

# Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 8th November, 1911.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## SWEARING-IN.

Mr. J. J. McDonald (Gaseoyne) took the oath and subscribed the roll.

## QUESTION—EARLY CLOSING ACT PROSECUTION.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Has the attention of the Minister been drawn to the low fine imposed on J. T. Glowrey, of the Palace hotel, in the Perth Police Court on November 6, on the charge of having during Show week neglected to allow five dining room assistants a half-holiday, and failing to keep a proper record of hours worked by his employees? 2, Will the Minister inquire as to whether there were extenuating circumstances such as to warrant the imposition of the small penalty?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1. Not previously. 2, Inquiry has been made, and the following report received from the Clerk of Petty Sessions:—"There were six charges under Section 10 of 'The Early Closing Act, 1902,' against J. T. Glowrey, the licensee of the Palace hotel, Perth. Defendant, through his solicitor, Mr. M. G. Lavan, pleaded guilty to each of the charges, and the Bench, comprising Messrs. J. L. Glick (chairman) and W. H. Mc Cormack and C. J. Totterdell, justices, considered a fine of 2s. 6d., with 22s. costs, divided between each of the cases, sufficient to meet the charges. Mr. Lavan explained to the court that as the offences were committed during Show week, when the staff of the hotel were very busy, the matter was overlooked. I have interviewed Mr. Glick,

the chairman of the Bench, and he gave the above as his reasons for the Court's decision."

## QUESTION — SPECIAL TRAIN, PERTH TO ALBANY, COST.

Mr. PRICE asked the Minister for Railways: What was the cost to the State of the special train from Perth to Albany and return therefrom used by the then Premier, Mr. Frank Wilson, ex Perth on September 21st last?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: £167 3s. 4d. For a portion of the distance the train was availed of for the haulage of goods.

## ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Third day.*

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): There are some points in His Excellency's Speech upon which I would like to say a few words. One thing that struck me was the announcement that the Government expected to have a deficiency at the end of the financial year. I do not know whether the Government are any different from a firm in private business, seeing that in many departments they are running commercial concerns, but I do not think it is a good advertisement for the State that the Speech should call the attention of the world at large to the fact that the Government of Western Australia expected a deficit at the end of the financial year. I know what would happen to any business man if, at the beginning of his year's operations, he advertised that he would have a deficiency at the end of the year. I venture to say his banker would be very chary about lending him more money. It seems to me that that part of the Governor's Speech would have been better left until the expiration of the financial year when, if necessary, it could have been announced that we had a deficiency. However, I suppose it will be said that this is only a matter of opinion. During the recent campaign one or two matters were brought prominently before the electors. One upon which, I think, I gained more votes in the Wagin

district than upon anything else, was the policy expounded by the present Premier of the non-alienation of Crown lands. For a great many years past we have advertised all over the world that we have millions of acres of land for sale in Western Australia, and that all we wanted was men of energy to come to the State and take up the land at a reasonable price. That advertisement, I think, has appeared in almost every part of the English speaking world, and if the policy that was propounded by Mr. Scaddan on the bustings is carried into effect, I venture to say it will have a very bad effect upon the number of desirable men whom we all wish to see coming to Western Australia to settle and develop our vast agricultural areas. I hope that when the Government bring in the proposed bill it will not be so drastic as to attempt to prevent the further sale or alienation of Crown lands. To my mind, it would be disastrous in a young country such as this to attempt to prevent the sale of Crown lands, and I am certain that many persons throughout the whole of the agricultural areas agree with me that it will not be in the best interests of the country if such a Bill ever should become law. The system of leaseholds, which it is proposed to adopt in lieu of the present system, will not induce a great number of people to rush to Western Australia to settle. Yet there are thousands of acres of agricultural land within an assured rainfall still awaiting settlement and requiring only men of pluck and energy to develop them and thereby enhance the richness of the State in every department. I hope, therefore, that the Government will not take the extreme steps that they said they intended to take with regard to the sale of Crown lands. While on the subject of Crown lands, let me say that I am one of those who believe that past Governments made a mistake in fixing the prices at which the land was sold. During the campaign I had a considerable amount of travelling throughout the Great Southern areas and particularly in the Wagin district, and 30 and 40 miles away from any proposed line of railway I came across people who

had taken up land at from 15s. to 22s. 6d. per acre. I regret that many of those people have gone on the land during the last twelve months under very adverse circumstances. Providence has not been too kind to them in the matter of rainfall and many have to cart water a distance of from 20 to 30 miles. I was extremely pleased to hear that the Government intend to help by every possible means in their power those settlers in the Eastern districts who are suffering through shortage of rain, and who, with their families, would have to abandon their holdings if prompt steps were not taken to enable them to get water supplies at a reasonable price. Every person throughout Western Australia will uphold the action of the Government in ameliorating the conditions of the settlers in the dry areas, and I hope that the lands board or the Minister, or whoever deals with the question of further alienation, will take care to see that the prices fixed after the surveyors have sent in their reports are more moderate than they have been of late. Because I maintain that these men who go out into the new districts east of what I consider the assured rainfall should be encouraged by getting their land cheap, and even if the rents were not collected for the first five years it would be a step in the right direction, provided, of course, that they complied with the improvement conditions.

Mr. Bolton: Do you not think they should be discouraged from going beyond the assured rainfall?

Mr. S. STUBBS: The question is what is the limit of the assured rainfall. There have been no means of ascertaining correctly the rainfall in some of the districts that are supposed to be outside the safe limit. Out Lake Grace way, the place which I have particularly in mind at this moment, the old settlers will tell you that this has been the worst year they have experienced, but although they have no gauges for recording the rainfall, they consider that it is from 12 to 15 inches. Even 10 inches falling at an opportune time is sufficient to grow wheat, but if it falls in the month of June or July, there is a great risk to the farmer's crop. In

connection with the announcement made by the Minister for Lands in the Press the other day warning people that he was going to see that the conditions under which land had been taken up were complied with, I take it from a subsequent statement made by him that it is intended to put a stop to men trafficking in land for the purpose of gain. In my humble opinion, if 97 out of 100 people who have taken up land under the conditions laid down by Acts of Parliament are legitimate settlers and desirous of eventually making homes for themselves on the land, it would be a great mistake indeed to run a steam roller over those 97 in the hope of catching the three men who might have taken up land not for the purpose of working it, but rather for the sake of getting a profit from somebody else who might come along after they had selected. In that connection I think I am right in saying that the financial institutions of Western Australia have done a remarkable amount of work, for which very few people give them credit, in lending money on condition purchase land to the average man who selects in various parts of the State. The Agricultural Bank, too, has done its part in that good work. I have no reason to doubt the statement made by the Government that there are men who traffic land in an illegitimate manner. I agree that such people should be brought to book, and that any infringement of the conditions under which they have selected their land should be punished even to the extent of forfeiture, but I am afraid that a great number of legitimate farmers will suffer. The financial institutions will refrain from lending any more money to a man, no matter how legitimate may be his claim for a loan to enable him to improve his holding. I fear that the majority of the bankers will be chary about lending money in future, seeing that at any moment the Minister may cause an officer to visit a man's holding and then declare that the land shall be forfeited because the conditions have not been complied with. I do not say for a moment that the Minister would do such a thing, because I believe Mr. Bath to be an honourable and up-

right man, but country bank managers will not take the risk of being brought to book for lending money to farmers, when there is a risk that the inspector may report to the Minister that the conditions have not been complied with. Caution is the order of the day with the bank managers nowadays, and I hope that the Minister will deal leniently with the men who have gone into the back blocks and endured hardships of which those who live in the City have no conception. They do not work eight hours a day on a farm; they are busy anything from 12 to 16 hours a day in the endeavour to build up homes for themselves and their families, and they cannot do that without the aid of capital. Again, many storekeepers can testify that they have assisted a number of people who have gone on the land by giving them as much as £200 worth of credit without any security at all, and if every storekeeper before giving credit to a settler has to send a representative to the farm to see that every condition of selection has been complied with, I venture to say that many legitimate farmers will find themselves unable to get the credit which they have been accustomed to get in the past. I trust that this matter will be noted by the Minister, and if he desires to get verification of what I have said he will find it in many districts besides this one of which I have spoken. I believe that we have a big heritage in the agricultural resources of Western Australia, a heritage such as few of the States of the Commonwealth possess. I credit the Government with being actuated by a desire to do justice to everybody, but I hope that in their desire to prevent the country being rooked by a few persons, who, they say, have been in the habit of trafficking in land, they will not do an injustice unintentionally to scores of men who are endeavouring to make Western Australia the grand State which I believe it is destined to be. In regard to the late elections and the preparation of the rolls, I regret to say that a great number of the names that were sent in for inclusion on the roll for the district I have the honour to represent were not put on for some unaccountable

reason. I sent my own name to the registrar to be placed on the roll, but for some unexplained reason that was not done, and other names which I sent forward in ample time were also omitted. It was advertised that all names which were sent in by the 31st August would be inserted in either the main roll or a supplementary roll. Unfortunately Wagin did not have a supplementary roll, and the names of scores of persons sent up in ample time were not put on the roll so that these persons were disfranchised. As Mr. Nenke, my opponent, informed me that a number of names he caused to be sent in for inclusion were also omitted, I do not think it was done with any intention. I think it was carelessness, or that there was a screw loose in the department controlling the compilation of these rolls. I hope some inquiry will be made into the reason why so many scores of persons were disfranchised.

Mr. Taylor: Was your name omitted?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Yes.

Mr. Taylor: But it is on the Parliamentary roll, so you are better off than the others.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Last session many lines of railway were authorised for construction, and I hope the policy of the present Government will be in the direction, not only of building these lines, but also of bringing in Bills for the construction of many more. Many members will have lines of railway to bring before the committee the Premier has notified his intention of appointing to supersede the present advisory board. I think the intention is a good one, it meets with my hearty support, and I hope the committee will be appointed soon and get to work. There are one or two lines in the district I represent. The extension of the Dumbleyung line was authorised last session and the work is now in course of construction departmentally; but owing to the inability of the department to procure sleepers the line has been hung up, and hundreds of settlers east of Dumbleyung who were dependent upon the iron horse to carry their produce to market are very anxious that the present Government should see that the promise made by

the late Government is fulfilled, and that the construction is completed in time for the present grain harvest. Another line promised by the previous Government is the Wagin-Darkan, to shorten the distance for the carriage of the grain, which I hope will shortly be hundreds of thousands of bags, from the Wagin district to the nearest port, Bunbury, for shipment to the old world. As soon as the Committee is appointed I intend to try to get them and the Government to see eye to eye with me in the matter of the construction of this line, because I believe that the zone of Wagin geographically is that Bunbury is the nearest port, and that Bunbury should be able to carry from the State the produce grown in the Wagin district. Therefore, I hope this line will be constructed in the near future. I have no hesitation in saying it is warranted. Hundreds of settlers who have settled on the route from eight to fifteen years, and who are now carting their produce 16 to 17 miles, which does not pay in any shape or form, have been living in the hope that this line would be constructed. Looking through the 1906 return of the Public Service Commissioner I find we have a population of 261,000 people, but I was astonished to find that it cost £1,557,396 to pay the salaries and wages of the men and women employed in the Government service during 1906. If wages and salaries paid by the State are to increase at the rate they appear to be doing, the money that will be required to pay the civil service of this State will be something enormous. No country can be prosperous unless it pays good wages. I have no quarrel with that; but if it going to cost this enormous sum every year to manage a handful of people, we are running the country in a socialistic manner in disguise, because one in every seven adults is a civil servant, or a man drawing a salary from the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Does not the railway employee earn his money?

Mr. S. STUBBS: Probably, but the railway men are not drawing this one and a half millions, only a small portion of it. It costs more than half the rev-

enue of the State to run the country. If a business man was to spend in wages half the money he earned he would soon be in the insolvency court. It behoves any Government, Liberal or Labour, to watch the growth of the civil service and the amount of money it is costing the country to run it every year. It was recently announced that certain men's wages were levelled up to 8s. No one can say 8s. is a big wage. We all know the cost of living in this country has been advancing for some years past; but I do not think the blame for that rests on the late Government, as some people tried to make out on the hustings; nor do I think the Labour Government, if they had been in power, would have been to blame either; but the point seems to me that there are men in the Government service in responsible positions, more responsible than those of the 8s. a day men, who are not getting more than 8s. a day. Can anyone assure me that these men are going to be satisfied with 8s. a day? Many of them work more than eight hours a day. There are railway officials in charge of porters, men in the goods sheds, and they have to work more than eight hours but yet are not getting more than 8s. They say, "What is the incentive to us to take the responsibility when we are not getting more than a porter"?

Mr. Price: How long is it you have known of this?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I was speaking only a few days ago to a gentleman who said, "I believe they have raised the salaries of porters, but what about the stationmasters? We work 16 hours a day very often, and do not get any salary commensurate with the responsibilities we have. They can raise the porters' wages; I suppose we will be also entitled to a rise in wages soon." I have no quarrel with that; but where will it end? It is all right paying out higher and higher wages, but sooner or later there must be a time when a halt must be called. We have to raise money, and if we are going to pay half the money we get in revenue in paying wages we will find very shortly that the British moneylender will cry a

halt too. I hope the Government in their anxiety to see that everybody is well paid will not overlook the fact that the population of this State does not warrant the number of men employed in the Government service. I hope the time will come when the Government will say, "We are not going to have any more civil servants unless the population of the country increases in proportion."

The Minister for Mines: We have got rid of one or two already.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I think you will have to get rid of one or two thousands in a few years' time.

Mr. George: Not as long as they have votes.

Mr. Carpenter: Where would you start cutting down?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I may be able to show where savings may be made in administration. There is too much overlapping among departments. Very often men who are sent to inspect some work that is to be done could easily inspect another work alongside that another department has control over. A great deal of money could be saved in that direction. However, it is not for me to suggest that; I only ask the Government to look carefully into the question of the number of civil servants employed: because, comparing the population of Western Australia with the populations of the Eastern States, we will find the proportion of civil servants very much greater here. It may be argued that the large tracts of territory in Western Australia account in a great measure for the number of officials, that the huge distances they have to travel is accountable for the great many more hands than would otherwise be necessary for the management of a State with less than 300,000 people. If the number of civil servants increases in the next five years as I believe it has increased in the past five years, some steps will have to be taken to cope with this question. I will not say that the late Government were thrown out of office because the civil servants voted against them in large numbers.

Mr. George: It was a big factor, anyhow:

Mr. S. STUBBS: I believe a great many did; but no civil service in Australia was treated more generously as a whole than our public service was by the last Government. There may have been one or two individual cases of hardship, but in controlling a big number of men like that individual cases will crop up. The vast majority of the civil servants in this State were treated handsomely by the late Government.

