

tal. If we are going to set a standard on one thing, you must set a standard on every other thing. It seems ridiculous on one thing, we must set a standard on their wages and form unions and combines to protect their labour, can expect that they can be treated by the capitalistic section in any other way. Necessarily for their own protection they find that the formation of unions and trusts answer so well, that it is only natural that the other sections of the community will follow in their footsteps and do likewise. Therefore it seems to me that we will not only see meat rings, flour rings, and other rings in the future, but I suppose we farmers too will have to form rings and every other trade will have to do the same. Finally after the country has suffered for a considerable number of years, we will all decide to squash the rings and start over again. It does seem strange that the Government should have thought it necessary to inquire into one of the combines and not thought it necessary to inquire into others.

Hon. T. F. O. Brimage: That may follow.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I was pleased with the close attention paid to our finances by Mr. Kirwan. It is undoubtedly the question to which this country should give attention. I was also pleased at the remarks of Mr. Patrick on a point I hope we will never forget, a point that I trust will finally receive the consideration to which it is entitled; and if we can get it in no other way there must be an inquiry. I refer to the Goldfields Water Scheme being turned into a revenue producing concern instead of losing £90,000 a year. When I first came into Parliament I mentioned this matter, and I am glad it is not dead. I am sorry I cannot endorse the remarks of Mr. Piesse. I sincerely hope we will always be able to retain the sinking funds on our loans. I feel that we, who have the benefits of the expenditure of the loans, should, while the money is being expended, put a little of it aside from the enhanced business it brings about. In conclusion I hope that the good words and the good work put in by other members will help us to a better realisation of what is necessary with re-

gard to the financial aspect, which is undoubtedly of a very serious nature, but which we hope we shall soon see satisfactorily cleared up.

On motion by *Hon. T. F. O. Brimage*, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 18th November, 1908.

	Page
Papers presented	200
Questions: Railway, Pinjarra-Marrinup	200
Railway project, Marrinup-Marradong	200
State Smelting works	201
Railway auditor	201
Prospecting party, State Aid	201
Public officers and local bodies	201
Railways, newly constructed, loss	202
Address-in-Reply, fifth day	202

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, By-laws of the Municipalities of Beverley, Boulder, and Geraldton; 2, By-laws of the Local Boards of Health of Bayswater, Donnybrook, and Victoria Park; 3, Rules and Regulations of the Perth Public Hospital.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION. PINJARRA-MARRINUP.

Mr. LAYMAN (for Mr. Hopkins) asked the Premier: When is it proposed to start the Pinjarra-Marrinup Railway?

The PREMIER replied: The work will be commenced departmentally almost immediately.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT—MARRINUP TO MARRADONG.

Mr. LAYMAN (for Mr. Hopkins) asked the Premier: Has the survey of

the proposed extension of the Marrinup Railway to Marradong been made; if not, when is it proposed to undertake that work?

The PREMIER replied: A trial survey has already been made to Marradong, and a permanent survey running about 5 miles north of Marradong, and for about 12 miles beyond towards the Williams.

QUESTION—STATE SMELTING WORKS.

Mr. DAVIES asked the Premier: 1, In view of the large number of unemployed workmen now in our midst, and with a view of providing smelting facilities to cope with the opening up of the mineral districts of the North-Western portions of this State, have the Government taken into their serious consideration the desirability of purchasing and working as a State concern the South Fremantle Smelting Works? 2, If not, are the Government now negotiating with the present owners of those works, or have they under consideration a scheme whereby they propose to subsidise or assist in any way the proprietors of those works with a view to bringing about an early start in the working operations of those smelters?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No, but the Government have considered the question of providing smelting facilities at Fremantle. 2, The Government have under consideration a scheme whereby it is proposed to give assistance towards the erection of smelting works which will afford facilities equal to those existing in the Eastern States for the purchase or smelting of ores.

QUESTION—RAILWAY AUDITOR.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier: Is it true that Mr. Triggs, while retaining the position of Chief Accountant in the Railways, has received the additional appointment of Railway Auditor?

The PREMIER replied: No. An officer has been promoted with the title of "Auditor of Receipts," and the

branch has been placed under the control of the Chief Accountant.

QUESTION—PROSPECTING PARTY, STATE AID.

Mr. WALKER asked the Premier: 1, Was Robert Menzies equipped by the Mines Department for a prospecting tour? If so, what was the nature and extent of the equipment? 2, Has the department received intimation that the said Robert Menzies disposed of part of the said equipment at Sandstone? 3, If not, will the department make inquiries to ascertain if such a statement be true or otherwise with a view of taking such further steps as may be necessary?

The PREMIER replied: 1, In June last Messrs. L. R. Menzies and party were loaned an equipment until the 30th instant. The equipment consisted of 3 horses, 1 spring cart, 2 tanks, 1 pack-saddle and packs, 1 set of harness, 1 set of leading harness, assortment of tools, 1 tent and fly, tarpaulin, and some rations; 2, The Department has not received any intimation that this party disposed of any part of the equipment at Sandstone. The reports received were to the effect that they started from Southern Cross on 7th June, went to Mt. Jackson, thence to Pigeon Rocks, thence to Higgins' Find; this information was contained in a report dated July 21st. On August 31st a further report stated that they prospected from Higgins' Find to Mt. Kenneth and intended to return to Mt. Jackson and then make towards Phillips River. On October 22nd they reported having prospected South from Parker's Range to Flatter's Hill; thence towards Bremer Range, but had to return to Southern Cross for repairs to the cart; they then intended going towards Phillips River; 3, Yes.

QUESTION—PUBLIC OFFICERS, AND LOCAL BODIES.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has he given permission to an officer of his department to nominate as a candidate for a paid position on the Fremantle Tramway Board? 2, If so,

will he extend the privilege to all officers in his Department to serve on similar boards or local bodies? 3, Has he read the comment of the Public Service Commissioner on this matter?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Permission was given to Mr. Bennett to stand for re-election to the board by Executive Council minute 17th October, 1906, under Section 82 of "The Public Service Act, 1904"; 2, As has been the custom in the past, each case will be dealt with on its merits; 3, Yes.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS NEWLY CONSTRUCTED, LOSS.

Mr. BATH (without notice) asked the Premier whether the figures given in regard to the loss on newly constructed railways included provision for sinking fund on capital cost.

The PREMIER replied: I would like the hon. member to give notice of that question. I am not quite satisfied on that point, but I am under the impression that the average working cost is taken, although as a matter of fact spur railways do not necessitate the same expenditure as main lines. The whole expenditure is I think spread over the whole system at so much per mile, and that is debited up.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. MONGER (York): In common with all those other hon. members who have previously spoken, I desire, sir, to tender you my congratulations upon your re-appointment to that position which you so ably filled during last session. During the course of this debate, we have heard on more than one occasion that perhaps the Address-in-Reply might be altogether done away with; that the Leader of the Opposition, the mover and seconder and one or two members of the Government should be the only members to contribute towards the Address-in-Reply debate. During the years I have been in Parliament I have never gone out of my way to trouble the House

with my views in the course of these particular debates, but it does appear to me that on such an occasion, seeing that we have recently come from our elections, it is to a certain extent incumbent upon every member, whether sitting on this side of the House or on the other, to give some small expression of views in connection with affairs pertaining to the local requirements of the electorate he represents. Whilst I regret not having seen in the Governor's Speech any reference to the extension of agricultural railways in the electorate I have the honour of representing, I hope that before long the Government will see the advisability of extending the only agricultural line in my district. Whilst speaking on that point I am reminded of the fact that the particular line shows a very considerable loss on its year's working, and I have no doubt the Leader of the Opposition in the question he asked just now, without notice, was referring to this as one of the lines showing a loss. The Greenhills extension to Quairading was taken over and completed about the end of April last, and according to the financial statement summarised in the Press two or three days ago, this line of railway showed a loss on the year's workings, based only on the first two months, during which very little traffic passed over the line. During those two months there was a loss of four hundred odd pounds, and consequently they calculated that the loss would be £2,400 and more per annum. I think any line of railway costing the amount of money that the Greenhills-Quairading line did and losing during its first two months of life only on the basis of £2,400 pounds per annum, is a really good proposition, because it is only from now onwards to the end of summer that the line has any reasonable amount of traffic taken over it. During this debate there appears to have been a considerable amount of feeling shown as to the interpretation placed by a learned Judge the other day upon a certain section of the Electoral Act in connection with the petition with regard to the Menzies election. Most of us remember the weary hours of last ses-

