty, and will very materially assist members of Parliament, provided that the basis upon which we work is of such an equitable character that no injustice will be done to any municipality. Of course there will be instances where the scheme will be looked on as disadvantageously affecting certain places; for it is impossible to make a rule which will uniformly apply with satisfaction. But practically considered, this seems to me a very satisfactory proposal, and one which, if adopted, should be of service to the country. I, as an ex-Minister, agree that many of our municipalities should have never been created. In the present Municipal Act is a wise provision that there must be a possible municipal income of £300 a year before a municipality can be created; but even apart from that, in view of our existing roads board legislation, I think we should put off as long as possible the creation of new municipalities. Even some of the townships which are within roads board districts can quite satisfactorily be administered under the Roads Act, thus saving the dual expenses which

are necessary in a district governed by a municipality and a roads board. Therefore for some time to come I think there will not be any desire on the part of certain townships to avail themselves of the privileges of the Municipal Act, preferring as they will to remain under the Roads Act; and I think it will be necessary to come to some understanding with certain roads boards, to ascertain in each case what subsidy is to be paid for that portion of the town which is within the roads board district, because there will be a proportionately greater expenditure on the streets in the township than on the ordinary roads outside; so some provision will have to be made by which an increased subsidy may be given to those districts administered by roads boards which deal with municipal matters also. I say that considerable sums can be saved in administration by leaving such a place under the control of the roads board. Why have two different authorities to deal with it when it can be economically administered by one? In the matter of Government subsidies the smaller towns are fairly well treated in this scheme. We shall no doubt have complaints from the larger towns. As has been mentioned by the Treasurer, Perth will probably object to being placed upon the scale here proposed, according to the present rate, of 8s. 6d. in the pound; and we shall hear complaints from the members interested in this municipality, and from suburban members also. But there is much to be said in favour of the Treasurer's suggestion, for the larger towns have larger revenues and are able to carry out their works with less assistance from the Government than are the smaller places; hence the latter, until they reach that stage when they can raise more revenue by local efforts, should certainly enjoy the advantages of the higher subsidy which it is proposed to give them.

THE TREASURER: I think Geelong and Ballarat, in Victoria, do not receive any subsidy.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Then if we follow that example, Perth will not receive any.

THE PREMIER: And Katanning will soon be in the same position.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I hope I shall live to see the day when the revenues of

Katanning will equal those of Perth, and then I shall be glad to see the municipal subsidy diminished, for that will show how greatly Katanning has increased in size and wealth. On the whole, I think the Treasurer's proposals should receive earnest consideration at the hands of members. I am quite convinced that his scheme will be of great assistance to them, because it will relieve them from the responsibility of making recommendations to the Government, and will relieve the Government from the difficulty of dealing with such applications—a difficulty which I have personally experienced. Frequently applications appear to be just and fair, and probably the member making them believes they are; but he may catch the Minister on a day when he is in a more generous mood than usual, and may get a much larger grant than some unfortunate member who subsequently comes along representing another constituency which deserves quite as much and possibly more consideration, yet does not receive its proper subsidy.

THE TREASURER: It should not be left for the Minister to say.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I agree. I say you are taking the right course, and I will give one good reason and an example. I was not the Minister who was responsible for the introduction of that, although it was suggested in my own time, but it was ultimately carried into effect during the work of the present Minister, that is with regard to the question of agricultural halls. Recently I have had three applications, and I did not even go to the department about them, nor did I write about them, but applied for the necessary forms and returned them to the people asking them to state what they proposed to do themselves, and pointing out the fact that, if they proposed to carry out such work and could assure the Government they would raise so much money, the subsidy provided under the regulations would be payable to them. That was a case where we were able, without trouble, to give them the opportunity of making the application which they felt they should make, and of obtaining the necessary help. It was a case of a similar character, only upon different lines from that now proposed. Anything we can do in this direction should be done; but of course it

could not apply very well to a roads board district. You may have the different lengths of road, the opening up of the country, and different things to be carried into effect, making it difficult to apply the principle. But in municipalities the principle could be applied. At the same time it needs careful consideration as to its application. The system of paying the subsidy proposed is an excellent one, and one which no doubt should be thoroughly well received; but at the same time it is a question in regard to applications in the case of municipalities whether the order the Government have placed them in, from one to five, is such as the House is prepared to accept. I welcome the proposal of the Colonial Treasurer, for I think it is a step in the right direction, and one that will assist not only the present Ministry but any succeeding Ministry that has to deal with claims which we know are difficult to deal with, and which after all are not dealt with on that equitable basis which which should be laid down.

On motion by **MR. DAGLISH**, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:32 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 20th August, 1903.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION — PASTORAL LEASES
(KIMBERLEY), MR. S. W. COPLEY.

HON. W. MALEY asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, If Mr. S. W. Copley