Mr. Lander: On sweating wages.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The Labour Government paid 6s. a day to some of its employees.

The Minister for Mines: Good old State farm!

Mr. Lauder: The late Government paid £90 a year to teachers.

Mr. S. STUBBS: When in Scotland recently I was asked many questions about the payment for teachers in Western Australia, and I said the salaries ranged from £100 to £150 for teachers capable of looking after schools of 40 or 50 children. Many men in England, Masters of Arts and Bachelors of Arts, are working for £90 a year, and are glad to get it. I advised many of them to come to Western Australia, and I do not think any of those with degrees attached to their names would get under £150 or £200 a year, and I have yet to learn I was incorrect in telling them that. In Scotland they are many teaching in schools, working far longer hours than the teachers do in Western Australia, and getting not much more than will keep body and soul together. I am no advocate of low wages for school teachers. I believe they have a monotonous life, and I think anything Parliament can do to raise the conditions and salaries of State school teachers will commend itself to the House, at any rate it will to me; but the wages paid here are not too bad. In England one can find numbers of people working 10 to 12 hours a day at from £1 to £1 5s. a week, when the same class of work here is rewarded 12s. to 14s. a day. One wonders how they live.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I have seen them pay 50s. a year rent.

Mr. S. STUBBS: And pay heavy rates and taxes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): No one pays rates and taxes there.

Mr. S. STUBBS: You cannot get rooms in England now without having to pay a fair price for them. The wages in Australia are not too bad, and I think if the country is prosperous, good wages should be paid. There is such a thing as killing the goose that lays the golden egg. We cannot conduct the affairs of this country without borrowing money, and I say that the time is not far distant when the man from whom we are borrowing the money will want to know how we are spending it, in comparison with what is earned. I have no desire to keep the House any longer except to say that any measures that the Government may bring forward, which, in my opinion, are in the best interests of the State, will receive my cordial support, but anything which I think is detrimental to my constituents, or to any portion of the country, I shall not hesitate to voice my humble opinion against it.

Mr. MUNSTIE (Hannans): I do not intend to occupy the time of the House at any great length on the subject of the Address-in-reply. There is just one matter that I would like to mention which struck me forcibly as a new member on the opening day in Parliament, and that is that many of the ceremonies in connection with the opening procedures could, in my opinion, be discontinued to the advantage and the welfare of the working of the State generally. I believe that the electors when returning members to Parliament do so in order that they may carry on the necessary business of the State; therefore I contend that there is a good deal of unnecessary formulæ adopted on such occasions which could be done away with. In connection with the debate on the Address-in-reply the leader of the Opposition stated in the course of his remarks, that the fact of no definite mention in the Governor's Speech of railways for the goldfields would be a bitter disappointment to the members representing

those constituencies. I wish to state, as a member representing a goldfields constituency, that I feel no disappointment at the absence of mention of any railways for the goldfields in the Speech. I also honestly believe that my constituents feel no disappointment. I will say that I realise, at all events, and I made use of it from the public platform in my constituency, that a great amount of benefit would accrue to the people in those electorates if there were sympathetic and proper administration of the Acts already on the statute-book. I also realise that the Ministers are new to their present offices. They certainly require a reasonable amount of time in order to get into touch with the working of the different departments. That being the case, and being firmly of the opinion that it is the wish of not only this side of the House but of members opposite, that the present session should not continue over Christmas, I contend that Ministers have acted wisely in the matters that they have placed in the Governor's Speech for the consideration of the House. There are many matters of vital importance to the constituents that I represent that I will be anxious to see in the Governor's Speech at the opening of the next session. While I am quite prepared to give the present Government all the assistance that I possibly can to carry out the proposals which are embodied in the Governor's Speech, on this occasion I do not intend to deal with the Speech generally, and I shall only refer to one or two matters. First of all I desire to refer to the question of the amendment of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Whilst I believe that we would not have sufficient time to give to the people of Western Australia, the workers in particular, a Conciliation and Arbitration Act which would be absolutely satisfactory, and to make all the alterations required to make it a workable and practicable measure, I do believe it is the intention of the Government to introduce a few most necessary amendments to this Act. In my opinion one of the most necessary amendments is that referring to the manner in which an organisation may approach the court. The Act at present

provides that a majority of the union, or the organisation, shall vote in favour of the resolution authorising that a ballot of the members be taken to approach the court. That in my opinion is absolutely unnecessary. I think that the individual members are safeguarded inasmuch as they have the right to have a say by ballot as to whether or not the court shall be approached, and I fail to see where the necessity comes in for having a majority of the members of the organisation present at any meeting to decide that point. The organisation of which I have the honour of being a member, the Kalgoorlie and Boulder branch of the Miners' Union, would have to take one of two courses to get to the court. It would either mean that we would have to hang up the mining industry on the Eastern Goldfields for at least one day, or else convene a meeting for Sunday, in order to get a majority of the members present to carry a resolution authorising the members to take a ballot to approach the court. That, in my opinion, is quite unnecessary and should not remain in the Act any longer. I hope that the Government will see that that alteration is brought about. I might instance another society, the Engine Drivers' Union. We have had one experience already of the Perth branch of the Engine Drivers' Union endeavouring to get to the court. It necessitated the hanging up of the whole of the timber industry in the South-West for a whole week in order to get all their members to come to Perth to carry the resolution to say whether they should go to the court. Those instances are sufficient evidence in favour of amending the Act in this direction immediately. There is another point which needs serious consideration at the present juncture and that is the registration of unions as they are at present composed. Under existing circumstances it is a very difficult matter for many organisations on the goldfields—I know of some organisations which have been in existence for six months, and through no fault of their own, and from my way of thinking at all events, through no reasonable grounds, have been refused

the right to register. I contend that when an organisation is formed, if it is anything within reason at all, every facility should be given to it to register, even though on the face of it it appears to be a continuance of composite unions. There are many other alterations I would like to see included, but representing as I do a district which this Act particularly affects, I am prepared to wait until there is sufficient time to deal with the comprehensive amending measure. There is another matter I would like to touch upon which is not referred to in the Governor's Speech. If there is any constituency in Western Australia which should be disappointed over anything, my constituents, I think, ought to be disappointed at the absence of any mention of an amendment to the Mines Regulation Act. I am prepared to say from practical experience that the existing Act is not a fair one so far as the employees are concerned. I am also prepared to say that under fair administration the measure as at present constituted can be made considerably better for the employees. I hope that not later than next session the Government will introduce an amendment, and when they do that I trust the amending Bill will re-enact Sections 20 and 27 of the 1895 Mining Act. Section 20 in particular, and the section giving the right of the employee to sue the company for injury or for neglect resulting in injury should find a place in the amending measure. I think a majority of the members are well aware that since the passage of the Mines Regulation Bill in 1906, hardly a case in Western Australia in regard to suing for damages has ever been successfully contested, though I am prepared to say in many instances evidence has proved almost wilful neglect on the part of some of the officials of the mines. There is another matter which is a burning question with the mining community, and that is the appointment of check inspectors. I wish to refer to the fact that just prior to the present Act coming into operation the then Minister for Mines, Mr. Gregory, invited the Executive of the Miners' Federation to meet him in conference with regard

to making a suggestion which would be of advantage to the employees. We agreed to meet the Minister and we put three or four requests before him, which we desired to have embodied in the Mines Regulation Bill. After we had discussed the pros and cons, the Minister stated that personally he believed the requests to be reasonable, and added that he was quite prepared to do his utmost to see that they were given effect to in the Mines Regulation Bill of 1906. One of those requests was the right of the employees to appoint their own check inspectors. After debating that point with the Minister at considerable length we felt pleased at the thought that we had been able to convince Mr. Gregory of the absolute necessity of having check inspectors. But what did we find? The Bill came before the House and we found that the most bitter opponent of the idea of the men having the right to appoint their own check inspectors was the Minister for Mines, and that too, after having promised the Executive of the organisation that he would do his utmost to see that the suggestions made by us were embodied in the measure. The section dealing with check inspectors provides that the majority of persons employed in any mine may, at their own cost, once a month or oftener, appoint from among their own number one to act as check inspector. The provision is absolutely unworkable, for many reasons. Prior to the Act coming into force, and ever since, the officials of the different unions have been rapping at the door of the Minister for Mines for the right to appoint check inspectors. The Minister has repeatedly referred us to the provision made; yet in no case has advantage been taken of it by the employees. They realise that, so far as they are concerned, it is absolutely useless. In the first place it would mean the holding up of a big mine for at least one and a half hours during the day, because to obtain a meeting of the majority of the men employed on any of the mines would necessitate keeping the shift about to go below above ground until the arrival on the surface of the shift knocking off. All this in order that the check inspectors might be

properly appointed. In the event of such appointment, if the inspectors went conscientiously through the mine—as I believe they would—and give a true report of their investigation, in less than a week some reason would be devised for dispensing with their services. Having regard to the fact that an attempt to take advantage of the provision would mean the discontinuance of the bread and butter of the duly appointed inspector, you can readily understand why the men have disregarded Section 16 of the Mines Regulation Act. There is another matter of great importance in connection with the inspection of mines. On the Eastern Goldfields, on three or four different occasions, I have been appointed one of a deputation to interview the inspector of mines on various subjects, but particularly the lack of the management in neglecting to comply with the regulations under the Act. The system adopted by the mines' inspectors on the Eastern Goldfields is to notify the manager of the mine to-day that they intend to visit to-morrow; the result is that in almost every instance when the men are about to go on work at four o'clock in the afternoon, when getting candles or giving in their time, the underground manager or the shift boss will "word" each of the men to see that things are fixed up, to put their dynamite carefully away, and to see that the ladders and gear are in good repair. He does not say that the inspector is coming to-morrow, but everyone knows from the instructions given that the inspector will be there. We believe this is not in the best interests of the men employed. The inspector argues that it would be absolutely impossible for him and his colleagues to do the amount of work expected of them if they paid surprise visits. In the interests of the men employed I contend that if two inspectors could not do the work it only requires representation by them to the Government, and the Government would be inhumane indeed if they did not give them some assistance. But irrespective of that, the inspector argues that this giving of notice is the right course to pursue. He contends that it is not the trifling faults he is there to deal

with, but that his business is to get the best and safest system of mines' working. I agree that it is desirable to get the best system, but the best or the worst system is not responsible for the great number of fatalities and minor accidents which occur; it is the faults in the system, and if the inspector desires to locate those faults it is only by paying surprise visits that he can do it. That is another reason why we are so anxious for the appointment of check inspectors. I trust that when an amending Mines Regulation Bill is introduced the Government will see fit to give the employees power to appoint their own check inspectors. Another point of interest in connection with the Speech, and one to which I would refer, is the matter of the building of workmen's homes. I am pleased indeed to see that the Government intend to assist the people of Western Australia to build homes for themselves. During the elections I read both in the *West Australian* and the *Kalgoorlie Miner* reports of speeches in which it was stated that the Labour party had practically stolen the policy of the then Government in connection with the building of these workmen's homes. This came as a great surprise to me, because I was of opinion that for some considerable time past the Labour party had favoured the idea, notwithstanding which the Ministerial party professed to be of opinion that in this respect we were practically taking their platform. I would like to draw the attention of the House to an incident coming within my own knowledge. At a conference held in the Workers' Hall, Boulder, in 1906, the present member for Forrest was representing the Menzies branch of the Miners' Union at that gathering, and he moved "That the time has arrived in this State when the Government should take into consideration the advisability of building homes for the people." That resolution was carried on the 20th June, 1906, and forwarded to the proper head of the Ministerial department; yet on top of that we have to-day supporters of the late Government contending that we are stealing their platform because we announce our intention of doing our best

to encourage the building of homes for the people. Another point to which I would refer is the statement made by the member for Moore, who expressed the opinion that the desire of the Government, and of members on this side was solely to increase wages. While I thoroughly agree that every individual who has to work for his living should get a fair remuneration for the work done, in my opinion that is not the object of the Labour party. I contend, and I am positive that this party will prove to the member for Moore, that it is our desire, so far as possible, to introduce legislation which will increase the spending power of the money that people already have, rather than increase the wages. In the recent history of South Australia we have a fair illustration of how much good it is to increase wages and take no further steps. One of the first actions of the Verran Government was to increase the whole of the lower-paid civil servants 6d. per day, and the Premier also intimated his intention of reducing the railway freights, and thereby increasing the purchasing power of the money. But he found that after about three months the workmen were practically no better off with the increase of sixpence, inasmuch as the landlords had increased the average of rents by half a crown per week. That, I think, was the chief reason why the present Government got such a hustle on with regard to the building of workmen's homes, and I believe it has had the desired effect, if not of reducing rents, at all events of preventing their further increase. There is little else I wish to say. I am firmly of opinion that at the conclusion of the life of this Parliament, I do not mean this session, the Labour party will have demonstrated to the people of Western Australia that it was considerably to their interest that they voted as they did on the third of last month.