sion, after which we arrived at a sort of amicable arrangement in connection with the Electoral Bill, and how every member of the House, when the measure was finally passed, went away apparently perfectly satisfied. Now the moment a decision is given against the wishes of the other side of the House what do we find? We hear the oratory of the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman), used in a very unpleasant style, to defame a man who unfortunately is unable to be present here to give to him the political castigation which his remarks entitle him to receive. However, we have seen by the attitude taken by all the members on the other side of the House how strongly they feel the position which they are now in owing to the proper interpretation which the Judge has placed upon the section of the Act. This morning when I looked at the *West Australian* and saw that nine members of the Opposition had visited the Menzies electorate, hunting like wolves in their endeavour to get the poor carcase of one member of this side of the House, I felt inclined to congratulate those who thought it their duty to hunt in these packs instead of allowing the great Mr. Buzacott to go "on his own." He must, indeed, be a very weak man if he requires so much of the talent from the Opposition in his electorate to support his candidature.

Mr. Walker: What about the civil servants from the Mines and Railways departments, who have gone up there.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: Is it true?

Mr. Bolton: Absolutely true.

Mr. MONGER: At no time have those who represent the Labour party in Parliament so degraded themselves to my way of thinking as in the present instance. They may say they do not mind in the slightest what I think, but never in the history of self-government have the great democratic representatives of Western Australia shown themselves to worse advantage than in the attitude they are now taking in connection with the Menzies election. It is not because I am speaking to the House this afternoon that there are empty benches opposite. It is more pleasure to me to

see those benches empty and have the benches on this side full, but the cause of the emptiness on the present occasion is that so many members are away helping their poor friend, Mr. Buzacott. I have not had the pleasure of meeting that gentleman.

Mr. Bolton: You soon will have.

Mr. MONGER: I shall never have the pleasure of meeting him during this session of Parliament. He must be indeed weak if all the Opposition talent, together with the wives of the leaders of the Opposition have to go to Menzies to tender Mr. Buzacott the little support to which he is entitled. I fail to see why, from the other side of the House, so many disparaging remarks should be made in connection with the great work now being done by the Honorary Minister, Mr. Mitchell. What that gentleman has done during the few years he has held the position entitles him to more than ordinary consideration from members, even of the Opposition. Nothing gave me greater pleasure than when I heard and saw in my travels round the country that men like the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath), and the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), have taken upon themselves the responsibility of acquiring tracts of country with the view, presumably, of bettering their position. On every occasion, however, when the Honorary Minister brings forward any scheme it is belittled by Opposition members. All know well the vast extent of Western Australian territory, with its millions of square miles of country, and that up to now only some 14 millions of acres have been alienated, or are in process of alienation. We are told by our agricultural and surveying experts that we have in the South-Western portion of the State country to the extent of about 90 millions of acres which is capable of producing corn and every other commodity of the soil. Out of that 90 million acres only some 14 millions, as I have said, are alienated or in process of alienation. We have an enormous country to look after, and it devolves on all of us to do our best to further the interests of the great agri-

cultural portions of Western Australia. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to find a man who has made a small competency on the fields coming down to the coastal districts to reside, and to make his home in the settled parts of Western Australia. I would like to see a few thousand men from there taking up our lands, and would much prefer that to witnessing the arrival of a kind of pauper population from the mother country. During my recent tour in the Eastern districts I have seen examples of what our new immigrants are capable of doing as compared with the work of the older settler, who husbands and farms his land in a proper style. I have had the pleasure of seeing a 700-acre field that is giving its owner a return of nearly two tons to the acre, while within two miles of that field there is a 70-acre crop which was put in by an inexperienced man from the mother country that will not return much more than 2cwt. to the acre. I trust that when my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, and those other gentlemen on his side of the House who have taken up land, work their properties, they will follow the example of those who have had some small experience of farming in a proper manner. When we hear the cries of the unemployed, those of us who understand the conditions in the country realise that there is really no necessity for it, because if those men care to go into agricultural centres and do a decent day's work for a decent day's pay they will be easily accommodated.

Mr. Taylor: You have never made work scarce.

Mr. MONGER: I am always only too pleased to give every assistance in that direction.

Mr. Carson: He gives the other fellow a chance.

Mr. MONGER: I desire to congratulate the Opposition on the splendid manner in which they have been able to provoke strikes throughout the State.

Mr. Walker: That is not right.

Mr. MONGER: I regret that the members for Murchison (*Mr. Holman*) and Cue (*Mr. Heitmann*) are not present so

that I could relate to them what a great and noble work they have done in the interests of the workers of Western Australia. I trust the member for Cue every night from this on, when he goes to his bed, will congratulate himself upon the active and noble stand he has taken in connection with the Nallan wood strike; I hope he will think of some of those 500 families connected with that one big mine on the Murchison; I hope he will think of the straits and troubles they are placed in owing to the attitude he and others on the Opposition side of the House have taken in connection with that matter.

Mr. Walker: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. Bolton: And he knows it.

Mr. MONGER: I would be sorry to make an incorrect statement in this House; but let the member for Kanowna show me that those two members to whom I have referred made the slightest effort to ameliorate the conditions of the workers in the unfortunate trouble at Nallan.

Mr. Walker: Show us how they have attempted to do an injury to the people up there.

Mr. MONGER: I can only say that I hope all those gentlemen who represent as they say they do, the great democratic portions of Western Australia—I can only hope, I repeat, that they will be able to say to those 500 non-workers and to those who are associated with them, "we did our duty to you."

Mr. Walker: Have you tried to get the mines to come to terms? They want to shut up, it is not the workers.

Mr. MONGER: Having referred to the remarks that have been made by the members on the other side, I must make some little reference to the Arbitration Act. I would like to see it, and I believe every hon. member would like to see it so amended that the decisions when once arrived at would be absolutely final. But what is the result? If there is to be arbitration with unions under the regime of some of my friends on the opposite side, and a decision is given against them, the result is simply that they will not have it. I say with all due

respect to everyone, as long as the affairs of Western Australia are conducted on those principles, the sooner the Act is so amended that gentlemen on that side and gentlemen on this side of the House will be able more easily than at the present time to come to a proper and definite understanding the better it will be for the country and everybody. I say that if the attitude adopted by the gentlemen whom I have mentioned—and I am sorry to see that many of them are away this afternoon at Menzies—during the whole course of their political career is to be allowed to continue it will be a standing disgrace to the people of Western Australia. During the course of the remarks of one member who sits on the opposite side of the House we were told that special privileges had been given by the Government to certain prominent individuals in connection with areas of land that had been acquired or were in process of acquirement. No mention on the other hand was made of those tracts of country which my friend the Leader of the Opposition and others were desirous of acquiring.

Mr. Bath : I did not get a tip that a railway was going there.

The Minister for Works : Who did?

Mr. Bath : Supporters of the Government.

Mr. MONGER : I will give that the lie direct.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

The Minister for Works : Is the hon. member, the Leader of the Opposition, allowed to state here that members of the Government gave information to enable certain people to take up land in connection with railway extensions?

Mr. Speaker : Did the hon. member state that? If the hon. member makes such a statement it is certainly a reflection and he should withdraw it.

Mr. Bath : I may say that the statement was made to the hon. member for Mt. Magnet, by Mr. Glowrey, in the public room of the Lands Department.

The Minister for Works : Do I understand the Leader of the Opposition to

state that Mr. Glowrey said he had previous information from members of the Government in connection with railway extensions? That is what I want to know.

Mr. Bath : What Mr. Glowrey said to the hon. member for Mt. Magnet is "you want to get in the know."

The Minister for Works : That is not the statement that the hon. member has made and I must ask for the withdrawal of what he previously said.

Mr. Speaker : If the hon. member made such a statement I am sure he will withdraw it, as it is undoubtedly a reflection on the Government.

Mr. Bath : I would like to have from the Minister for Works the exact statement. I would ask him to repeat what I said.

The Minister for Works : The hon. member stated that information as to railway extension had been given by members of the Government to their supporters.

Mr. Bath : That is entirely incorrect. What I said was we did not get information in regard to tracts of land that the hon. member for York is speaking about. Permit me to say also that my land is not near any railway that has been built or even projected.

The Minister for Works : I ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. member is very reasonable; he denies using the words attributed to him and I must accept his denial. If he used those words unquestionably he must withdraw them.

The Minister for Works : I asked the question, who did give the information?

Mr. Bath : If, in your opinion, Mr. Speaker, I have transgressed the rules of the House, I will withdraw.

Mr. Speaker : No; I have accepted the hon. members denial.

Mr. Bath : My objection was to a misstatement of the words which I used. It was only in reply to a misstatement from the hon. member for York.

Mr. MONGER : As far as I know the members of the Government, and I am fairly well acquainted with them, I find

that on every possible occasion if it is the question of an interview with a Minister, the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House receive far greater consideration than we on this side do.

Mr. Bolton : We do not receive much.

Mr. MONGER : As far as acquiring information about land is concerned, I can say I have never had divulged by any member of the Government the direction in which a line of railway was about to go. But when I see in the Premier's policy speech that he proposes to construct a line of railway or continue the construction from Wickiepin to a point on the Eastern railway it is only human nature that a man who has an eye to business will say: "I am going to form an opinion as to the position which this line will take and will settle on the land." That is the point. I am desirous of seeing all the surplus goldfields population settled on the land. Whilst regretting that the population is decreasing on certain parts of the goldfields, I am more than pleased to find that the people are coming down to settle in the agricultural centres of Western Australia. We, the old residents of Western Australia, are always pleased to welcome and always pleased to see those successful goldfields people coming down and making their permanent homes on the agricultural lands of the State. As I said in the earlier stages of my remarks, we have a magnificent territory of 90 millions of acres, only 14 millions of which are alienated or in process of alienation. With that great balance why cannot we on this side of the House and those gentlemen on the other side, work for one common desire, that is the advancement of every one in the community, for the advancement of Western Australia generally. Now, I want to refer to one little remark that fell from the hon. member for Murchison when he was speaking the other evening, and I rather regret his absence this afternoon. In the course of his speech the hon. member made a retort to an interjection of mine that owing to the way in which I had recently been received by my electors the chances were that after this Parliament was over I would have very little prob-

ability of ever seeing the seat again. I do hope that during this Parliament there will be a Redistribution of Seats Bill brought in by the Government and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see Murchison and York combined.

Mr. Taylor : That would be the end of you.

Mr. MONGER : I venture to say there would be no John B. Holman within the precincts of the Chamber after that election.

Mr. Heitmann : I wish the hon. member would repeat those remarks he made about me in my presence a few minutes ago.

Mr. MONGER : The hon. member has asked me to repeat what I have already said about him. Nothing will give me greater pleasure. I referred to the fact and I congratulated the hon. member upon having been one of those who according to newspaper reports and according to the position he held upon a certain mine, that he had done more towards causing distress and inconvenience among 500 happy homes than any other man in Western Australia. I refer to the Nallan strike, and I compliment the hon. member and I hope he will be able to go home and rest his weary head and say, "I am perfectly innocent; I did my best to prevent these poor unfortunate 500 families so much distress."

Mr. Heitmann : You are a coward to make such a statement.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Mr. Heitmann : I withdraw.

Mr. MONGER : I thank hon. members for having listened to my few remarks, and I do hope we will be able to carry on the business of Parliament as a happy family and easily finish before Christmas.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue) : It was not my intention to speak at this stage on the Address-in-Reply, but I desire to take this opportunity of giving the hon. member who has just sat down some information in regard to the Nallan strike and also in regard to the part the firewood company have played. The hon. member said that I was responsible in some degree for the throwing out of work of some

400 or 500 men, and I said it was cowardly to make such a remark, because I certainly think that an hon. member of this Chamber, instead of making a bald statement in reference to the actions of another hon. member, should at least try to get at the truth. It is known to everyone who has investigated this matter, to anyone who has made inquiries at all, that I played the part in that matter not to get the men to strike, but to get them to remain at work, and I was the only one on the Murchison who could have got the men to arbitrate and who did get them to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Mt. Margaret is not in order in holding up a newspaper in the way he is doing.

Mr. HEITMANN: Why the hon. member should accuse me of being responsible for throwing four or five hundred men out of work, I cannot understand. The hon. member must be dreaming. He must be indebted to his imagination for his facts, and I strongly resent such a statement coming from a member of this House, unless he had substantial reasons for it. I say again he is a coward to make such a statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw that statement; it is not parliamentary.

Mr. HEITMANN: I withdraw; but after—

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not repeat it.

Mr. HEITMANN: I withdraw the statement, and I would say that after trying for a number of weeks to bring about an amicable settlement of this dispute, it is grossly unfair to be accused in the way I have been accused to-day. Touching on this Nallan wood strike, I would like to get to the start of it. About twelve months ago the Government called for tenders from contractors prepared to supply the mines at Day Dawn and Cue with firewood. That was after the Government had been asked by myself time after time to build a railway to supply the mines there with firewood. It was a gentleman of the name of Baxter who was the successful tenderer. I wish to point out to those champions of private enterprise on the Government benches the actions of this individual, and I

would ask: Is this Mr. Baxter a desirable man to have in the State? Mr. Baxter got a contract from the Government, and without doing one hand's turn sold the concession for £400 or £500. Now I would like to know who is paying that £500. The men who are out on strike trying to get a living wage are asked to pay the £500 to these champions of private enterprise. Here was a man who had the concession selling it without doing a hand's turn, without doing anything for it, for £500.

Mr. Monger: Do you know that positively, or is it just an affirmative statement?

Mr. HEITMANN: I would say that he sold his concession.

Mr. Monger: I suppose it cost him something.

Mr. HEITMANN: I do not know whether it cost him anything, though it costs a lot to get information. At any rate he sold his concession, and I am led to believe that the present Company spent something like £1,000. That is all they did. The rails and sleepers were provided by the Government, and the result has been, as I predicted here 18 months ago, they followed the same lines that were followed by the wood contractors on the Eastern Goldfields, namely, their only idea of making the thing pay is to sweat the workers, and I am inclined to think that in sweating the workers they are going to be supported by the very people who should protect the men.

The Treasurer: Do you uphold the award?

Mr. HEITMANN: Supposing I do; there is an award, but still I cannot force these Italians who have been employed by the company to work. My advice to them was to clear up their wood and clear out and leave it. At the same time the men who were fighting the company for weeks for an increase of 5d. a day—

The Treasurer: Where does the sweating come in?

Mr. HEITMANN: One of the witnesses brought by the company before the arbitrator worked for three months on the line and went away with £3.

The Treasurer: But where is the sweating on the terms of the award?