MR. GREEN (Kalgoorlie): I feel considerable pride in being able to present my case from the Kalgoorlie standpoint before the House to-day. Unfortunately in the past Kalgoorlie has not had that meed of representation in this Chamber to which the people of that city con-

sidered themselves justly entitled; so it is that instead of returning a supporter of the Government with a 500 majority over his Labour opponent, as happened at the previous election, this time a supporter of the Labour party was returned with the greatest majority in the State. I must congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon election to your high office. I am satisfied that it is not only because of your integrity to the Labour party, but because of your worth as a man whose honour and work are known throughout the State, that you are in that proud position. As a goldfields member I must raise a protest against the manner in which the Eastern Goldfields have been treated, almost since the inception of Responsible Government in Western Australia. That is generally recognised. As far as the late Government were concerned so much were the people on the goldfields satisfied that it was impossible to get a fair deal from them that we have presented to us the spectacle, unique in any State of the Commonwealth, of ten solid supporters of one party—the Labour party—being returned by the goldfields. That represents the opinion of the goldfields with regard to the late so-called Liberal Administration. Previous Governments have been known in Kalgoorlie as "Perth Governments" and whilst we have had the labour paper in the State supporting the Labour party we have had the spectacle of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* fighting tooth and nail against the late Liberal Government because that paper recognised that so far as the goldfields were concerned, whether they were Liberal or Labour in sentiment, there was no chance of getting fair treatment from past Governments. We have many grievances against the late Government. We have paid excessive charges on the railways. Everything which we wear on the goldfields and every article of consumption has to be carried anything from 380 to 500 miles and in many instances 600 miles, and on all of these we have had to pay excessive rail charges. It is not as if these particular railways were not paying and paying handsomely. So handsomely were they paying that the late Liberal Government refused from

time to time to give us sectional returns which they knew would show that the rates charged on these lines were excessive. Much has been said by the past Government with regard to the large amount of money spent on the construction of railways on the goldfields, but in many instances and particularly in connection with the Yilgarn railways, the people of the goldfields paid for the lines as they were being constructed, because the Government made arrangements whereby the contractors were allowed an undue time for the construction and during that time the contractors charged the people exorbitant rates, thereby reimbursing themselves for all costs. In this way have the people of the goldfields had to pay for the construction of their railways as they have gone along. The policy of the Governments in the past has been one of centralisation. This evil of centralisation is one with which the whole of the States of Australia are confronted to-day. In Sydney they have had to grapple with it, because it has assumed such proportions that it is easier to bring goods from Tasmania to Sydney than it is to carry them from the interior of the State a small distance of 250 miles to Sydney. In this State the late Government not only did not propose to do away with the policy of centralisation, but they were determined to fight for it tooth and nail; they never made the slightest promise of decentralisation. The late Premier was fairly frank when he told the electors in that tortuous constituency which he represents that so far as the Esperance railway was concerned he was determined that he would have none of it. We can imagine that he felt quite safe with his little parochial policy so far as his own seat was concerned, but a man who persists in a policy of that kind must eventually receive his deserts at the hands of the electors, and whilst he has been allowed to favour us with his presence in this Parliament he has at least been hurled from the high office which he previously occupied. That is a sufficient indication that the policy of the late Government has not commended itself to the general body of electors. The Esperance railway

is not a thing which we fought for yesterday or the day before; 16 years I have been on the goldfields, and when Sir John Forrest went to Kalgoorlie to open the Water Scheme, which was a magnificent work, I admit, what was the writing on the wall? Right across the wall in the hall in which the visitors were banquetted there appeared these words, "We want the Esperance railway." Year in and year out the daily papers have fought for it and the people have fought for it, and yet past Governments have consistently turned a deaf ear to our entreaties. In the circumstances some of us may be forgiven if we regretted that the Constitution prevented us from severing our connection with such a Government. The late Government spoke a great deal about opening up this vast State, but we must accept that statement with a certain amount of reservation. It was proved by the majority of the advisory board whom the late Government sent out that this country between Norseman and Esperance is good and that there are 1½ million acres of first-class wheat country that could be opened to the settlers of Western Australia. The majority of the board recommended that 60 miles of railway should be constructed, yet what do we find the leader of the Opposition saying in one of his late memorable speeches? In spite of what the board said, he was still opposed to the railway and he stated that the land was arid and porous. At the time he made that statement the dams in that district so favoured by nature were overflowing. In this district south of Norseman the rainfall is always certain. It was only the other day that I received this telegram—

Grass Patch cutting two tons per acre. Rodger's crop, harrowed in 30 mile, ton and half; others good.

This is land that is close to the miners of the Kalgoorlie fields who wish to leave work on the mines and make homes for themselves and their children in a country that is sure of rainfall, has a cool climate and faces the Southern Ocean instead of being on the tropical seaboard.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The late Minister for Lands inspected it in the dark.

Mr. GREEN: The opening of this railway would give the goldfields people a chance to take up land, and as a money order clerk in the post office at Kalgoorlie I have seen hundreds of miners who have toiled year in and year out, who have been practical farmers on the other side, who have fought the battle with nature and who know what farming is, refused time after time permission to settle on blocks in other parts of the State, and those who have had the temerity to settle in this highly favoured Esperance country have been refused a railway. At the present time our women and children on the goldfields require a change; that is freely admitted by all the medical fraternity. They require something different from what Perth and Fremantle can afford, and although Albany has a splendid climate, the journey to that port from the goldfields is very long and trying. But there, within 240 miles of Kalgoorlie and Boulder, is a coast with one of the finest climates in Australia, where after 3 o'clock in the afternoon there is always a temperate ocean breeze. Notwithstanding that the health of the women and children has had to suffer, past Governments, in order to suit themselves or their constituencies, have year in and year out determined that a third of the population of the State should be denied this very necessary assistance at their hands. It is significant that the constituencies on the goldfields have not returned a single supporter of the late Government. At the last election they returned only one or two, and it seems singular when you consider the two things side by side, that this particular portion of the State should be refused assistance by the Government. If the desire of the late Government had been to open up the mines, they would at least have given the languishing mining industry at Norseman a chance. At the present time, machinery for the mines at Norseman has to be brought a distance of five hundred miles from Perth, but if the Esperance line were built the distance would be shortened to 140 miles and the mining industry would benefit accordingly. The late Government boasted of their bold policy, and it was a bold policy when we

consider the way in which they have flouted the wishes of the people on the goldfields, who in connection with this Esperance railway have been treated as uitlanders. Esperance is the natural port of the goldfields, which are distant from it only 240 miles as against the 380 miles from Perth. The port has already a long jetty in existence and a goods shed, and at the opening of the goldfields, before much provision had been made for shipping, there were nine tramp steamers, some of them of the 3,000 ton class, in that harbour at one time, and not any of those vessels had a pilot to bring them into the harbour. It is almost impossible to state a parallel case, and in view of that fact any further statement in regard to the safety of the harbour would be superfluous. It is one of the most charming places on the seaboard of Australia, and the late F. C. B. Vosper wrote a brilliant panegyric on the beauties of the harbour. I would refer it to the attention of the somnolent leader of the Opposition when he reaches a stage at which he will be able to read it. Another matter in connection with which the goldfields have been denied justice is the redistribution of seats. It is well that we exist in an Anglo-Saxon community, in which we are satisfied that if we hammer long enough and hard enough we will get justice, and the justice of our policy has been proved by the presence of an overwhelming majority on the side of the Labour party to-day. This Redistribution of Seats Bill has been the laughing stock of the whole of Australia, so far as jobbery is concerned with regard to politics. Two seats were taken from the Eastern Goldfields. It was hoped, it might almost be believed, that the population of the goldfields would decrease, so that it would be necessary to clip their wings with regard to their representation in this Chamber; but that not being so in face of the fact that our population kept stationary in most of our districts and increased in others, we were absolutely robbed of two seats. In Kalgoorlie at present it takes three electors to have the same voting power to elect me as one to elect the brainy member for Irwin. For

Kalgoorlie there are 4,853 votes and it takes 1,622 votes to elect the member for Irwin. The past Government also robbed Kalgoorlie of £900 municipal subsidy. That is a matter I intend to pursue with the present Government. I am satisfied that if our case is just, although they have many things to do, and a hard row to hoe, they will give justice to the Kalgoorlie municipality. The past Government refused from time to time to give us cheap water for the municipal parks; and when we come down here and see the luxurious and fine surroundings in which hon. members can disport themselves in the many so-called lungs of the City, and when we see the way in which their fine lawns are kept, and the prodigal way in which water is used, I say the request for cheap water on this arid portion of our country we are determined to stick in and open up, since we are worthy sons of Anglo-Saxon progenitors, is a just one. We recognise that the fight in Australia is to open up the dead heart of Australia. We recognise that the past nations of Babylonia and Egypt peopled arid countries, and that it was only because of their efforts to open up their arid countries that they became such self-reliant and energetic people. And so we believe that Australians as a people will be made finer by their contest with nature in wrestling from her the wealth of the arid portions of the Commonwealth. I argue that on the goldfields a small concession of cheap water should be given so that we can bring our wives and children into the parks in the evenings after the hot and dusty days. The least we could expect from the Government was to try to help a little to square their policy somewhat along the lines of justice. While we have not had the port of Esperance opened to us, at least we might claim that we should be able to send our wives and families triennially—for that is about what the average miner can do—to Fremantle, Bunbury, or Albany. But what do we find? While cheap fares have been made between Perth, Fremantle, and Albany, so far as the fields are concerned cheap fares to the whole of the people have never been granted. The reduction is compara-

tively small and not sufficient at any rate to give the ordinary worker a chance of sending his wife down to the coast at least once a year. It is absolutely necessary that our wives and our children on the goldfields should be sent from that enervating climate at least once a year to keep their health. We believe that our wives and children should be with us on the desert; we believe that we should be given every chance to make our homes there; we contend at any rate that the particular electorate represented by the leader of the Opposition and Perth city are not everything so far as Western Australia is concerned; and we hold that if the late Government had had the welfare of the people of the goldfields at heart they would at least have made a liberal concession so far as the fares to the coast are concerned. There is another matter with regard to mining I must dwell on. We cannot blink at the fact—it has often been said in this House, but apparently it has fallen on deaf ears, and it cannot be too often repeated—that first and foremost amongst the industries of this State, towering above everything, is the mining industry. We represent miners who intend eventually to become farmers. There is no miner in the mines intends to keep at mining until his old age; he is not hostile to the farmer, he is going to help the farmer, he is going to shake hands with him; and the Labour party are going to do more for the farmer in the period at their disposal, the three years before them, than all the Liberal Governments have done in the constitutional history of Western Australia. We have to recognise, however, that first and foremost is the gold mining industry, that for the last 10 years three parts of the export of wealth from the State of Western Australia have been from the great gold mining industry, and that for the last year over half the wealth exported from the State was from the mining industry. Notwithstanding that it has lifted the State from being an ordinary penal settlement, known as the Swan River Settlement, to be one of the brightest jewels in the crown of the Commonwealth, this industry has been the victim,

past favours have been forgotten, and conveniently forgotten, because the men that represent that part of the State did not see eye to eye with the particular parties that held the reins of government at the time. That is the whole reason for the injustice under which we suffer. The mining industry has been ignored. At present the gold-mining output is steadily decreasing, yet, unfortunately in one sense, the late Minister for Mines is not present for us to point out to him that, so far as the goldfields are concerned, his efforts have been of a pigmy character compared with the vast work demanded of him to help the industry. What do we find now? This great industry, second to none in the Commonwealth, giving half the production of the Commonwealth, second to none in the world considering our small area, has been neglected, and the somnolent Government have folded their arms and sat back while the greatest industry in the Commonwealth has been dying. The Labour party intend to have a live policy so far as the gold-mining industry is concerned. On the north end of Kalgoorlie in my district there are vast lodes that are being worked, some of them at a small profit and some, I regret to say, at below a profit. We believe that cheap water would be an immense help to these particular shows. We believe that the low-grade mine owner should be given a chance by reason of this great river of water, the Goldfields Water Scheme. We believe that 2s. per thousand gallons should be the charge to the low-grade shows, and we believe it would be the means of adding 700 or 800 workers to the north end of Kalgoorlie. We believe also, that, in order to get at any particular undue profit that may be derived from these mines, an income tax could be imposed so that those making a large profit would pay their fair quota towards the government of the State. The dividend duty, as put in operation by the last Government, was absolutely futile in so far as getting a fair proportion of the profits of the mining industry. Every man connected with the mining industry who knew anything about it knew that ;

it was a truism of the fields ; yet that sleepy Government were absolutely deaf to this particular phase of the question. Now, coming to the Governor's Speech, I am pleased to see that in the Labour party's policy we have a policy of hope. Not only do they propose to see that the different Government servants of the day get fair justice by means of fair wages, which the member for Wagin has been so careful to denounce to-day, and which we propose to support up the hilt—The member for Wagin may be a very enlightened individual, but I guarantee that working on these particular railroads as State servants—and after all we are only State servants—there are just as brainy men, just as attentive men to their particular duties, just as apt men so far as that particular industry is concerned, as the member for Wagin who is getting more than 8s. a day for what he is doing in this Chamber. We propose that the railway servants will have to get a fair deal. We recognise that the Ministry are in a particularly hard position. They have come in in the face of a deficit; there is not the slightest doubt about that; it is a very serious deficit indeed; in the eastern portion the selectors are almost on the point of starvation. Fortunately we have members of the Government who are going to seize the situation with courage. We believe the Labour party in Western Australia will show as equally brilliant a record in their way as the brilliant record made by Mr. Andrew Fisher, the coal miner, in the Federal House. We believe there is just as much chance here. Not only will they give a fair wage to railway employees—and we are going to fight as private members tooth and nail for it; our opponents need have no fear on that head—they are also going to rise superior to every Government in the point of administration; because the other Governments, no matter what injustice they may have seen, consisted of men who were doing better in the world than the average worker. We are representatives of the common workers of Western Australia; we are proud of that position; the other side represent largely vested interests.

We have nothing to say against vested interests; we have nothing to say against the man who puts his money legitimately into any particular industry; but we say that the whole of the welfare of the community depends upon the minimum wage paid to the lowest-paid worker in the State. The Labour Government are going to reform administration. They propose to amalgamate the water supply services, and I believe there is a great field in this direction. On the Goldfields Water Scheme we have five or six engineers doing ordinary clerical work, that I or any other trained clerk could do just as effectively as these engineers who are being paid £600, £700, and £800 a year. I am satisfied from conversations I have had with employees of the Water Supply Department—and after all the employees in different Government services know more of what is required in their services than the departmental heads; this is an astounding statement but nevertheless it is true—they have told me that a large number of these engineers could be spared to-day for other engineering work which is urgently required by the State. So on this particular head, at any rate, there is to be an immense saving. Another thing the present Government propose to do—and it is contained in the Governor's Speech—is to grant full citizens' rights to the railway and other employees of the State. There is nothing revolutionary about that. We heard the gentleman who is taking his nap to-day, which he probably should have taken last night, say this was going to place us in a particularly bad position, that we were going to be in the corrupt position of the United States of America if we granted them full political privileges. Let me inform that hon. member through *Hansard*, because it will not reach him by word of mouth, that so far as America is concerned that the hundreds of thousands of employees in the postal service of the United States of America have not full political rights. That may be news to him. Probably he passed through America on his late joyous trip in the company of gentlemen who were not particular about informing him of the facts

of the case so far as America is concerned. Perhaps it is because the citizens of the United States who are in the Government employment are not granted full citizens' rights that there is so much corruption. I have enjoyed full political privileges so far as the Federal service is concerned. Night after night I have fought on what I believed to be the side of justice, the side of the Labour party, and I may say that fighting for the Labour party from the Government service might not be considered a strange action on the part of a Government servant, but it is only to be wondered at that some of the Government servants in the past have been so blind as to be cajoled by the Liberal party into voting the Liberal ticket. I am satisfied too that the Liberal party came out in their true colours when they decided not to grant the service full citizens' rights. Another matter I wish to deal with is with regard to the amendment of the Workers' Compensation Act. We feel very keenly on that matter on the goldfields, and we believe that before this short session is closed something will be done to help the toilers on the Golden Mile. At the present time if a man is permanently disabled on the Golden Mile, the £300 which is granted to him is extended over a period of three years; that is to say, the worker is practically asked to sit down in Kalgoorlie and eat up what has been granted to him at the rate of £2 a week until the amount has been exhausted. We are satisfied that the Government will see that the whole of the amount is given at once when the worker is totally disabled, so that there might be a reasonable chance of that worker embarking in some little business to help himself, his wife and family, during the black period. Another matter we intend to urge forward is in connection with industrial diseases. In the Workers' Compensation Act of the old country, a country which is so often pointed out as being far behind ours, provision is made for no fewer than six industrial diseases. We are determined to see that any industry which brings in its train such a serious disease as fibrosis, that it must be made a charge on the industry. We are also

determined to urge that the idea of bringing a charge of negligence against a worker, so that his dependants might not be entitled to compensation, will be wiped out of the Workers' Compensation Act as it stands at the present time. No one can imagine that a man is going to practically commit suicide at his work on the mines. Another matter I intended to urge was with regard to tributers, but owing to the limited time at my disposal I will not be able to deal with it at this stage. Permit me, however, to say that land monopoly in the agricultural areas is not the only curse from which the State is suffering. On the Golden Mile some of the finest properties extend from the north end of that field to south of the Golden Mile almost to Hannans Lake, and they are held by companies, many of which have done practically nothing, and in many instances even the representatives of these companies have never been in the State. These companies are holding great areas of rich auriferous country out of use, just the same as the land monopolists are holding unused land, which is alongside agricultural railway lines.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: And the absentee owners will miss the late Minister for Mines.

Mr. GREEN: With the interjection made by the hon. member I am thoroughly in accord. There is no doubt that the absentee shepherders of these blocks will have to open them to the tributers on decent conditions, not on the basis of 25 or 30 per cent. of the gross returns of the gold won, irrespective of whether there is a living wage in them, but on the basis which will be something in accordance with equity and justice. I believe if these different leases on the Golden Mile were opened up that at least 1,000 additional men would be able to find employment there, and so the Eastern goldfields and the cities of Kalgoorlie and Boulder would benefit immensely. A matter which the Government propose to deal with, and which the Minister for Lands has had the courage to tackle in a bold manner, a term, by the way, borrowed from the

men who sit in the cool shade of the Opposition, is in regard to the land. The election was practically fought on this question. I have been at a labour congress, where it was considered inexpedient by some of our supporters to advocate that the fee simple of the land should no longer be given. Some of the bolder spirits, who believe Australia has nothing to lose by being democratic, insisted on the inclusion of this plank in the platform. We were satisfied also that every plank in our platform would bear analysis. We were satisfied that every plank was a sound one and we took it up, and we fought the election on that question, and the result is that we have been returned with an overwhelming majority. The Minister for Lands is to be congratulated on bringing forward this bold policy, and I see, without going into the pros and cons, it is fairly self-evident that the land question is even known to the benighted members of the Opposition, who, in their sane moments, must have got to the inwardness of the question. When we consider that we have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in building railroads, and that we have taken this money out of the pockets of the citizens of the State so that we should have State controlled railroads, and then to think that the private land owners have been satisfied to lock up a good deal of the land, and many of them remain absentees, simply waiting for the unearned increment so that they might pocket it in their nice homes in London, I am satisfied that the present policy of the Labour party with regard to this question is one that will commend itself to the workers of the State, and will eventually commend itself to the farmers of the State when they come to see the benefit which will follow the working of this particular land law. Then it will be found that the Government will go down blessed as far as Australia is concerned for their courage in grappling with the greatest of all problems, the land problem. I find that my time is drawing to a close, and so, although I was going to speak on other questions such as a State bank and workers homes and meat, and other questions,

I feel, out of respect for the indulgence of the House, that I will have to close at this stage. I cannot, however, sit down without further commending this Government for their bold policy in bringing forward the idea of instituting a State bank. Some few days ago we saw that at the meeting of the directors of the Western Australian Bank a dividend of 20 per cent. was declared. I would like to know if these particular dividend receivers are doing anything so far as this State is concerned, and so far as the producer is concerned, in drawing those dividends. I think it is fairly safe to say it is the producer in this country, not only the miner but the farmer, and every other producer, no matter what industry he is engaged in so long as he is a producer, it is he who is bearing this 20 per cent. tax at present, and so the institution of a State bank whereby we will be able to take the farmer after the Agricultural Bank has done with him, and lead him through the arduous stages with which an average settler is confronted, we will be able to give him State assistance until he is properly on his feet, and so help this individualism which those opposite prate about and do not bring into prominence unless it concerns their own or their friends' interests. Another matter I would like to touch on briefly is that of the workers' homes; that is a direct hit at individualism of the State as represented by the landlords and the jerry builders, who speculate with seven per cent. interest, and who, besides charge excessive interest and excessive prices for the houses that they build for the luckless workers who have to put themselves in their clutches. The Labour party's success in this State is not because of its platform altogether, it is not altogether because of the work that our labour representatives have carried out in this Chamber, and that work we fully recognise has been arduous enough; it is because the Labour party of this State are workers and have advocated changes and reforms that would be to the benefit of the whole of the producers of the State for years; it is not because the workers in the Com-

monwealth are advocating reform that we occupy this proud position, it is because the workers all over the world have united and have determined to see, so far as the whole of the producers of the world are concerned, that they are entitled to the full products of their labour. Our presence here is because we are determined never to lose sight of the fact that the goal of our ambition is to show that the producer is entitled to the full product of what he earns. So it is that the workers all over the world are working for this grand ideal. The Liberal party are working for several parochial ends that affect them, that affect the meat monopolists of Western Australia, that affect the different rings in Western Australia; but the Labour party throughout the world are fighting for that which will do away with monopolies, not alone in Australia, in America and that grand country, Great Britain, but throughout the world. It is wonderful to think we are marching in time with the men of the world, and it is a cheering thing to come here as a young member and know we are in a majority and that we in Western Australia are one of the few Chambers in the world to which the workers of the world may point and say—"In that State at least the workers have a majority; in that State at least the workers are determined to see that at last the producers come into the full product of their labour." I must thank you for having listened to me very patiently on this my first occasion of speaking.

Mr. BROUN (Beverley): As a new member of this House I am pleased to have the opportunity of saying a few words. Although a Liberal myself, and on the Opposition side of the House, I would have been more pleased if I had been sitting on the Ministerial side with 34 other Liberals than I am on looking at that side and seeing there 34 while the Liberal party are only 16. However, it has been the wish of the people that they should have an entire change of Government, and it remains for them now to see whether their confidence in the Labour party is not misplaced. I hope the Lab-

our Government will endeavour to carry out the policy they laid down in their electioneering campaign, although, as a Liberal, I am aware of several planks in their platform which I hope they will not endeavour to put into operation. For instance, there is the non-alienation of Crown lands, and the nationalisation of all lands. I feel certain that if this measure is brought into force by the Minister for Lands it will do a great amount of harm to the settlement of Western Australia. It is going to hit the poor man most, because in many instances I have seen men who have taken up land with very little capital forced to work on other farms for two or three years in order to make sufficient money to improve their own land according to the land regulations. By this means such men have gradually worked their way along, and to-day they are fairly well off; but if the Minister is going to compel those who take up land to immediately settle on the land, it will be a hardship to all selectors, while the poor man will find it prohibitive that he should reside on his block for six months during the year. However, I hope the Minister will give to all of these men who have not sufficient capital to improve their holdings due consideration and allow them, if necessary, to go out and make a few pounds in order that they might return to their land and properly improve it. I believe it is the intention of the Labour Government to increase the taxation on land and also to impose an income tax. I think it would be very much better for the Government to do away with the land tax altogether, and allow the local governing bodies to tax the land themselves so as to get revenue to carry out necessary works in the respective districts, such as the making of roads. Then the Government would have no occasion to make liberal grants to municipal councils and roads boards. If it were left to the local bodies to tax the land they would soon have good roads in their districts for the use of the settlers carting to the nearest railway siding. At present the amount the local governing bodies can raise is strictly limited, and if their revenue were augmented in the manner I have indicated

the Government would not need to fear that those local authorities would not impose a sufficiently heavy tax to raise enough revenue to carry out their works. In regard to the meat question, a good deal has been said about the high price of this commodity. I can assure you it is not the farmer who is profiting by this high price. I hope the Labour party will do their best to investigate the question and learn why the public are paying so high a price for meat. As farmers we have to put up with many hardships in the breeding of stock to send them down to the metropolis to be killed by the butchers. At the present time we have sale yards at North Fremantle which are not of very much use to the farming community. For one thing these yards are too far away. I consider that the proper place for sale yards and abattoirs is Midland Junction, and I hope the Government will endeavour to construct abattoirs at that centre as speedily as possible. Then the farmer could send his stuff there to be sold and killed, and this would give the small butcher a chance to purchase any quantity he required, slaughter the beasts, and deliver the meat to his customers at his own price. No doubt there is at the present time something in the nature of a monopoly in the butchering trade. I notice that for lamb the retail consumer in Perth has to pay 4d. per pound for very inferior fore-quarter, with the neck included, while the hind-quarter is sold at 7d. The best price the farmer can get for his lamb is 3½d. per pound down here after having had to pay all expenses of railage and auctioneering. This serves to show that the butchers or others are making a big profit, and I feel certain that it requires some investigation on the part of the Government to learn exactly where the discrepancy occurs. I hope that these abattoirs will be constructed at Midland Junction, where they would be better for the farmer and better for the consumer. In regard to agricultural railways, several were promised by the past Government, and I am pleased to see that the present Government intend to carry out that policy. It has been mentioned that there is to be a line constructed from Brookton

east to meet the Wickepin-Merredin line, and also that the Wickepin-Merredin line is to be constructed through that eastern portion, which to my mind is very necessary. It was the intention of the late Government to construct a railway on the west side of Brookton for a distance of 25 miles or thereabouts to meet the Narrogin-Armadale line. I would like to see these railways constructed, because it is a large agricultural area with plenty of good land suitable for growing and breeding stock. In constructing agricultural railways through this district the Government should have a uniform scheme, and should take into consideration future developments. Up to the present in many instances these railways have been built, perhaps 40 miles apart. The policy of the late Government was that its railways should be constructed no closer than 25 miles apart, leaving  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles each way for the carting of produce. In some instances there is a distance of 30 odd miles between the two lines. For instance, if the railway is constructed from Brookton east at the present time it will leave a very large part of country between the York-Greenhills and the east of Brookton railway which it will never pay the Government to tap at a future date, whereas if they keep to their policy of constructing 25 miles apart at some future date they may see their way clear to constructing south 25 miles again. I would much like to see the Government take into consideration the advisability of constructing the trancontinental railway from Norseman through to Armadale. By doing this they would save the cost of constructing the Brookton-Armadale railway, and it would mean also a saving in distance of some 30 odd miles.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Do you know for certain that the Brookton to Armadale railway has been decided upon?

Mr. BROUN: No. I said that it was the intention of the late Government to build that railway, and that I hope the present Government also intended to carry it out in order to relieve the traffic on the Great Southern railway.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I have never seen any public announcement to that effect.

Mr. BROUN: It has already been favourably reported on by the Advisory Board. In regard to the Trans-Australian Railway there is also a great saving in the cost of construction; because if this line is brought down the goldfields line, all the platforms and the cuttings will need to be altered and new sleepers supplied, I should think; the stations and tunnels and all other workings must necessarily be altered and it must cost a considerable amount of money. I hope these things will be taken into consideration by the present Government. I feel certain it would be much more beneficial to the country if the railway I suggest is built. The grades would be very much better than the present Eastern Goldfields route between Northam and Perth. There is practically no obstacle in its way, and it would open up all that country to the east and west of the Great Southern Railway. I am pleased to see the announcement that a Veterinary Bill is to be introduced. It is absolutely necessary from a farmer's point of view. There have been many so-called veterinary surgeons travelling through the Eastern Districts, and as veterinary surgeons they know no more about horses than I would about navigating a ship to the Eastern States or England. I think some steps should be taken in this direction to stop these men practising in our farming districts. In many instances they do the stock they attend more harm than if nature was allowed to take its course. I know there are some veterinary surgeons who have been practising for some time; I doubt very much whether they could pass an examination or not, but they have proved themselves to be satisfactory to the farmers. However, while there are only two or three who are satisfactory to the farmers in carrying out their work, there are many others who are not capable and know nothing of what the work is. I do not wish to keep members any longer. I am not much of a speaker, and I am not too well acquainted with the different subjects I would like to speak on. I hope, however, that, what-

ever my actions in the House may be in endeavouring to carry out my duties, they will be carried out with justice to the people of Western Australia and in a straightforward and honourable manner.

Mr. CARPENTER (Fremantle): While joining in the congratulations that have been offered to you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to the honourable position you now hold, may I go one step further and venture to compliment you upon having discarded one of the ancient and, shall I say, hideous adornments of your office which has been handed down to us from the dark ages? I hold that the true dignity of your position depends not upon adornment, but upon the reputation and integrity of the man who holds office and I venture to say your action in this regard, small though it may be, is made with the approval of the majority of the members of the House. Glancing across the Chamber at the remnant of the previous Ministerial party, looking very small indeed, I naturally feel some of the elation the member for Kalgoorlie has expressed in his very eloquent speech. It is something to be a member of the prominent party with, at least in one House, a sufficient number to enable it to carry its ideals and aims into practical realisation; but while I feel that elation, or share it, I could not help thinking when the member for Kalgoorlie was speaking that he had, for the time being perhaps, lost sight of the fact that, though we are here in such overwhelming numbers with the endorsement of the great majority of the people in Western Australia as to the policy for which we stand, there is also another place which, unfortunately perhaps, still exists, and which has to say something on all the legislation we put through this Chamber. I find myself in a somewhat unique position as a member of my third separate Parliament in Australia. It may be proof of inconsistency or, perhaps, of the generosity of electors of different parts of this great country; but it is something to the credit of the Australian democracy that, no matter what his position may be, one can hold these positions to which I have just referred. Having been a member of

the Federal Parliament, may I say here what I have said there, and what I hope to say no matter what position I may hold, that while recognising all the powers and rights of our national Parliament, the people of the States of Australia should on no account lose sight of the importance of their State Parliaments? In my opinion it would be a sorry day for the people of Australia if, dazzled by the brilliance, perhaps, of the Federal Legislature, they for one moment lost sight of the very great importance that still attaches to State Parliaments, and of the great power which those Parliaments have should they wield it judiciously in the interests of the people grouped as States. If there is one danger to the State Parliament to-day it arises from the fact that our Federal Parliament represents the whole of the people, whereas the State Parliament, at least one branch of it, represents one section only. It has been a matter of regret to myself to find already that this is being made a reason for depreciating the value of the State Legislatures. Naturally the democratic element in State politics clamours for full political rights. The democratic appetite, if I may use the term, grows upon what it feeds upon; and having had full power granted to it under the Federal Parliament, it cannot be expected that it will sit down and allow the major portion of its political powers to be controlled by any one section of the community in a representative State Parliament. If the people of the States and the members of the State Legislatures want to maintain the power and dignity of their State Parliaments then they must see to it that at the earliest possible moment both branches of the State Parliaments are made as representative of the people and as responsive to the wishes of the people as the Federal Parliament now is. I believe that will be one of the fights of the future. Before this Parliament expires I quite expect to see that question raised in a very acute form here, and I am sanguine that with the ranks we have on this side of the House—and I hope with assistance from the other side—when the fighting does come on.