Mr. HEITMANN : The fact that they have been out for 14 or 15 weeks shows that there is sweating somewhere. The only idea of this company, and of other companies in Western Australia, in making profits is to make them out of the worker. This wood cutting is about the worst occupation any man can take up in the State, especially during the summer months. But the men wanted to make a fair thing and it was proved before the arbitrator that they could not make a fair wage from the conditions under which they were working. I believe an application has been made to the Government on the part of the wood company for exemption from the payment of rent. I believe they are paying 10 per cent. on the cost of rails, sleepers, etcetera, but I think it is the duty of the Government not to back up the capitalistic company or the party who are undoubtedly sweating their workers, but rather to bring about a settlement and, if anything, to lean to the side of the worker. It is bad enough for these men who have been employed at a sweating wage, as proved by the evidence, to be out for 14 weeks fighting the company, but when we find the Government ready to assist the company, where can these men turn to get assistance ? It is amusing to hear the company's view of the position and to hear the sympathy expressed for the few British workmen on this line, because the Italians have kept them out. It is enough to make one smile. As a matter of fact, I was on the line before the strike started, and I was out there a week after the strike was on, and out of 150 men employed on the line I think there were 25 Britishers. Now the company express sincere sympathy for the British workmen, because the Italians are keeping them out. I say here, that the company deserve all they get if the Italians never go to work, or if they pull up the line. They used the Italians in the first place in the same manner as the mining companies in the State are using them, as a lever on the British worker. No one can tell me that the Italians are better than the British workers. As a rule the British workers are better whether at skilled or unskilled work, but on the

Great Fingal mine to-day there is a big percentage of foreigners. Why is it ? Anyone knows they are not better men than the Britishers. These foreigners are simply used on the timber line and on the mines of Western Australia because the companies can get them to work under conditions which the British workers will not work. As far as I am concerned, I would like to see a settlement of this wood dispute brought about; but at the same time if the men are not prepared to accept the award, I am prepared to stick up for them every time whether they be British or Italians.

The Treasurer : Then you are supporting the strike ?

Mr. HEITMANN : I asked that this line be built by the Government, but that was no good to certain individuals. It was no good to the class that sits on the Ministerial benches to-day. There was nothing to be made out of the Government building the line. There was nothing for the friends of the private enterprise crowd. They could make nothing out of it. But I venture to say that if the line had been built by the Government there would have been no strike to-day, the men would have been getting an equivalent for their labour, and the 500 thrown out of work on the Great Fingal would be working now. It has taught me a lesson that as long as I am in this Chamber I am going to object strongly to private enterprise of this description. There they are using the people's funds, and in order to make a certain amount of capital out of it they use the woodcutters, the producers. The company stand on velvet. From what I can gather they have laid out about £1,000, and I am told that in one month, the month prior to the strike, they had a return of something like £350 on this capital expenditure of £1,000. I would like to ask who is earning this money. The men out in the bush. And they not only have to earn these dividends, but the £500 paid to the owner of the concession in the first place. Yet they are expected to make a fair thing. It is well known that the men in the bush around Cue cannot make it at 5s. a ton. A great deal of sympathy has been ex-

pressed for the company, and I believe it was the intention of the Government to grant them exemption. But I would like to say that when the evidence was heard before the arbitrator, it was proved that the company, or at least the manager of the company was a daylight robber. Evidence was given to prove that one man was carting a certain number of loads a day and that these loads contained a certain weight. He swore that he carted 30cwt., and the manager of the company paid a woodcutter at the rate of 4s. 10d. a load of 30cwt. Before the arbitrator the representative of the company tried to prove that he was being robbed wholesale by the sub-contractors who were the cause of the trouble. The only evidence we had in reference to this matter was that the company had robbed one man, inasmuch as he got 4s. 10d. where he should have been paid 7s. 6d. I have not the slightest sympathy with the company. They started out on their venture, and the only method they had of working was to get the work done under a fair rate. I still hope a settlement will be brought about, but as long as the workers are prepared to stay out and fight the company I am prepared to fight with the men. Getting away from that question I wish to touch on a few matters, mostly on mining. For the last three or four months we have heard of the great assistance that has been given to the mining industry and especially to the small men. It is laughable to hear our Minister for Mines telling us what he has done for the industry. I find that as far as Cue is concerned if there was anything he could do to retard the progress of the town he did it. I recently introduced a deputation to the Minister asking that a public battery be erected in Cue. It is well known that there is no town on the goldfields of Western Australia that has lived on its own resources to the same extent as Cue. Very little outside capital has been put into the mines there, but still it is a very solid little place. The Minister, after spending an hour or two with the owner of a battery in Cue, came down with the same individual and did not even have the decency to ask him to retire when the

prospector's had their interview. I will say here that the Minister was almost insulting to those men. In the first place he doubted if they were prospectors, and altogether he seemed to meet the deputation fully primed with information from the gentleman who was opposed to the erection of a public battery there. Naturally there are certain people opposed to public batteries being put up, because they own batteries themselves and want to get the crushing; they want to live for some time to come, as they have lived in the past, on crushing for the public. The public believe that a Government battery would be the means of practically making the place, still we are told by the Minister for Mines that there are crushing facilities there and that he is not prepared to give more. At that time the Minister for Mines promised a deputation faithfully—by the way on that occasion he promised almost everything asked for if the request was made by my opponent at that time, Mr. Chesson—to try and bring about a system of rebate on ore crushed at privately owned batteries, but from that day up to the present time we have never heard one word about it. Another case at the same time occurred. A representative of a syndicate known as the Empty Syndicate of Cue waited on the Minister and asked for some assistance to enable them to do certain work; the Minister promised to go into the matter on his return to Perth, but up to a fortnight ago not a word had been heard from that individual by the syndicate. That is another instance which shows what an interest the Minister takes in the mining industry in Western Australia. We find certain gentlemen able to get anything from the Minister. A party by the name of Wilson and Moxon were able to get assistance before they had even taken up a lease: they bought certain machinery with Government money and took it to Yalgoo, and some of it is there now. I believe, in the railway yards. This party did not have a lease, they had a prospecting area only. What is the conclusion one comes to, it is simply this, that certain back-door methods are adopted by the Minister for Mines which are not

creditable to himself and which are not in the best interests of the mining industry of this State. I have seen case after case where the Minister has been influenced by *ex parte* statements; I have seen where wardens decisions have been reversed without any reason being given by this great Minister for Mines, Mr. Gregory.

The Treasurer: Who are Wilson and Moxon?

Mr. HEITMANN: I would not be sure of the names, but I think those are the names.

Mr. Bath: He comes from Mulline, a great supporter.

Mr. HEITMANN: I do not know if that indicates anything, but it is a disgrace to the Mines Department; it is characteristic of the dealings of that department. The man who has a genuine claim for consideration by the department is generally starved out in waiting for a reply; a "bounder" comes along who has influence with members of the Government and he gets what he likes.

Mr. Bath: The Mines Department declare that the whole thing was a great mistake, this loan to Moxon and Wilson at Yalgoo, after they "fell in the soup."

The Treasurer: They must be "bounders."

Mr. HEITMANN: They must be "bounders" to get that. I know genuine prospectors who have been absolutely robbed of property which has been given to "wild cat" promoters. Case after case of this description can be brought forward, yet we hear so much about the encouragement which is given to the mining industry in Western Australia. Take for instance the Wheal Ellen matter which was most unsatisfactory; then there were the Legacy Leases, and the Star of Aberdare is another case. All these prove to me that when the interests of the poor man clashes with the interests of the individual who has liberty to get in the back ways of the Mines Department, the poor man has not a possible chance with the department.

The Treasurer: There is no back way.