we will find ourselves standing to some extent shoulder to shoulder in seeking to serve our State Parliament by giving to the people of Western Australia the full right of participation in both branches of the Legislature as they have now in the Federal Parliament. There are just one or two matters I want to refer to without exhausting the full programme which has been dealt with by previous speakers. For some time past we have been discussing the important question of developing our North-West trade. I regret we have not in the Chamber as yet those hon. members who have been elected to represent the Northern and North-Western portions of the State; but I think hon. members generally agree with me that, while the South-West of the State is demanding and, shall I say, receiving the attention it deserves, we have a heritage in the North-West that ought to receive greater attention than it does to-day. One of the reasons given for the non-progress of this country, and one of the chief complaints made by those who are endeavouring to develop that portion of the State, is the disability under which the people there suffer with regard to shipping facilities. I suppose the matter has been mentioned in this House time and again, and I make no apology for mentioning it here at the very first opportunity; because, apart altogether from the general importance of the matter to the State as a whole, I represent the chief port of the State which is peculiarly interested in the matter. Some time ago, through the Trades Hall Association at Fremantle, a request was made to the late Government to look into this matter and appoint a small Commission to inquire into the cause of the complaints made by the settlers in the North-West on the one hand and the Fremantle merchants and traders on the other. For a long time our request went unheeded; then after a long delay the Government appointed not the Commission we asked for, but one Government officer to make a sort of official inquiry. I have not a word to say against that gentleman and his work. I believe Mr. Sinclair did his work well. ex-

cepting that, as he himself put it, in his efforts to obtain information as to the grievances complained of he found himself thwarted at every turn, because those who had the information necessary for him simply refused to let him have it. So he had to make his report without the information he should have had, and which a Royal Commission could have insisted on obtaining. For some reason that I have not been able to ascertain his report was pigeon-holed for several months, and it was only after repeated requests that it was at last made public. Then we found that the position taken up by Mr. Sinclair supported and justified the complaint we had made and the request we had made for an inquiry; and it so happened just at that time one member of the late Government, the Colonial Secretary, had to seek re-election. He, as members are aware, had to obtain the support of the electors in the North-West part of the State, and Mr. Connolly promised during his election campaign that if he were returned the Government would relieve the pressure on the North-West coast and give the settlers a chance of getting their goods to and from the North-West ports. He promised that if he were returned the Government would put on a steamer between Fremantle and the North-West ports in order to compete with the shipping ring and give the settlers on the North-West coast a fair deal. Mr. Connolly was elected, but not a word further was said in reference to the Government steamer. Just a few weeks ago when the election campaign was coming on the subject was resurrected by the late Premier, and we were told by him that if his Government were returned to office again he intended to put on a steamer between Fremantle and the North-West ports, if found necessary. To those who have any experience of Parliamentary life, that qualification "if it were found necessary" is sufficient to show just how much value is attached to a promise given in that way. So that I am particularly gratified to find that the present Premier before he assumed office frankly told the public that he recognised the difficulty

that the North-West settler was labouring under and he, if returned to office, would put on a steamer at the earliest possible date and I have sufficient confidence in him and his colleagues to believe that he will keep that promise to the full. I am quite aware that the matter is one of the utmost importance. The project needs to be looked into from every point of view. The one monopoly which is affecting Western Australia injuriously to-day is that of the shipping monopoly, and any Government which attempts to compete with or modify the doings of that combine has a difficult problem to face. I am going to suggest to the Government that they take the earliest opportunity of making inquiries from those who have expert knowledge of the conditions of shipping, and possibly secure the services of some one man or some men who personally are acquainted with the North-West coast, so that when this step is taken it shall not be taken hastily or without full knowledge of all the difficulties. If that is done, as I believe it will be done, I am sure the putting on of a steamer on the North-West coast, with the idea of regulating and bringing down to a fair level freights and fares the settlers have to pay, will help very materially in assisting the development of that important part of the State. I could quote if time permitted, and if it were necessary, some of the figures that Mr. Sinclair mentioned in his report. I will just quote one, and only one paragraph and that is this :—Mr. Sinclair pointed out that in a 1,500 mile journey, compared with the conditions on the northern coast of Queensland which is somewhat similar to our coast here, a shipping owner charged on a 1,500 mile journey 14.45 per cent. more in freights for the journey, and 34 per cent. more in fares. That is just the average of that one journey, but on some shorter journeys the difference is greater than that. I repeat, if the Government can do anything in the immediate future to relieve that it will be a benefit not only to the chief port of the State, but a very large number of people will settle upon our North-West country.

There is one other matter on which I would like to say a few words, and that is the question of further harbour extensions. I listened with very much interest to the mover of the Address-in-reply, and I quite agree with him that the port which he has the honour of representing should be congratulated on the growth of its trade; and while representing another port, I want to say very frankly that along with the hon. member I rejoice that the trade of the South-West is giving to Bunbury the importance it deserves. If at any future time the member for Bunbury and myself happen to come into conflict—I hope we never shall—both, I am sure, will be actuated by the highest motives and will work in a friendly way. So, recognising all the member said in respect to the growth of the trade of the port he represents, I can at the same time claim that the chief port has made, and is making a corresponding growth, so much so that the question of further extension to accommodate the increasing shipping trade is an urgent matter. For some time past the people of Fremantle, those most particularly interested, have given attention to this subject, and one or two proposals have been made for suggested extensions to the harbour. This is not the time or place to discuss these propositions. All I wish to say now is this, that the Government should be seized of the importance of making timely and adequate provision for the extension of the shipping trade that must come, and it would be very unwise for anyone charged with the administration of the affairs of the State to allow the time to go by and not make provision beforehand of such an important thing as the accommodation of our shipping trade. Last year we had the spectacle during an emergency of seeing ships lying outside the harbour waiting for berthing accommodation. If that were to occur more than once it would be a bad advertisement not only for the port but for the State also. I am convinced that the Government are fully alive to the importance of the matter and will make provision beforehand for the

accommodation which we all know must be made. I do not know how long it will be before the proposed Parliamentary Works Committee is appointed, but I have a fear that when it is set up, if it should be during the next month or two, it will be rushed with work, the extensions of railways that are going on and other works must of course have attention, and this question of harbour extension, not only in regard to Fremantle, but all other ports as well, is a question needing very special attention. The evidence and information required to enable any body of men to report effectively on it requires some very careful collection. I am doubtful if any works committee amongst its other duties will find time to make the researches and to take the evidence necessary to give a fair and effective report on the subject in hand, so I am suggesting to the Government whether it would not be better for themselves, and for the committee who will have a large amount of work—certainly it would give satisfaction to the people at the ports—that a small Commission be appointed to undertake particularly the question of harbour extension, not only as regards Fremantle but other ports as well. I am aware that other ports have their claims, but I am here to advocate particularly that of the chief port of the State, and I want to suggest what will be best for all the ports concerned. If the Premier and his colleagues will take the matter into consideration they will agree that a question of such importance will warrant the appointment of a small Commission which can get to work at once, and bring up a report at least in time for next session. If that can be done I think they will give satisfaction to the people who are anxious and who at present do not know what the next step in regard to harbour extension is to be, particularly at the port of Fremantle. So much has been said as to the matter of the land proposals that I almost hesitate to touch the subject at all, but I just want to refer to one point, and one point only. In all the criticism indulged in by the opponents of the Government there is only one point. They

accuse the Minister for Agriculture, and with him of course the Government of which he is a member, of having broken faith with the present settlers. We have been told that in introducing these new regulations the Minister for Lands has really broken the contract between the Government and the present settlers. If there is any truth in that charge it would be a very serious one, but I contend there is no such breach of faith, that no settler to-day has been interfered with in any degree in regard to any contract made with the Government in the procuring of his holding. What has really happened is this. To-day many of the so-called settlers are not keeping their contracts, and it is to prevent a breach of contract on the part of a settler who is also a speculator that the Minister for Lands has introduced his new regulations. Only a few weeks ago, just before the elections, a man in my office confessed to me that he had taken up land, some of the choicest he could get hold of, and he said, "I am going to live on it for two years, and no longer." I said, "Then, you are not a genuine settler," and he replied, "Yes; I am. I am going to carry out all the improvements I have to do, but when I get my improvements through I am going to sell." To that extent he was going to be a speculator and not a settler.

The Minister for Works: He would change his mind in the two years.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is just to prevent operations of that kind, a breach of contract, which the so-called settler sometimes makes, that the regulations have been introduced and not in any way to retard the genuine settlement of the land of the State. The question of stopping the further sale of Crown lands is a matter which will have to be the subject of legislation, and I am doubtful if it will be carried into effect at present. I had the honour fifteen years ago, of assisting in passing a resolution in the Legislative Assembly of South Australia to stop the sale of Crown lands, and that resolution represented the opinions of a majority of members of that Chamber: but while that Chamber expressed its opinion on the subject then in the way

of a resolution, we all recognised that there was no possibility of getting legislation through another place in order to put that resolution into effect. And so to those who may be expecting to see something revolutionary with regard to the lands policy, I want to say that it will be some time yet, even though we have a majority in favour of it, before we can possibly hope to see that policy put fully into operation. As one who was not in the previous Parliament, I felt very much gratification at the action what was taken, on the instigation of the Labour party, I believe, to make a beginning, through the Agricultural Bank, in the encouragement of manufacturing in our own State. For some time past it has been a matter of concern to me that, while we were making such splendid progress in our agricultural development, we were not making corresponding headway in what are sometimes called our secondary industries. That term is, to my mind, a misnomer, because both are equally important to the State. I repeat that I was gratified to find that an attempt had been made through the Agricultural Bank to encourage the purchase of agricultural machinery manufactured in the State. Some five years ago I had the pleasure of going through an exhibition in Melbourne, where, of course, the exhibits were chiefly those of Victorian manufacture, and I made it my business to ask two or three manufacturers, or their agents, who I knew were doing business with this State, what was the reason for their not establishing branch manufactories in Western Australia, seeing that there was a prospect of such good business to be done here. The reply in each case was—"We do not want to establish workshops or factories in Western Australia so long as the Western Australian people will buy from us in Victoria." I am not so narrow as to say that we must not buy from the manufacturers in the other States.

Mr. George: We must buy if we want the machines.

Mr. CARPENTER: We are doing so at the present time. but, as those responsible for the development of our own

State, if we can by legitimate means encourage the establishment of those manufactories here, we are doing no more than our duty to our constituents. I am hopeful that either other means will be devised, or that the present provision in the Agricultural Bank Act may be extended, so that we may be able to give the same assistance to the manufacture of other products as we are giving to the manufacture of agricultural machinery. If we can do this, we will be helping forward the industrial production which plays a very important part in the prosperity of every State. I believe that the members of the party to which I have the honour to be attached come to the House with the highest zeal and actuated by the best motives for the progress of the State. I may say also that perhaps our opponents have the same object, and are fired with the same zeal; we differ merely as to methods, but whatever our difference as to the means by which that progress can be best assured, I am confident that in all essential things we shall find ourselves in harmony and co-operation in helping forward the prosperity of the State of which we have the honour to be representatives.

Mr. FOLEY (Mount Leonora): In opening my remarks I wish to compliment you, Mr. Speaker, on your attainment to your present high position and also to compliment the Chairman of Committees on his election. I hope, with the leader of the Opposition, that the experience you two gentlemen have had in this Chamber will lead you at times, when all the brain you possess is brought into requisition, to temper your justice with at least a little mercy. There are many questions that affect the State which we will be called upon to discuss from time to time. It is not my intention to speak on many of them but there are a few on which I, as representative of a mining constituency, may be able to enlighten the House, particularly as to the requirements of the goldfields. I might say with a great deal of truth that during the last few years the goldfields of Western Australia have been the land of promise. I trust that after the present Government have held the Ministerial benches for three years the gold-

fields will no longer be the land of promise, but that we, as their representatives, will have something more substantial than promises to take back to the people. The land question has been touched on by several of the speakers, and there is no need for me to deal with it, but nearly every speaker said that the conditions of the people of Western Australia should be bettered. I hope that at the end of its term of three years the House will have done something practical towards bettering the conditions. We are representatives of a British community and of Australian sentiment, and I know that if the policy of the present Government stands for anything it stands for Australianism pure and simple. I represent a constituency in which half of the actual mining population is non-Australian, and I consider that the work of this House will not be complete until something is done to better the conditions of the miners in this grand State of Western Australia. Four years ago I had the opportunity, I can not call it the pleasure, of stating what I knew to be the actual facts as to the conditions under which the miners were working at the Gwalia mine. The same conditions apply to all the mines in the outback centres that I represent, and I repeat that the work of this House will not be done properly, and the House will not have done its duty, until we can no longer go to any mine in this State, and find one Britisher working one shift and three on another, and all the other employees in the mine non-Australians. I have no wish to insult other nationalities but if we depend on Australians to keep us in our position we, as Australians, should do something for the Australian community. The Mines Regulation Act deals with this matter, but I say that it has been the unsympathetic administration of that Act in the past that has kept the workers in the mines in the condition in which they find themselves at the present day. I am glad to know that up to the present the gentleman who now occupies the position of Minister for Mines has done something to show that he is in sympathy with those men. We all know that mining is a dangerous occupation and that a miner depends to the fullest extent on the men

working around him for his safety. It is imperative that a man should not only be able to speak English, but that he should be able to understand English when it is spoken to him; yet I have been working on a level in a mine where I was the only man in the mine who could speak English intelligibly. During the election campaign I went into the Waroonga mine at Lawlers and found there one Britisher on a shift, and I was told that I was lucky in arriving at that time, because had I arrived during the next shift there would have been four Britishers at work and I would not have had them to listen to me. The miners have no occasion for gratitude in connection with the past administration of the Mines Regulation Act, but I feel sure that we can leave it to the present Government to deal with this matter in a way that will meet with the desires of the mine workers. The member for Wagin stated that he wished to see the conditions of the worker improved, and I propose to show to what extent the present laws do that. Every hon. member that I have heard speak during this debate, and every candidate for Parliament at the last election, stated that it was his desire to see better conditions prevailing, and I am now going to ask for the co-operation of those members. The Workers' Compensation Act at the present time is absolutely devoid of anything of a humanitarian nature; it deals with only one class of worker. We, as a party, stand for equal opportunity to all, and any legislation that is put on the statute book should stand for equal opportunity to all, whether it is going to accrue to the Government side or the Opposition side. Under the present Workers' Compensation Act, as it applies to miners, 10 men might be descending a mine in a skip, eight of whom come under the Workers' Compensation Act and two do not. A few months ago I had the misfortune to be working on a mine on which a skip accident took place and, whilst eight out of the ten men injured had a chance to claim under the Act, the other two, because they happened to be a surveyor and a surveyor's assistant, were not qualified to do so, and their dependents had to go without compensation and be dependent