Mr. HEITMANN: What about the Legacy Leases. In that case the warden listened to the evidence for two days,

he took the evidence and gave the leases to the genuine prospector. The warden decided he would not forfeit the leases when an application was made by a man called Thompson. The warden recommended that a fine should be placed on the working man. Thompson was not satisfied with and at first he got to the Press, and then he trotted to the back door of the Mines Department. The Minister did not even refer the case back to the warden as he should have done if fresh evidence could be brought to bear, he did not even do that, he reversed the decision of the warden and gave the lease to the "wild cat" promoter, for the man was well known as a "wild cat" promoter in this State; he will take up lease after lease and get rid of them to somebody else so as to make money out of them. I do not object to him doing that, for it is looked upon as legitimate game in Western Australia. And in Melbourne anything short of robbery is looked on as legitimate. In a case there the gentleman got a fair raking over by the Judge. The Wheal Ellen is another case which shows that pressure can be brought to bear on the Minister. I am perfectly satisfied that the poor man cannot get a fair deal in the Mines Department from my experience. I would like to go once more into the question of the administration of the Mines Regulation Act. Time after time I have brought this under the notice of the public, and the Government during the whole time have sat callously by regarding the lives of miners as of no consideration. I accuse members sitting on the Government side with the same thing. It seems to me that a man's life is not to be considered in any way at all. Members on the Government side listen to one man on their side, while ten or eleven members on the Opposition side speak, and no notice is taken of what they say. The Mines Regulation Act in some respects is good, but the administration of it one cannot call anything but rotten. It may not be known to the members of the Government or the members sitting on the Government side of the House that Western Australia has the unenviable record of a higher percentage of deaths in mining disasters than any other State in Australia.

lia, and from recent reports we find the Murchison caps the whole of Australia in fatal accidents. During the last three or four months five or six deaths have occurred in mines on the Murchison where there are only 2,000 or 3,000 people employed, and no notice is taken. We find in the St. George mine at Magnet—a dangerous mine to work in I admit—one man was killed there one day, and a week or two after another man was killed, then on the following Sunday there was a fall of earth of four or five tons injuring men. In a fortnight two or three men were killed in one mine, two men were killed underground. Is this going to be altered or are we to continue to give the lives of the miners, adding them to the cost of the production of gold? It will be much better to close the mines altogether than add the lives of miners to the cost of the production of the gold. It is absolutely impossible to bring these matters before the Government, for it is well known that the general conditions of mining is bad in this State. Men working in the deep mines have not a possible chance of living out their ordained lives. In some of the deep mines in Western Australia it is only a matter of ten or twelve years, in fact a man is very fortunate, and he must be a very strong man, if he can stand working in these deep mines for ten or twelve years. In such mines as the Fingal and the big mines of Kalgoorlie year after year the fatal accidents are piling up, and to-day we have the record for Australia of fatal accidents on the Murchison. I believe there is a percentage of 60 deaths per year for every 10,000 miners employed on the Murchison. This is a matter which is deserving the consideration of members of the House. We find in Western Australia at the present time that there are hundreds of men who after working a few years in the mines find that they are unable to continue their occupation. What does it mean? Would it not be more desirable to have a better inspection of mines, to keep the men in a fair state of health? We see the suffering miner and the worn-out miner—it must be terrible suffering, for he is often mentally as well as physically suffering. One often sees cases where a

man has to sit idly by and watch his wife and children almost starving; that is bad enough, but he has physical suffering at the same time. A few weeks ago we heard of a sensational accident down at the show grounds at Claremont, and at that time there seemed to go through the people of Western Australia a great feeling of horror and of sympathy for the unfortunate man and for those who were left behind. I only wish that the accidents that happen in the mines could be witnessed by the same crowd of people and we should see what kind of feelings exist in the hearts and minds of the population. The people would not rest until members of the House did something to remedy the existing state of affairs, for it is too bad. The conditions of the mines are bad enough even with the best supervision. On the Murchison we have the administration of the Mines Act becoming an absolute farce. I am sorry the Premier is not in his place in the House, because I am going to demand from the Government that the gentleman who has filled the position of inspector of mines on the Murchison should be removed. At the present time so indignant are the miners throughout the Murchison that they are signing a petition, from one end of the Murchison to the other, asking that he be removed. This gentleman is well known. I have challenged the Government time after time to disprove the charges which I have brought against him. If I could not prove them or if I did not prove them the Government should have called upon me to apologise for what I said. There was the case in which the member for North Fremantle made certain charges against the Commissioner of Railways and he failed to prove them; an apology was demanded from that gentleman. I have made worse charges than that member made; I have charged the inspector of mines with things ten times worse than the member for North Fremantle charged against the Commissioner of Railways.

Mr. Bolton: But they withdrew the request.

Mr. HEITMANN: They asked for an apology; why do they not do the same in my case, for my charges are ten times

worse than those brought forward by the hon. member.

Mr. Taylor: Wait till the Minister comes back.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am satisfied that the Minister will be absolutely on one side. Had he witnessed one individual murdering another he would have been excused because it was on the right side. If members will only read the evidence in the cases they will see that I am right. We find that this inspector for mines was not only prepared to allow the mines to become in a dangerous condition—

Mr. Monger: I have heard that for the last five years.

Mr. HEITMANN: If members will only read the evidence they will find that I charged the inspector with not only allowing the mines to become dangerous, but in the case of men who are injured he is prepared to go further, and even go to the deathbed of an injured man to protect the companies against the anticipated legal actions. Now this is a gentleman who is supposed to administer an Act brought in solely for the workers themselves, and what do we find? During the evidence given at an inquest into the death of one called Smith, at Earles a few months ago, we find the inspector acting in a manner that would have led a stranger to believe he was appearing as counsel for the company, instead of protecting the interests of the men. He acts as counsel for the company on every possible occasion. Can the Government allow this to continue? The hon. member who is now fighting his election knows only too well that this inspector, Mr. Lander, was removed from Kalgoorlie because he did not administer the Act as he should have done.

Mr. Monger: He did not administer it to your liking.

Mr. HEITMANN: I was not there. The fact remains he was petitioned out of the district by the miners; and if it be necessary he will be petitioned out of this district. I say he has no regard whatever for the lives and health of the miners. He is with the mining companies every time.

Mr. Monger: That is an unfair statement.

Mr. HEITMANN: Is it unfair against the man who on the evidence brought by myself went to a dying man in a hospital and wrote down a false statement in order to protect the company? You say it is unfair? Can anything urged against an individual of this description be unfair? Yet the Minister for Mines knows full well that this gentleman is not what he should be, and every member of that Government knows that I proved the charges I brought against him.

Mr. Monger: You did not; you absolutely failed.

Mr. HEITMANN: Did I fail? I have tried to get that threshed out in this House on several occasions, and it has been blocked time after time. I am prepared to bring it up again and if any hon. member will tell me that I failed to prove my charges it will be a revelation to me. Every miner on the Murchison is convinced that the charges I made were proved. This man is looked upon with hatred and contempt right throughout the whole district.

Mr. Monger: But the Court gave it against you.

Mr. HEITMANN: The Court gave it against me, it is true.

Mr. Monger: And that was Warden Troy.

Mr. Bolton: Nonsense.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member should keep to what he knows something about. As a matter of fact, now that you have mentioned Warden Troy I will say it only shows the rottenness of the Mines Department that they appoint Warden Troy to conduct the inquiry and owing to certain communications from Cue remove him again. What can have been the object? Warden Troy was appointed Royal Commissioner to hear these charges. Suddenly telegrams which have never been allowed to appear on the file were sent from Cue to the Minister for Mines in Perth. I found out who sent these telegrams and what his object was. What could be the object in removing Warden Troy and sending somebody else? Only to protect one of the officers of the department. It is well-known throughout the whole district. I am not using my personal spleen against

this man but I am going to follow him until he is removed. I believe he is not honest in any way. I have proved it, yet Ministers sit idly by and allow the lives of the miners to be thrown away on many occasions simply because they will not remove this individual from office.

Mr. Monger: That is another of those unfair remarks.

Mr. HEITMANN: The hon. member got up in this House this afternoon and accused me of things he knows absolutely nothing about, just as when he spoke of Warden Troy as having sat as a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the charges I made against Mr. Lander. It is well-known that I worked for weeks trying to bring about a settlement of that strike to which the hon. member referred. He speaks of something he knows absolutely nothing about. Is this going to continue for ever? Are the lives of miners not to be considered? Are we to go on seeing these men working under conditions that are really bad, that will not give the men a fair chance? It seems to me that the Government are not aware of what should be the first function of any Government—that is to provide decent living conditions and a certain amount of happiness for population. On the other hand we find them directly fighting against these things inasmuch as they support the maladministration of an Act in the way I have stated. The Treasurer may look calmly upon these things. He does not understand them nor does he try to. He knows this individual was removed from Kalgoorlie for misbehaviour.

The Treasurer: I know Mr. Lander to be a good and honest man. I know him personally as a good man.

Mr. HEITMANN: If the Minister will go to any part of the Murchison and get an impartial opinion, whether from miners or from business people, he will hear this man discussed with the greatest contempt from one end of the Murchison to the other. I asked this Government during the last session of last Parliament to inquire into the circumstances surrounding the death of Smith at Earles. We had in that case evidence that the mine was unsafe. We had evidence of

this inspector travelling along there and hurrying on the inquest, getting up from his seat and instructing the acting coroner as to what to do, and refusing the brother of the deceased an adjournment of the inquest. Why? Because on his own explanation he had more important business to attend to. He did not want to be kept there all night, he said, and at two o'clock in the morning he had them sitting on this inquest in order that he might get away elsewhere. Have the Government made any inquiry? All through the Murchison the case was regarded as a scandal.

Mr. Monger: And you never reported it.

Mr. HEITMANN: I wrote to the Mines Department right away and in this House I asked the Government to hold an inquiry. Somebody should have been placed in the dock for manslaughter. Here was a place absolutely unsafe and known to be unsafe. Two men had left the work only that morning because it was unsafe.

Mr. Monger: What was the coroner doing if he allowed all this?

Mr. HEITMANN: It would seem a remarkable fact that this should take place with the coroner there, but he was a justice of the peace and he did not know the procedure. In the first place he should have allowed the adjournment asked for by the brother of the deceased, who wanted to be represented by counsel; but after being in consultation with the inspector of mines he said he could not grant an adjournment.

Mr. Monger: Do you charge the coroner with incompetency?

Mr. HEITMANN: I am not particular what he may be charged with. The man I want to get at is the Government servant paid with Government money for duties which he does not carry out.

Mr. Foulkes: Did any solicitor appear on behalf of the relatives?

Mr. HEITMANN: No; the brother of the deceased asked for an adjournment, stating that he wanted to be represented by counsel. The inspector of mines rose from his place at the table and consulted with the coroner, after which the coroner refused to grant the adjournment. The

inspector stated in a whisper, which however, was overheard, that he had more important business to perform.

Mr. Foulkes: Was the inquiry finished in one day?

Mr. HEITMANN: It finished that night, and we had the disgraceful spectacle of the jury sitting out in the bush around a fire at two o'clock in the morning to consider their verdict.

Mr. Monger: Were there not two sittings.

Mr. HEITMANN: I could not say now, but it ended at two o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Foulkes: Were not the jurymen miners.

Mr. HEITMANN: The foreman of the jury was a miner. He drew up a verdict to the effect that the man met his death by accident. He wanted to stop at that but he no sooner wrote it out than the inspector of mines jumped up and said, "No blame attachable to anybody." The foreman said there was blame, but he could not just then say to whom it should attach. They then got the other three to agree to it that the blame could not be fixed. The deceased had been working in an open cut that any man could see was dangerous. Two men left the work the very morning of the accident simply because they were asked to work in this particular place, and they would not do it. Yet we find the inspector of mines telling falsehoods against the weight of evidence. He said there were four props holding up this ground; yet strangely enough no other witness could be found to support this. Now I want to know how long this is to go on. Have the Government made any inquiry into this accident? Do they consider the life of a miner not worth inquiring into? Five or six fatal accidents have occurred during the last three or four months and it is becoming so bad that not only are these unfortunate men killed, but their relatives have to fight in every case for the compensation which the framers of the Compensation Act held to be their right and due. I trust that the Bill to be brought forward by the hon. member for Dundas (Mr. Hudson) will mend this state of affairs by doing away with the

defence that can be brought forward by an employer. During the last 12 months this section was struck out of the English Act and that, too, in a very conservative country. I hope this Bill when it is brought forward will receive the support of this House in order to give the widows of the miners a chance to get compensation which everyone will admit is due to them. I want to say that notwithstanding these charges made time after time in this House the lives of the miners are being sacrificed and we find Ministers, especially this ultra democratic Mr. Gregory, telling us that he looks after the interests of the miners and that his administration is all that is pure. In my opinion this hon. member, and the Ministers who assist him by leaving the whole of the Mines Department to him, are responsible to a certain extent and they should be made to answer for many of the accidents in the mines of Western Australia. The fact that we have a higher percentage of mining accidents than obtains anywhere else in the Commonwealth should be sufficient to make even the Minister for Works want an inquiry. As a matter of fact there is no part of Australia where mines can be worked more safely than in Western Australia. As a matter of fact there is no part of Australia where men suffer more in their work than in this State. Hard ground lends itself to safe conditions if the ordinary precautions are taken. Even in Victoria where the grade of ore is low the percentage of fatal accidents is below that of Western Australia.

The Minister for Works: Have you any of the figures?

Mr. HEITMANN: The figures appeared in the *Bulletin* about five weeks ago. There were public statistics of all the Australian States and New Zealand and I was surprised to find that the Murchison had a death percentage of between 60 and 70 per 10,000 miners employed. This is very serious and something should be done for the men. What are the Ministry going to do? One would think that considering the large distances in Western Australia the cost of inspection would be very high, but

the statistics show that there is a less percentage to the cost of administration of the Mines Department for inspection in this State than in any part of Australia or New Zealand. This indicates that the inspection is not getting the attention it should do. It is all very well for the Minister to say he will give a sop here or there or build a battery, but what is he going to do for the miners themselves? The prospectors generally speaking have been treated much better than the actual wages men in the mines. It will surprise members to know that in Day Dawn, where there is a trades union of 400 members, each of whom pays a shilling a week, the transactions for 12 months left the union in an actual state of bankruptcy owing to the large number of accidents that had occurred at the Fingal mine. The unionists had to get up a bazaar in order to build up their funds, for they found it impossible to carry on with the shilling a week subscription, owing to the heavy drain on the funds through accidents. This state of affairs exists not only on the Murchison but also at Kalgoorlie. Every week we hear of accidents of a serious character. The results show that the fatal accidents number almost one per week, while the tally of serious accidents runs to two or three a week. Last year there were something like 46 fatal accidents in Western Australia. No more need be said to indicate the seriousness of the position. Yet year in and year out the Minister, who declares he is a democrat, and a Government, who say they are friends of the people, allow this state of things to continue. Are they going to allow it to go on for ever? I will continue to bring the claims of the miners—I was going to say unfortunate miners and really they are unfortunate when they have to go down two or three thousand feet to keep body and soul together—so long as I am a member of this House.

The Treasurer: Surely the position is not worse here than in Queensland, Victoria or New South Wales.

Mr. HEITMANN: In the mines of the same depth as those of Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland the posi-

tion is very much worse. Mining here is on a much larger scale. There is more dust and where in Victoria one ton of dynamite is used, 10 tons are used here. I worked at the 3,500 feet level in a Victorian mine and the conditions there were no worse than in the Fingal mine at the 1,800 feet level.

The Treasurer: Is that because fewer men are employed?

Mr. HEITMANN: Not altogether that, although men will naturally inhale less fumes in a mine worked by a small number of men than in a big mine. In the Fingal mine four or five levels are working together and when the bottom level fires the men on the top level necessarily get the smoke. In some parts of the Fingal—and this mine is no worse than many at Kalgoorlie—weeks have passed without the various levels being rid of the smoke at all. In some cases, in fact miners work in places where smoke never leaves them. In rises and “dead” winzes the smoke never gets away. There is no ventilation or proper draught and from the time a man goes to work until he knocks off he is in a mist of smoke. Naturally enough in a very short time this condition of affairs has a serious effect upon the miners. I know of three Italians at Day Dawn who worked very hard in order to make sufficient money to get back to Italy. They did not realise the danger they were running and stuck to their work very closely. After labouring for two years they started for home. One man died before he left the State and the other two, a father and son, never lived to reach Italy. They were killed in a little over two years through working under such conditions. Members will be able to ascertain these facts for themselves if they go through the mines. They should not inspect the mines like the inspector does, after warning has been given and everything has been fixed up properly. When speaking on this point last session the Minister interjected that I had been given an opportunity to go through the Fingal mine and knew the nature of the conditions under which the men were working. I certainly went through the mine but I

had to make an appointment before I received permission to do so.