on the mine. They had no chance of getting anything under the Workers' Compensation Act. It is often said that the Labour party are a pick and shovel party. I say that they are not a pick and shovel party, and if they do not show it right out they will have me up against them. I only hope that the Workers' Compensation Bill, which was brought forward by one of the members on the Ministerial side of the House, will have the fullest consideration of members, and that at least from a humanitarian point of view it will be shown that members of Parliament in this State, no matter on what side they are sitting, are willing to do something for the betterment of the conditions of the workers in the mining industry. As regards Sunday labour on mines on the goldfields, when I first went to the fields it was immaterial which day of the week it was, Sunday or Monday were just the same. The men were not considered after they had worked six days, and whether they needed some recreation or rest on the seventh day did not enter into the question, and it was only on the point of the bayonet that the Labour party were ever able to obtain anything. I can say as a practical miner on the goldfields, irrespective of whether it be Kalgoorlie, the Murchison or the Northern fields, that there is too much Sunday labour, and if we wish to improve the conditions of the men, the more they can be kept out of the mines the better it will be for them. and any Government which will have this end in view will be doing a duty to the State. I hope the House will do something to remedy that which I consider to be one of the worst evils in the State. In the Mines Regulation Act there are various anomalies that need to be deleted from it. If one reads that Act he will conclude that if a breach was committed it would constitute an offence which would be punishable, and not only that, it would be thought that if a breach was committed by the company, and that through an accident an unfortunate worker should be killed, his widow would have some recompense. The Mines Regulation Act as it is constituted at present practically means that the occurrence of an accident is not

*prima facie* evidence of neglect. This was taken out of the Mines Regulation Act, and when the present Workers' Compensation Act was framed it was not put in there. There was another clause, the common employment clause, which practically means that if you are sent into a place to work by the manager of that mine, or the shift boss, and it happens to be a dangerous place and you refuse to go there, the result will be a tramp for miles. Men have always had to pay the penalty, in many cases by victimisation. I will ask every hon. member if he believes in the betterment of the conditions of the worker to study the Mines Regulation Act, and at least take notice of the men who have lived their lives in mines and know the actual wants of the miners. When the common employment clauses were before the House they were put before members by a gentleman who is not now a member of the House. These clauses mean that if a man is sent into a dangerous place to work and he is injured while performing the duties he is sent to carry out, he has no chance of obtaining damages or compensation from the company other than workers' compensation, because he is in common employment with the man who sent him there. When framing the Workers' Compensation Act, and going through the Mines Regulation Act there was a case which had cost the miners' unions of this State several thousands of pounds, and the administrators of the Act knowing this put one clause into that measure which I hope to see deleted. That clause did away with every vestige of chance of a man obtaining anything except workers' compensation for any accident. So far as the question of the workers' compensation is concerned, when that comes before the House we can deal with it, but there is another question, the Arbitration Act. This is a matter which, as far as the miners are concerned, has been of very little value. I have the honour to represent a district where an award under the present Act was given, and a mine which was paying its way was ordered to pay a certain rate of wages for a certain class of work. There was another mine whose leases adjoin this

paying mine, and because it was not paying its way, the award declared that it was not to pay the same rate of wages as the other mine. That is the interpretation put on the Arbitration Act by one judge. There are other judges who have sat as presidents of the Arbitration Court who have had different ideas as to what should constitute an award. I think no good can come from arbitration until this House takes a decided stand as to the basis of an actual fair rate of wages, or the standard it shall be based upon. If one goes into the Criminal Court it will be found that the various legal gentlemen who have charge of the case will declare what constitutes an offence; the various opposing lawyers will go through the case and decide to what extent that offence has been committed, and there is a penalty laid down according to the degree of the offence. Parliament and the people should say that there should be a standard for a fair rate of wage, and not a living rate, which is always driven home by the Arbitration Court. If that is done the judge will merely have to adjudicate on it, and there will not be that responsibility thrown on him which should be kept on the people of this State through their representatives in Parliament. Reverting back to the Mines Regulation Act there is one section at the end of it that I hope to see deleted. It is said that it is an injustice to the Minister to throw on him the blame for this, but I say it is an injustice to the people of the State to put a man in the position to undo the good that we as legislators all hope to do, and I hope to see this section deleted from this Act, and similar clauses from other Acts, which are administered by other departments. I have been told that past Ministries have stood for the State control of the liquor traffic. We as a party say that we believe in the nationalisation of the liquor traffic; we also believe in the nationalisation of anything that it is possible to nationalise. The Premier of Queensland lately said that the profits accruing to the State hotel in Western Australia were the result of Sunday trading. I give that a denial. I have lived in the town where the State hotel is for a

number of years, and I say that the hotel, from the point of view of respectability, is run, I will not say altogether according to the Act, but very much more closely on the lines set down by the Act than many of the hotels in various parts of the State. The only fault that can be found with it is not in the actual management but in the administration of its affairs. There is one little point that might surprise several of the gentlemen sitting in Opposition. The former Minister for Mines certainly had charge of the affairs of the State hotel, and the Government had the chance of still furthering the idea of establishing State hotels by starting one at Bullfinch. It has been urged that if the State had put up an hotel at Bullfinch it would have been an absolute failure. There are many places though in the State where a State controlled hotel would have been a success, and I hope that the party which is at present in power, before they have done with the question, will put the machinery into motion and show the people that this can be done. When the Lancefield mine was started, after having been shut down, there was never a greater chance of establishing a State hotel from a profitable point of view than at this particular place, yet we find that the past administration gave private enterprise the opportunity of putting up the hotel, and that several hundreds of pounds were spent in its erection. Mr. Millbank, who has the hotel, has declared that he took £4,000 there in the first three weeks. I have that on the authority of the manager of the State hotel at Gwalia, who made the offer to the former Minister for Mines that he would manage the hotel at Gwalia and a State hotel at Lancefield. He declared that he could secure the services of a competent man to take charge of the Gwalia hotel, and he urged the ex-Minister to establish a State hotel at Lancefield, and showed him that there would be no difficulty in making a handsome profit; yet we find the Minister for Mines declined to agree to it. I have asserted that the Minister for Mines has never been in sympathy with the State control of the liquor trade, and he showed that by the

way in which he administered the affairs of the Gwalia State hotel. I hope that if in the farming districts hotel accommodation is needed, the Government will lose no time in establishing State hotels, and give the people a chance of at least controlling what we all regard—no matter what we say about the question of control—as an evil. There is another mining question I wish to speak about, and that is that on the various goldfields the men have not in the past been considered to the extent that should have been done. The men work mostly under unhealthy conditions. It is well known that it is impossible to find a healthy mine in the State, and when they come up after doing a shift it is found that the places set apart, which are alleged to be change houses, are nothing better than pigsties in many instances. The member for Hannans stated that whenever an inspection is about to take place the staff of the particular mine are notified, and it was a very prominent matter when the members of the present Phthisis Commission was about to visit one of the centres I represent, the miners' union there had been, not for one week, but for at least seven months, trying to drive home the necessity for improved change houses. Yet we found that it was not until just on the advent of that Commission that any improvement was made in the change houses of the mine. I would commend to the Minister for Mines that he sees, as far as possible, that the regulations in respect to changing houses be carried out; for, after all, if mining is an unhealthy employment at least we, as representatives of the people, should do all we can to take away the worst conditions and make it as satisfactory as possible under the circumstances. There is one matter which affects a district such as I represent, and by affecting that district affects most of the State; we have all heard lately, and many of us discussed, the question of the meat supply. I do not mean a meat supply for any one district, but for Western Australia. Several thousand pounds have been spent in sending men out to cut tracks and make them fit to bring cattle along to the centres of popu-

lation. I am glad to see that up to the present time the Minister for Mines, as far as my district is concerned, has exercised a sympathetic administration, and has improved the conditions of the wells, and I have reason to believe that in the near future he will be in a position to see that the wells along most of the stock routes are in a fit condition for the carrying of stock. Now, if we are going to bring cattle from the various districts down to the centres of population, and bring them under good conditions through having a good water supply on the track, the people in the congested centres will be benefited by being able to bring meat at a cheaper rate. As far as the State battery system is concerned, many of the alleged batteries are of an obsolete nature. Every report I have received from the various places with which I have communicated says that the batteries are in an unfit condition to crush stone. At the Mount Ida battery this obtains, and at various other batteries. Much as the late Minister for Mines wished to help prospectors, the prospector can never be helped once he has the stone out unless you give him good crushing facilities. As far as that battery is concerned, there is no cyanidation there, and I have received a letter saying that private enterprise has now put in a cyanide plant, with the result that the prospectors have to pay whatever the private enterprise firm demands. I hope the Minister for Mines will be in a position in the near future to see that the State battery system is put on a good and solid basis. At many of the State batteries which are in a good condition as far as machinery is concerned, we find that when men bring stone in to be treated it has to come in as back-loading with the teams, and is left some distance from the boxes in which it has to be prepared for treatment. At some of these batteries, especially that at Leonora, after a man has paid exorbitant charges for carting the stone—stone which has been raised at a high price—one would think the Government would afford good conditions for the crushing of that stone. Yet in one instance there is a further impost of 1s. 6d. per ton

after the stone has been put down at the mill to be treated, this 1s. 6d. being for further handling of the stone. If you are told you have to pay 10s. a ton to cart the stone from Mt. Stirling to the Leonora battery you generally suppose that all charges are included in that; but there is this further impost of 1s. 6d., because they cannot put the stone into the battery from where it is dumped. Yet it only requires a belt conveyor, or some other device of the sort, to do away with the impost. If the Government wish the men to prosper they should show their gratitude for the prospecting work done by improving the conditions at the State batteries. I daresay that at a later date the conditions of crushing at these batteries will be taken into consideration. This is a question I would recommend every member of the House to study. I hope members, after much boasting of what they have done and intend to do for the prospector, will at last do something for him. It can be done in various ways. At a later date I intend to bring in a measure dealing with mining boards. However, there is no need to go further into this matter at the present time. I hope that the deliberations of the House will result in permanently improving the conditions of Western Australia generally.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): If there is any part of the policy of the Government which appeals to me, it is that in which they propose to build various agricultural railways. That, I maintain, is the most important part of the policy, because the development of the State depends on the development of its agricultural resources, and I fail to see how those resources are to be developed other than by an extensive construction of agricultural railways. It is the duty of the Government to, as far as possible, carry out the promises of the past Government in so far as these railways are concerned. Those promises were given in good faith, and were largely responsible for the extraordinary settlement of the land in the back districts. The people took up those lands under anything but the best conditions in respect to rainfall, and any member who has a know-

ledge of the difficulties to be contended against in settling the land must realise that these people are entitled to special consideration. To-day they are faced with serious difficulty in respect to the water supply, and undoubtedly it is the duty of the Government to assist those people to the utmost of their ability. At the same time I feel that had the late Government remained in power those people would have received special consideration, probably more than has been extended to them in the circumstances.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): How do you know?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: With all due respect to the present Government, and I feel that they are in earnest, I maintain that the position is almost identical to-day with what it was a week before the elections. I do not intend to speak in any way ungratefully, because I believe the Government mean to help these people. They are doing their best, and I am hopeful that in the near future the difficulty will have been largely overcome, if only temporarily. Now it is necessary that the question of water supply be taken in hand, and as speedily as possible be overcome by a big permanent scheme. The country fully justifies it. This year we have seen extraordinary crops raised on a very short rainfall. We were told that the crops at Dowerin were a failure, but I am glad to say they are scarcely that. Some crops away east of Dowerin are a failure, but in Dowerin the crops are fairly good. Yet with scarcely a water supply of any sort there is very little complaint from the people in that district. Great consideration is due to them, and I hope it will be extended. There is large settlement going on in the north of the Cowcowing district, and I hope the Government will see their way to take the promised railway through that district. It is due to these people, for they are an able and energetic class, and entitled to every consideration. If there is any matter in the Government policy which does not receive my approval it is the proposed amendment of the land regulations. I give the Minister credit for honesty of intention, and I feel sure that if left

solely to himself he would certainly hesitate and defer the carrying out of these proposed amendments. It is a question of great importance, especially at this stage of the history of the State. It is a most inopportune moment for the introduction of such a proposal. The operation of this proposal will go farther than the Government dream of. It has already discouraged people; numbers of leaseholders have spoken to me in regard to the matter. Many people say they had money to invest in land under the non-residential conditions, and were prepared to honestly carry out those conditions. Further, it is operating against the people in respect to the storekeepers, who hitherto, to my personal knowledge, have been in a sense carrying the small settler; for the storekeepers are not all robbers. Some years ago I was assisting in that line of business, and it is within my knowledge that these people have had credit for four or five years without interest, the storekeeper knowing full well that ultimately the debt would be paid. However, under the new amendment the securities will be unsound, and it is highly unfair to the selector that the proposed amendments should be made at this stage, because those people fully believed that their right of tenure was sound, that they could transfer if sickness or misfortune overtook him. However, under the proposed regulations they will be denied that.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I sincerely hope the Minister will not go on with his proposed amendments, and will do nothing to prevent these transfers.