The Treasurer: The fact that you were forced to make an appointment would not get rid of the smoke.

Mr. HEITMANN: No, but action was taken to vary the ordinary state of affairs. When I went through I found the conditions comparatively good for there was practically no smoke. I was rather surprised to find that the men were not working in most of the places. They were idle but I was told afterwards that at four o'clock on that morning they were told there would be no more firing done until I had gone through the mine.

The Minister for Works: The last time I was at Day Dawn I asked the manager of the mine about this question, and he told me that the last time the inspector turned up it was without notice and he had no idea that the officer was coming.

Mr. HEITMANN: The inspector should take steps to remedy the condition of affairs. He is perfectly justified in doing so. If he finds that the conditions are such that working should not be allowed to continue he should stop the working of the mine and insist on proper ventilating methods being adopted.

The Treasurer: You would want a ventilating plant like in a coal mine.

Mr. HEITMANN: When complaining of this absence of ventilation I have been told I was asking for what was impossible. The position I take is this, that if owing to his occupation the life of a man is shortened by one day then that industry is a bad one. To give conditions anything like those in connection with surface workings would, I know, close up many of the mines. The same question arose in Victoria. They failed to ventilate the mines there and then the question was taken up in the Victorian House of Assembly. It was shown that to give ventilation would mean practically to shut up Bendigo.

The Treasurer: And what did they do?

Mr. HEITMANN: They worked on under practically the same conditions as

before. Men have worked there ever since and will continue to do so. And it is a fact that in some of the mines here men have worked where the natural heat of the rock was nearly 90 degrees. In Bendigo they had a miners sustentation fund, but they could nothing like cope with the demands made upon it. The result of working in such bad conditions is that miners die at a comparatively early age. I am bringing this question forcibly under the notice of the Ministry now in order to try and convince them that it is necessary for steps to be taken to improve this condition of affairs while the mining industry is comparatively in the early stages of its history. It can be carried out at this stage more easily than when the industry is older. The conditions here, unfortunately, are worse even than they are in the Eastern States as is shown by the statistics I just now quoted. The cost of inspection in Victoria is nearly 12 per cent. of the total cost of administration of the Mines Department, while in Western Australia the cost twelve months ago was only 2½ per cent. of the total amount. One would have thought that with such a large area as we have here the inspection percentage would have been far greater than in the other States.

The Minister for Works: The mines development votes in the other States might be smaller than they are here.

Mr. HEITMANN: It is a difficult matter to get at the absolutely correct figures in taking a percentage of this kind, but I have got results as nearly as possible to correctness. In some of the other States the percentages are 12, 14 and 15. Certainly some of the mines development votes might be comparatively small, but in Victoria there is a large developmental vote. I am convinced we are not spending the money we should in the inspection of mines. The figures with regard to those inspection percentages were drawn up by one of the clerks in the Mines Department. He informed me of the matter. I then wrote to the department and obtained the results I have stated. These figures were not allowed to go on the

Table of the House. They were drawn up by one of the clerks in the State Mining Engineer's office and had I not obtained the information probably the figures would not have seen the light of day. They appear on one of the files of the department. Considering the state of affairs one can well be excused for rising on every possible occasion to endeavour to have something done for the miners. Many people say I am only agitating and asking for something that is impossible. If one does not ask one never receives anything, but I want the Ministers to consider the question, to inquire into the case at Errols, I have specifically referred to, and to come to a definite decision as to what is best to be done. The cases in question prove conclusively that the general conduct of the inspector is such that it is not safe to leave him in the position he holds. I noticed in the paper recently that applications were being called for the position of mines inspector. I hope this is an indication of the intention of the Ministry to dispense with that individual's services. Personally, I would approve of the State paying £1,000 a year to retire him from his position. That will show members that I am fully aware this man is not a safe individual to be allowed to remain in his office.

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

Mr. HEITMANN : Before leaving the subject upon which I was speaking before the tea adjournment I would like to refer to one phase of the question which was brought before my notice by an interjection from the Treasurer. He would make it appear from his statement that I was charging this gentleman session after session merely from personal motives. The Treasurer stated he knew this inspector personally, and knew him to be an honourable man. Now if that be so, is it natural that he has come to the conclusion that I am saying that which is not correct and that consequently I am a dishonourable man, or have been misled? I would like to draw the attention of the Treasurer to the fact that this matter has been before the public for 18 months, and it is only

natural, even if I am dishonourable in the action I am taking, to suppose that the electors of Cue would not have suffered statements such as those made by me to have passed without some protest. I think the Treasurer will admit that if I have been led astray the whole of the electors would not have been led astray. This matter was brought up at my election recently, and I think the fact that my majority increased from about 34 in 1905 to over 800 this year, should prove to the Treasurer and to the Government that my action, whatever it might have been during the past 18 months, was concurred in by a great majority of the electors. That should be sufficient to show that I am not attacking this inspector from motives of personal spleen, but rather that I desire to do justice to a body of men who, in my opinion, are not being treated as they should be. In speaking of the elections, I would like to say a few words in connection with the elections generally. I would first take the opportunity of congratulating the gentleman who has charge of the Electoral Department. From my experience of the Cue electorate, and judging from the returns given by the chief officer himself, the results have been very satisfactory. As far as the results of the Cue election were concerned and the conduct of that election, and the appointments made by the chief of the department, I can only say nothing was left to be desired. I would thank also the Minister for Works and the Colonial Secretary for the assistance they gave me during that election. I am afraid that had it not been for some of the Ministers visiting Cue, and I believe I had them all there at one time with the exception of the Treasurer and Attorney General, that my majority would not have been as large as it was. In viewing the elections right through, we find the Government were very active in travelling through the electorates. They should have credit for that, and I think this side of the House would do the same even as they are doing now at Menzies. I am afraid though that Ministers were prepared to give information that was not true, or at least they were

prepared to hide what was true. I refer to the Colonial Secretary who was in my electorate, and who I have to thank a good deal for the assistance he gave me. One of the questions, a burning question at Cue, as it was throughout the State, was the education question. A direct question was put to the Colonial Secretary as to whether it was true that the Government had brought down regulations providing that scholars over a certain age should have to pay for instruction, and to this Mr. Connolly replied in the negative. It is well known that that is not true, and as I stated, Ministers were even prepared to go to many electorates to state what was not true.

The Treasurer: That is wrong.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was a matter of controversy in the Cue newspapers, and it was never replied to.

The Treasurer: Are you stating the facts as they happened? Was the Colonial Secretary not asked whether those regulations were in force now?

Mr. HEITMANN: No.

The Treasurer: Well, What was he asked?

Mr. HEITMANN: He was asked whether it was true that the Government brought in regulations for payment of school fees by pupils over a certain age, and he said, "No." I would like to refer to a statement made by the Minister for Works, a statement which gave the Labour party a good lift. I was surprised to hear from a Minister of the Crown a statement in Day Dawn, when he was speaking on the education regulations, in which he tried to lead the people to believe that the cry of the Labour party against these regulations was all moonshine. He sought support on the statement that the majority of the people could not keep their children at school after they had passed the age of thirteen years. This is a statement from the Minister of the Crown who gave us a lecture here only last night on socialism. It seems to me that Ministers have no appreciation at all of the proper functions of Government. I think it should be the object of the Ministers to try to make it possible to keep children at school after they have passed the age

of 13 years. Again, on the subject of the education question, I remember reading when the matter was brought up at Collie that the blame for introducing those regulations to Parliament was placed on the shoulders, not of the Treasurer, but on one of the officers. I would like to know who was responsible for those regulations.

The Treasurer: Did I not take the responsibility?