The Minister for Lands: We will, if necessary.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: There is one other matter that stands next in importance, namely the cost of living. Although sitting on the Opposition side of the House, I am prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Government in the matter of reducing the cost of living. Much has been said on this question and many promises have been made, but the cost of living is almost wholly controlled by the large importation of our daily necessities. We import daily necessities

to the tune of a little over a million per year. Here is an opportunity for the Minister controlling the Agricultural Department. I claim that there is sufficient work in the agricultural industry and the secondary industries to require a Minister to control them, and it is hardly fair, seeing that these industries are so necessary to the advancement of the State, that one Minister should be burdened with the control of the two or three large departments now in charge of the Minister for Lands. There is sufficient work for one Minister in each one of them. The bulk of this million pounds worth of produce which we import yearly could, I maintain, be produced in the State if sufficient inducement were given to agriculturists. Let us take some of the items:—Butter and cheese total over half a million pounds. I say that with the aid of irrigation and systematic encouragement all that butter could be produced in the State. Here is an opportunity for the Government to devise a system of proper assistance and encouragement to the dairying industry. Practical demonstration is necessary. We hear a lot from time to time about the education of the young, but to my mind the education of the adult is also necessary, and a practical demonstration would go a long way towards overcoming the difficulties in the way of establishing the dairying industry. I saw in South Australia and Victoria in March last men doing well under favourable conditions with a small area. I believe it is the ambition of the present Government to encourage close and intense settlement, and for such settlement Western Australia offers equal opportunities with the other States. It only needs that we should show a bold front in this matter. If our south-western lands were the property of a private individual and money were obtainable I venture to say that individual would launch out to the tune of thousands, and surely if there is sufficient inducement for a private individual there should be sufficient inducement for the Government of a great State such as ours. The high price of potatoes was much talked about during the election

campaign, and it was said that the embargo upon imported potatoes would be removed, or at any rate, that they would be made cheaper. I hope that no tinkering will be attempted in this direction, because if it is possible to prevent that dreadful scourge, the Irish blight, getting hold of our lands, let us sacrifice a little to accomplish that end. We have in the south-west a vast area capable, we are told by the Commissioner, who is competent to speak on the matter, of producing sufficient potatoes for the whole of the Commonwealth, and there is a further prospect of a big industry in the production of good healthy seed potatoes. This year the growing of potatoes was seriously hampered because we could not obtain seed. There are fairly large quantities grown in my district but owing to the scarcity of seed, the areas planted were not as large as they would otherwise have been. A little sacrifice is justified to keep our potato areas clean, but if it is at all possible to allow the eastern potato to come in, provided it is thoroughly disinfected, let it be imported, but not to all districts. The south is entitled to consideration in that respect and should be exempted. Then there is the question of the high price of meat. The member for Beverley said that we do not get our price for the meat, but I feel sure he overlooked the fact that there is such a thing as the cost of retailing. I believe in fair play all round, fair play to the retailer and fair play to the producer. We have had inquiries made from time to time into the supply and cost of meat, and it has been stated in evidence that the cost of distribution is fairly high.

Mr. George: It should not cost 2d. per pound.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: It was argued that they wanted 100 per cent. profit, and if we consider the high rate of wages there is something in the argument. If we give high wages we must expect to pay for them through the product. I have some experience in this business myself, and I know that meat cannot be retailed with any certainty with a 25 per cent. profit. I am not holding any brief

for the butchering trade, but I am pointing out that it is wholly a question of supply and demand, and although the supply may at times be plentiful it is not easy to raise and lower the prices as the supply rises and falls. Then there is the cost of sugar. This is a matter controlled by Federal action, but this high cost of sugar at the present time seems due to the labour troubles in Sydney.

Mr. Carpenter: To the combine.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I am with the hon. member if a true bill can be made out against the combine, but in this case it is largely a combine in other directions; it is the Union Trust as well as the Sugar Trust. I am not going to say anything against the unions, because I realise that in the past they have done excellent service, but I maintain that to-day they have accomplished their end. The price of sugar is £26 and £27, and even as high as £29 per ton, and if we add to that the bounty, we find the actual price to the people is over £30 per ton. All this adds to the cost of living; the bonus comes out of the pockets of the people and indirectly is an addition to the price of sugar. The member for Fremantle remarked that we should protect the State Parliaments. I maintain that the State Parliament should make itself heard in connection with these high imposts on sugar and other commodities.

Mr. George: The Federal people will not take any notice.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: Now that we have our friends of the Labour party in power perhaps the Federal Parliament will listen to them. Then there are other commodities that are necessary on the breakfast table, and in connection with which the producer should be given encouragement. He needs all the encouragement that can be given him for he has many uphill battles to fight. The fruit industry is one that is very near to my heart. This industry combined with irrigation can be brought to a very high standard indeed, and no industry should have greater encouragement. Export prices are high. It has been said by the member for Swan that a State export department is necessary. I happen to have a knowledge of the export busi-

ness, and though well acquainted with the growers, I have not heard them express any desire for a State export department. I can give figures which show that the cost of sending fruit from the South Australian Government depot to the London wharf was 3s. 1½d. per case, whilst the West Australian cost was 2s. 5½d. per case from Fremantle to London wharves. I am not going to strongly oppose the establishment of a State export department, because if it is proved to be necessary undoubtedly we should have it, but at the present time, as far as my knowledge goes, and I am in daily contact with the fruitgrower, it is not justified. The money necessary for such a venture could be more satisfactorily expended in the encouragement of the industry in other directions.

Mr. Turvey: It is not costing the South Australian Government a penny.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The balance-sheet issued by the South Australian Government recently for the export depot showed a deficit for last year of £4,300.

Member: No, there was a big profit; about £8,000.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I am informed that there was a deficit, but I am open to correction. At any rate, I say that the industry can be better encouraged by more liberal assistance to the growers. The export of table grapes alone should appeal to the Ministry. In that branch of the industry alone there is more than comfort; there is even a little fortune if only the industry is given a little encouragement. It is difficult for the grower to produce the plants, and here lies an opportunity for the Government to establish a State nursery which would give the grower a chance of getting plants of export varieties. I maintain that an export department is scarcely justified at the present time, and if a proposal for its establishment is brought forward I shall move that a select committee be appointed to deal with the question. The question of irrigation is one that appeals to me very much. It offers splendid opportunities to the producer, and it would encourage many to take up the fruit in-

dustry who otherwise would not venture upon it.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: There is one matter that seems to me should very much occupy the attention of the Administration, and that is the question of irrigation. Irrigation has proved itself to be very profitable if properly carried out in this State, and I maintain that the soils of this State, given proper treatment, with the aid of irrigation, should produce from the first day of January to the 31st day of December each year. That is sufficient inducement to my mind to warrant the expenditure of a large sum of money in that direction. I am with the member for Bunbury who pointed out in his speech that it is the duty of the Government to give attention to this matter, and I submit that in the South-West districts, particularly at Brunswick at the State farm, sufficient proof has been given of the profitable nature of such a venture. This is an opening for the small man, and I believe it is the contention particularly of the party now in power, and has been for many years, that closer settlement is more desirable than the large holdings that now exist throughout the State. From my own knowledge of the agricultural industry we could not have better proof of the large carrying capabilities of a country under irrigation than Mildura. There they have an area under plantation of 300 or 400 acres, carrying a population of 4,000 or 5,000 people. This appeals to me, and it is a matter which is an avenue that would relieve the population of the goldfields, those who are inclined towards agriculture. There we have miners with growing families who do not know what to do with their families; here is an opening for them. If the land is placed under irrigation a small area would suit them. Then we should want agricultural education. An agricultural college is justified on the goldfields. It is claimed that the University should be free. I maintain an agricultural college should also be free to the sons of miners where they are eager and anxious to learn agriculture in all its branches and thus render themselves

useful and fitted to take up the work when opportunity offers. I have received repeated letters from people who have friends and sons fitted for training, asking if I could not take them in hand and impart to them some knowledge in the way of agriculture, particularly fruit. Here, to my mind, lies the opportunity for the Government of the day to prove themselves the friend of the worker in more ways than one, affording every opportunity and facility for the sons of the workers acquiring an agricultural training. It should not be confined to the gold-fields, but colleges could be established in the different agricultural districts of the State. There is sufficient justification for them, and I feel if the Government started in that direction it would quickly bear good fruit. I have not much more to say. I sincerely hope that any shortcomings that may have resulted from my efforts this afternoon will be borne with in a friendly spirit. I am no hard and fast party man. I would readily assist the Government in any measure that they may bring forward which has for its object the advancement of the State and not one class in particular, but I say my interests are more with the agricultural producer because I realise their difficulties. I have had a knowledge of the pioneering difficulties of the State. Although for many years I was in the civil service I have had considerable experience in agriculture, and therefore claim to have a knowledge of the wants of agriculturists. In the back districts of the State that are suffering somewhat from the short rainfall, the people are anxiously awaiting some definite announcement from the Government of the day as to the proposed amendment of the land regulations. I have nothing further to say than to thank members for the consideration they have extended to me.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): There have been some references to-night by hon. members on the Opposition side of the House as to the proposals which the Government anticipate introducing at the earliest possible juncture with due consideration of those proposals, and the hope has been

expressed by more than one member on the Opposition side that we, as a Government representing the Labour party, will see our way in the future to modify our proposals and alter our intentions as expressed at the general elections. I think it is just as well to be clear on this point. We are in the position of a Government and a party who have contested the recent elections upon these principles. We have thoroughly explained them to the electors and, speaking personally, I can say I had to fight most determinedly and against considerable opposition in order to convince the electors that these principles were right. Is it likely or is it reasonable to expect that having been successful in winning the elections we are going to modify these proposals? The electors of the State have pronounced a verdict in their favour, and so far as my opinion goes, and I think the opinion of other members of our party, we have a clear duty to go forward as far as circumstances and opportunities will permit, to carry into effect the policy endorsed by a majority of the electors of the State. During this debate and previous to the assembling of Parliament, a considerable amount of criticism has been indulged in as to certain, I will not call them regulations, but certain instructions which have been issued by me as Minister for Lands in regard to the future exercise of my discriminating power in the matter of the approval of transfers. These instructions will necessarily involve a certain amount of increased work, I may say a good deal of increased work for the Minister and the department, and I have not lightly undertaken that work or entered upon it without due thought, and without consultation with the officers and my colleagues in issuing those instructions and setting out the course which I propose to pursue. Those members who have taken exception have been pleased to state that the amount of speculation or trafficking which is taking place in land is only a small amount compared to the genuine settlement, but I have indubitable evidence that that trafficking has been conducted on a very considerable scale. I felt sure of it before the election, before entering the

Lands Department, and since I have entered the Lands Department my views have been confirmed. I want hon. members to consider this matter for themselves and if they take the monthly *Statistical Abstract*, which is distributed to hon. members, and will take the area of conditional purchase leases of various kinds which have been alienated, or, rather, which are in process of alienation from year to year, if they will work out the amount of improvements which should be effected on these according to the modest conditions of the Land Act, they will realise that there is a considerable area on which those conditions are not being fulfilled, and, further, if during the past six or 12 months they will turn up the advertising columns of the newspapers and read the advertisements there of areas for sale, and note the areas which are unimproved they will at once realise the fact that there is a great deal of trafficking in our areas going on, and I realise that the position is this, that this Parliament, representing the taxpayers, is finding a considerable sum of money each year for the conduct of the Lands Department, is involving itself in a considerable amount of trouble for the purpose of administering the lands of this State, but in doing so, owing to insufficient safeguards, it is providing facilities for this trafficking; indeed, it has called into being a number of mushroom land agencies particularly engaged in this work. It is undertaking all the responsibility and trouble, while the fees and profits from these transactions are going to people outside the Lands Department. I have always contended that the function of the Lands Department is to promote land settlement and the productive utilisation of the soil. That is the object we all ought to have in view, and if we find that policy is being unsettled, and that our selectors are finding it more profitable to secure these areas with a view to realising a profit on them at an early date, rather than to set to work to utilise them as they ought to be utilised for productive purposes, then the Lands Department is not fulfilling its real function on behalf of the people of this State. In looking

through the criticism which has been urged against these instructions, I find that there is a great deal of misconception. I anticipated that opposition would come from those whose business had been called into being by this process of trafficking. Naturally they would object, because we were building up a vested interest in the exchange of these properties, and we would have encountered precisely the same opposition if it had been customary to sell the positions in the public service and there had developed a system of trafficking in those positions. It would have called into being a number of men who would make a living by trafficking in public service positions, and when we proposed to put a stop to it we would have an outcry from those people. Therefore, naturally I expected opposition from this class of land agent, although there were some candid enough to say that while their business in connection with the department would suffer, they regarded these regulations as being beneficial in the interests of the State. Outside of that there has been a considerable amount of correspondence, but I would be prepared to attach more weight to it if so much of it had not been anonymous. One of the first letters I have seen to which the writer had the courage to attach his name is one which appears in to-day's *West Australian*, and it contains one of the misconceptions which has arisen. The writer declares that it is a legitimate way of business for people, who take up these selections and do not fulfil the necessary conditions imposed by the Land Act, to enter into an arrangement to dispose of the properties to somebody else, and for the purchaser under this arrangement to carry out the improvements which the original selector had contracted himself to perform, and when the necessary improvements have been carried out then come to the Lands Department and ask that the transfer shall be duly registered. The member for Northam has himself recognised that this has been going on, and from his place in the House he stated that although it was taking place he hardly knew how to deal with it. Now, I contend this is an absolutely illegal transaction and an absolute con-

travention of the provisions of the Land Act. It is more than a contravention—it is a direct encouragement to people to secure areas with a view to disposing of them to unsuccessful applicants before the land board at a considerable profit, greater or less according to the position of the land. I take it to be my duty as Minister for Lands administering the Land Act to put my foot down on what are illegal practices, and I contend that it is illegal for these people to enter into an arrangement for the disposal of a block when they have not fulfilled their contracts with the Lands Department. We have a contract with them, but they are also parties to the contract and they have certain duties to perform to the Lands Department. And it is an injustice in this way, that in nearly every case these selectors give sworn statements to the land board, which decides who shall be the successful applicant, and if they are to be permitted to make these statements in regard to their intentions, and then shortly after securing the land are to be permitted to break those intentions and go back upon their sworn evidence, we are conniving at practices which are certainly not in the best interests of the public and are not going to promote the settlement and development of the State. In connection with these sworn statements, we have to bear in mind that there are other applicants, and there may be amongst them those who are genuinely desirous of founding a home, continuously living on the place, and following legitimate farming, but who, being more modest, are not prepared to make extravagant statements such as those made by the men who secure these areas. And it is unjust to them that when they are turned down by the land board they are faced with the necessity of going to the successful applicant and practically paying him a premium for the right to go on the area. Let me quote some of the statements made before the land board in order to indicate the nature of some of the sworn evidence which is given in connection with applications for these areas. I will not read them fully but will take only the salient features. Here is one in which the appli-

cant says that he holds no land at present, that he never selected previously, that he intends to reside on the land as soon as it is granted, that his present occupation is contract clearing, that he has had eight years' experience in the Eastern States, that he has £300 capital, that he is married and has nine children, including five boys who would all go on the land, that he has no one else dependent on him, that he considers two-thirds of the land fit for wheat growing, and that he intends to make his home on the land. Another applicant swears that he holds no land at the present time, that he had seen this land and wanted to make it his home, that he proposed to use it for mixed farming and reside on it within two months, that he and his two boys would go on the land, that he was 54 years of age and born in the State, that he has had farming experience, that he had a capital of £500 and a full plant comprising everything required for farming, including horses, that he had a number of children, that there was no one else dependent on him, and that he was desirous of establishing a home on the block. Then, here is the case of two partners. They stated that they proposed to utilise the land for mixed farming, wheat and sheep, that they would reside on it, that both would go on the block immediately, that their present occupation was farming work, that both had had experience in farming before coming to Western Australia, that they had £230 between them, that one was married and his wife and two children would join him as soon as he got settled, and that he was desirous of establishing a home and embarking upon active farm work. I need hardly read any more. These are particulars of the evidence which is given in sworn declarations by the successful applicants, and we must remember that in each case they secured the area from a number of applicants. Now, it is an injustice if, after making these declarations before the land board, they are then permitted to go out and perhaps after holding the block for a brief time, advertise it for sale and compel the unsuccessful applicant, who probably was prepared in a bona fide way to go upon the land and

cultivate it, to pay a price over and above that which they gave the department in order that the unsuccessful applicant may be permitted an opportunity of going on the land and embarking on farming. I say that we should prevent this trafficking, and if there are those who secure the land by hard swearing and then afterwards dispose of it, our efforts should be directed to see that the unsuccessful applicants shall be able to get the area from the State at the price we fix on it, and not be penalised by having to embark their capital, or a considerable portion of it, in paying a premium to those who secured the land for the purpose of establishing a home and engaging in farming pursuits, and then turn around and dispose of it. Then we have other instances, and these refer to lands which are liable to forfeiture for non-fulfilment of the conditions stipulated in the Land Act. I hold that the Minister for Lands is there to administer the Land Act. Parliament has decided that it is a fair proposition for the State to exact these conditions in return for the right which we give to these applicants to occupy the land, and if these conditions are too onerous then it is the duty of Parliament to alter them and make them lighter. But while they are regarded as a fair proposition—and I think they are moderate; they do not entail a very heavy drain upon the farmer going on the land—having been placed in the Land Act, it is my duty as Minister to see that these conditions are fulfilled; of course, exercising discretion where unfortunate circumstances may prevent an individual who is doing his best to develop his holding from carrying out the conditions to their full extent. I do not intend in future, where there is a reasonable claim for leniency, to be hard on holders of these areas, but I certainly do intend to come down heavily upon those who have taken up these areas and have made no attempt, or little attempt, to cultivate them, and who are holding them with the intention of selling them at an advantage and of profiting by the enhanced value given to the land by reason of the facilities provided by the State. Where those cases come under my notice there will be no question but that forfeiture will follow.

There are more cases than there ought to be where it has been found that lessees under conditional purchase, have failed to fulfil the conditions. Although given the opportunity, and, in some cases, extension of time, and where they have been notified that it is the intention of the department to forfeit, they immediately effect a surreptitious transaction, and dispose of the land to someone else, and later on we have found the purchaser coming forward with a view of securing the transfer of a block which is forfeitable. Then there is every reason and justification for forfeiting, and in issuing these instructions I have had the purpose of preventing purchasers from being victimised. I desire to emphasise what are the conditions of the Land Act, the conditions under which these holdings are taken up, so that purchasers will have the opportunity of inquiring as to whether the conditions have been fulfilled, and so prevent from having transferred to them a holding which is forfeitable for the non-fulfilment of the conditions imposed by the Act.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: That was done as well under the old administration; I know of instances in Toodyay.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The position has been that the very fact of a transaction having been entered into has been urged as an argument why we should waive this right to forfeit in glaring cases where the land has been held and no attempt made to fulfil the conditions. As those cases came up I realised the necessity for issuing the instructions which have lately been put into force. The argument is put forward that the right way to deal with this is to have the areas inspected, to ensure that the conditions under which the land is held are fulfilled. I want to point out that that would involve an enormous inspectorial staff, and, while I certainly propose to do my best to see that the conditions are fulfilled, I would be wanting in my duty if I did not go further and attempt to provide conditions by which we would avoid in the future these holdings being held, and thus necessitate this costly supervision and inspection in order that the holders

might be compelled to carry out the conditions under which they secured the land. What I want is to see the fullest possible encouragement given to those who are desirous of going on the land for the purpose of developing and utilising it as a farm and a home, and to prevent, so far as lies in my power, opportunities being given to those who merely regard this land settlement as a good opportunity for trafficking in a block and realising £100 or £200 by transferring that block, without the necessity of undergoing those pioneering difficulties and the pioneering work which the genuine settler undoubtedly has to do in the early stages of his farming operations. The next complaint we have is that the financial institutions will not lend money, and undoubtedly I suspect that there is an effort being made by those who have been directly interested in the traffic, those who have been making a comfortable income out of it, to arouse opposition to these proposals by the misrepresentation of our purpose, and by exciting the fear that the genuine settler will not be able to secure accommodation. With regard to the financial institutions, I desire to point out that our conditions in Western Australia, as compared with those in the Eastern States, are certainly a great deal more liberal, and the financial institutions which have their branches in Western Australia as well as in the Eastern States, are lending money on land held under various forms of tenure in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia, where the conditions in regard to residence, improvements, the right of transfer, and the price of the land are a great deal more onerous than they are in Western Australia, and if the institutions are prepared to lend money upon those areas in the Eastern States, why this sudden and mysterious announcement that there is likely to be a check in the accommodation of settlers upon our agricultural areas? Surely if they are prepared to lend under more onerous conditions, so far as the Land Acts of the Eastern States are concerned, they have no reason to deny that accommodation in Western Australia, where the terms are more liberal. I cer-

tainly think if I, as Minister for Lands, insist upon improvement conditions, conditions which will lead to the advancement and development of the agricultural industry, to bring about the utilisation of the soil, we are improving those securities, we are making them better from a banking, or even a storekeeper's point of view, and so far as my policy can be successful in ensuring that end, so much more secure will it be for those financial institutions and financiers who are accommodating applicants in Western Australia to-day. It is certainly a new doctrine to me that insistence upon the conditions which are going to make these lands more valuable is going to lessen the value of the securities. It is a new problem to me in political economy and it is one that I cannot comprehend, so far as my knowledge of that particular science is concerned. Then we are told that the storekeepers are going to withhold credit, but, as a matter of fact, hon. members opposite who have criticised these instructions, know well it is very rarely indeed that a storekeeper secures a mortgage over the property. His accommodation is generally by way of a lien over the crop, or by promissory notes, and while there may be isolated instances where he takes a second mortgage, it is only in exceptional cases where that second mortgage is demanded. That being the case, I cannot see how the position of the storekeeper is going to be imperilled, so long as it is the purpose of the Lands Department to ensure that the settlers are being settled on the lands, and that they will be there for the purpose of improving their holdings and cultivating them, and thus increasing their own prospects and also taking their part in promoting the general prosperity of the State. If, however, we find that this pressure is brought to bear for the purpose of precluding the Minister for Lands, for the time being, from carrying out the provisions of the Land Act, if this pressure is to be brought to bear to compel the Minister to wink at evils, at hard swearing before the Land Board, and to wink at deliberate contraventions of the Land Act, then undoubtedly there is all the greater necessity for this Assem-

by to turn its attention to banking proposals which will give that accommodation to the settlers which other institutions deny. I certainly propose during the present session to liberalise the conditions of the Agricultural Bank in some ways, and I hope that will only be the forerunner of a State institution which will regard it as its chief function to assist legitimate settlers in the development and cultivation of the lands of the State. The member for Toodyay quoted several instances which undoubtedly are deserving of consideration, and in which he said these instructions would prevent transfers from being effected. I want to draw the hon. member's attention to the circular which was issued and published in the Press, in which I clearly expressed this view. I then stated "Any special case will be considered on its merits, and this embargo with respect to transfers may be waived; but the Minister will require such special case to be supported by whatever documentary evidence he may think fit." Then I went on to say "The Minister reserves the right to protect the land, or permit of a transfer where he is satisfied that the request should be dealt with as a special case justifying leniency." In issuing those instructions I had in my mind cases where a man might become ill, where he might be unfitted for pursuing the work of cultivating the soil, where the settler himself might die, and the necessity arising for the area to be transferred, and there might be a number of things cropping up where it would be perfectly legitimate for a transfer to go through. But it certainly would not be legitimate for me to wink at cases, which I certainly know at the present time, where areas have been taken up, and where they have been dummed by friends of the holder, and where they inevitably come along for the purpose of putting those transfers through with the object of concentrating the whole of those areas in the hands of one person. When those persons come forward there will undoubtedly be difficulties arising in getting them through. Those are just the very conditions responsible for all the dummings which took place under the original

Selection Acts in New South Wales and Victoria, which they were always attempting to defeat, and which were responsible for the stringent provision in the Land Acts of the Eastern States, to which I have already referred. I think the hon. member for Toodyay, and other hon. members, will not need any greater assurance that every consideration will be given to the applications of those who can put forward a legitimate claim to have their transfers effected. It certainly involves a greater amount of work, but I think that an additional amount of work will be justified if we can promote genuine land settlement, and prevent land settlers being fleeced by those who have secured areas for trafficking purposes, as I know from my experience during the past year or two. The leader of the Opposition indulged in some references to the announcement which has been made in regard to the deferment of the payment of rents in those cases where settlers are suffering from the present dry season. That hon. member approved and condemned in one breath. He condemned it first, then thought his condemnation might be misunderstood; and later on he said he approved, but intimated that it ought to have been effected in a different way. Now the position was that the leader of the Opposition did make some announcement in a quiet way to individuals here and there, that if application was made rents would be deferred. But I think that was absolutely the wrong way to go about it, because clamorous individuals who might not deserve that consideration would be able to secure the deferment of the payment of rent, while others who were unaware of it, because of the non-publicity of it, but who were really in need of such consideration, would not be able to secure it, and might possibly have to abandon their holdings because they feared they could not carry through. I think the best possible way was to face the situation honestly, to recognise that owing to the abnormally dry season we had a number of settlers in difficulties, and that it was better to let them know that we as a Government were prepared to

give them consideration, exercising due care, as the leader of the Opposition said ought to have been done, to see that these cases are determined on their merits. And we have provided that a claim shall be submitted, and that that claim shall be endorsed by an officer either of the Lands Department or of the Agricultural Bank, so that we will have some check as to whether the necessities of the case demand that the deferment shall be granted. I think that is a reasonable precaution, while at the same time the general publicity given to it makes it known to those settlers who will need this accommodation, and perhaps gives them heart to continue the struggle. Now there are other proposals which we have, but I certainly do not feel that I should make any announcement in regard to them here to-night, not because we are not sympathetic, but for quite other reasons. However, I can certainly assure hon. members that we will give most sympathetic treatment to those people; because we recognise that the great majority of them have worked well in those dry areas, and we believe that if we give them consideration now, when good seasons come the State will certainly not lose by it, but will be considerably the gainer by the increased production and consequently increased prosperity. Reference has also been made to the question of the cost of living, and to the establishment of an export depot. The leader of the Opposition imperatively demanded to know what has been done in regard to these matters. Well, the continuous Government was there for six years, and we have been here for about a month, so I think we are entitled to a little time, not exactly our own time, but a reasonable time to go into these matters before a public announcement is made.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I do not think I mentioned an export depot.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think you did.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Was it not freezing works and abattoirs? I asked why they had not been mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope this is not going to be a Government to merely mention things. I hate this habit

of mentioning this and that in speeches placed in the mouth of His Excellency the Governor. I much prefer to go ahead, and then come to the House and say "We have done these things." There have been too many matters mentioned, merely used, as it were, as bird lime, and not sufficient care given to carrying them out.

Mr. Frank Wilson: These works are already in hand.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Nonsense. If it can be said at all that they are in hand, it is merely in the construction of files in the departments of the State, and that is an industry which, I find, does not need any encouragement in Western Australia.

Mr. Frank Wilson: The designs and plans are in hand. Ask your colleague.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: With regard to the question of the importation of potatoes, I recognise I have to exercise proper care in protecting the producers of the State against the introduction of the Irish blight, and I certainly intend to exercise that care in the future. But I am going to take steps to preclude the possibility of precautionary measures against Irish blight being utilised as a means of cornering potatoes and putting them up to prohibitive prices. We have decided upon certain regulations, namely, to alter the boundaries of the area in the South-West by taking a line from Mundijong and, instead of going directly eastward, to take the line south-eastward to Katanning, and thence in a direct line eastward from the town of Katanning on the Great Southern. That will mean that the area to the south-west of that will be protected against locally grown potatoes grown outside that area, while on the other hand it will mean that potatoes from inside that area can be taken into any other part of the State. In deference to the unanimous wishes and expressions of opinion of the people of Geraldton district we are going to remove the embargo against potatoes being introduced into that port. The investigations of the officers of the Agricultural Department have proved that the immersion of

potatoes in a 10 per cent. solution of sulphuric acid is a means of effectively preventing any possibility of infection from these potatoes, and therefore we propose to establish a depot at Fremantle for the treatment of potatoes by this method, which will enable us to exercise a check and prevent the cornering of the local supply. Because I realise that in the cornering of the local supply it will not be the growers who will do the cornering, but the produce merchants who buy from them and then, by exercising a corner, put up the price to the consumer. We will have this means of introducing potatoes without any possibility of infection, and will be able to protect the interests of the consumers of Western Australia by reducing the price of potatoes. We find that the officers of the department feel assured that this process of treatment is much cheaper than the existing method, and I certainly believe we will not go back to the famine prices which have ruled for some time past, and which have made the potato an article tabooed to a very large proportion of the people of Western Australia. I may say there are other proposals in which I hope to have the co-operation, not only of members, but of producers and consumers outside, in regard to the cheapening the price of other commodities. But, naturally, one requires time to deal with these things and investigate them fully. I can assure hon. members we are dealing with this question of cheapening the cost of staple articles of diet with a view to making it less onerous to consumers than it has been in the past. So far as the question of the price of sugar is concerned, that is a matter over which we have very little control; but had the people of Australia exercised a little more consideration at the time the questions were submitted at the referenda we might have had some relief in this matter, which has been a subject of comment for some time past. However, I want to assure hon. members that in any proposal which we may advance we certainly intend to give every encouragement to the agricultural industry to the end that it

may prosper; and we are also going to take steps, so far as lies in our power, to see that in the development of that industry we safeguard the interests of the consumer and provide that where we are able to raise a more economic and better supply of agricultural products, the first advantage of that better supply is going to be reached by the consumers, who to-day are called upon to support very largely the efforts which are being made for the encouragement of the agricultural industry of the State.

On motion by Mr. Dooley debate adjourned.

### BILL—SUPPLY (£460,000).

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 8.28 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 9th November, 1911.*

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Charities; 2, Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fourth Day—Conclusion.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. W. PATRICK (Central): With other hon. members who have already spoken I wish to add my congratulations