Mr. HEITMANN: You did, as you should; but it is not for a Minister to leave it open for the people to believe that it might have been the chief of the Education Department, who is, I believe, Andrews, the chief inspector.

The Treasurer: Mr. Andrews.

Mr. HEITMANN: Yes, Mr. Andrews, I beg your pardon. I think he was responsible, and I can congratulate that gentleman for a splendid effort he made in a controversy in the newspapers on the subject of secondary education. I am inclined to think he was not responsible for the retrograde movement such as was introduced here by the Treasurer. He pointed out clearly that secondary education should be undertaken by the Government, and he pointed out also that the secondary schools we have here now have no higher standard than the public school in James Street. I think the Treasurer with the rest of us should feel proud that we have a public school with a standard such as that. If Mr. Andrews was responsible for this innovation, this new regulation, I think the Government should consider whether they should dispense with his services, or at all events not re-engage him when his term of office has expired. I believe this gentleman has not many months now to run; he was engaged for five years, and if he is prepared to move in the direction that the Treasurer moved in the session before last, he is not a person fit to take charge of the Education Department. After the elections although we had the Premier here telling us by some manipulation of figures that he had a glorious victory, the fact remains that the Labour party have come back with a good many more members than they had before. It is

not difficult to see the reason, and especially the Attorney General should be able to see the writing on the wall. I feel sure the Attorney General cannot feel too pleased with the reception he received at the hands of the electors of Kalgoorlie. Here we had a very strong individual, a man who had held public positions in Kalgoorlie and had the advantage of being in office, opposed by a complete stranger to politics, and by him was pushed very closely. I feel sure the Attorney General before the next election will look for a different seat or will leave politics alone altogether. After the elections too we had the Premier at Bunbury speaking of the results, and referring to Collie he told the public of Western Australia that he had never seen such an exhibition of ingratitude as that displayed by the people of Collie in turning out the former member. I do not know what he meant by that, but I could only come to the conclusion that Mr. Ewing had been so very liberal or the Government had been so very liberal in connection with the use of Collie coal that they thought it was impossible for him to lose the seat. They thought by giving the people of Collie everything that they wanted in the shape of orders for coal that they would secure the seat, but it is pleasing to find in this case that the only qualifications of a man who desires to retain his seat in Parliament is not that he should get a few roads and bridges for his constituency. I notice the *Kalgoorlie Miner* in commenting on the Collie election, stated that there was consolation in the fact that the country might now be rid of an incubus in the shape of having to use Collie coal. I do not know whether this is true or not. This is a Government paper. We find too the idea prevailing in the metropolitan areas that all a man has to do is to spend a bit of money and get a few sops for his electors and he should be entitled to the seat. We found at the announcement of the poll at Bakkatta the old member who was defeated deploring the fact and saying, "I did all I could for the district; in fact I spent the whole of the £600 I

received in salary in one way or another among the electors." It is pleasing that the people have got ahead of that sort of thing, and that things are not now as they were in the past when the chief qualification for a member of Parliament was to spend plenty of money and get plenty of sops for his district. In another part of the State after the elections we had our old friend Mr. Gregory making comparisons between my opponent and myself. Why this individual should go out of his way at a civic function—I believe it was a banquet of some description given in his honour—to have anything to say about me I do not know, but I do know that my opponent at Cue stated in a semi-public way that he would rather lose £1,000 a year than lose Mr. Gregory as Minister for Mines. I can quite understand how some people at all events are deploring the defeat of this individual. It simply means this: it is a well-known fact that certain men in this State have not to go about it in a public way if they want any favours. It is the old style of the dark room and the back stairs that has kept Mr. Gregory in office and that is now defeating him. I have no doubt that Mr. Gregory was sorry that Mr. Chesson was defeated, but why he should make comparisons at that time I do not know. The old cry in Cue was, as in other places, "Look at what so-and-so has done. See what a public benefactor he is, while Heitmann has done nothing." The fact is that one cannot do anything while certain people can go to the Mines Department, go in by the back door and get all they want. No wonder they deplore this gentleman's defeat at Menzies. I would like to refer to another election, that is the Roebourne election. It was better than a victory for the Labour party to see our old friend, the deserter from this crowd, defeated; and although the Government have the benefit of the services of the gentleman that defeated him, still Mr. Wilson represented the Government at that election, and it is satisfactory and pleasurable to note that even in the Roebourne district there is some political principle existing, and that they will not have a

traitor, from whatever side of the House he may come. There are many reasons, I suppose, to account for the defeat of some of the Government candidates. During the elections many references were made to the sweating tactics of the party in power, and no doubt this fact to some extent was responsible for the defeat of Government candidates. Although the Treasurer denied in some part of his electorate that there was sweating going on in the Railway Department, later on he was forced to admit that he made a mistake and that there were certain men working for a certain wage.

The Treasurer: I said there was only one man employed at 6s. 6d., that was my only information, but directly I got the correct information I corrected myself on every occasion afterwards and explained that the reference was only to the Midland Junction workshops men. There was no sweating then and there is no sweating even now.

Mr. HEITMANN: It is to the Treasurer's credit if he made the correction, but the Treasurer's idea of sweating is different from the idea of the average individual. I know of a case in the Railway Department where a married man worked for 5s. a day. If that is not sweating I do not know what is.

The Treasurer: What was he working at?

Mr. HEITMANN: Cleaning.

The Treasurer: There is no man working in the Railway Department for that wage.

Mr. HEITMANN: I said he had been working.

The Treasurer: When?

Mr. HEITMANN: Not so long ago; it was last year; but irrespective of whether a man was working for 5s. or not, I think that when men are working in the State service for 6s. 6d. and even 7s. a day it is clear enough proof of sweating.

The Treasurer: Have you seen the railway report?

Mr. HEITMANN: Yes, I have seen it; and very shortly I hope it will be moved in this House that no man shall work in the railway service at under 8s. a day.

Mr. Bath: No adults shall.

Mr. HEITMANN: It is very easy for the member for York to smile at the idea of sweating. I can assure the hon. member that in my opinion the present Government are nothing but a gang of sweaters from start to finish. I will tell of one instance of sweating going on now.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in making that accusation against Ministers. To say a "gang of sweaters" is unparliamentary.

Mr. HEITMANN: A body of sweaters will that do? At all events if it is unparliamentary I withdraw the remark. At the same time I know there are men working for the State at under a fair wage. The Agricultural Department are employing men on the rabbit-proof fence at under the wage ruling in the district.

Mr. Monger: Are those men worth any more? Are they not glad to get the wage?

Mr. HEITMANN: I suppose that if the hon. member were working up there he would be worth about 1s. a day. If these men could not do the work they would not be employed. I wrote to the department about the matter, and they replied that at Nannine, 70 miles away, the money paid was 10s. a day so that they thought it a fair thing that 70 miles out the rate shall be 11s. As a matter of fact the rate at Nannine was 12s. This was either a mistake on the part of the department, or they were not aware of the facts. I was shown a letter by an officer on the fence. It appears that at the time when the blacks were a bit troublesome in the North-West an inspector wrote down to the department and asked that, instead of one man riding the fence as boundary rider, men should travel in couples for protection against the blacks. The chief of the department—I believe it was Mr. Crawford—wrote back and agreed with the suggestion and said, "See if it is not possible to obtain the services of some able-bodied young fellow at about £2 a week, and in the meantime I will look about for some cheaper form of labour." If

that is not sweating I do not know what is.

Mr. Monger: That is hearsay.

Mr. HEITMANN: I have seen the letter from the chief of the department. Is that hearsay? It is about as much hearsay as the charges made this afternoon by the hon. member against the member for Murchison and myself. However, I am convinced that there is sweating going on in the departments, and I think the last place where we should ask men to work at under a fair wage is in the Government service. The people are not asking for it. If a vote were taken to-morrow the electors would say, "Pay the men a living wage." The Government deplore that the population is not increasing as it should, but they are not paying men sufficient money to increase the population. Men cannot take upon themselves the responsibilities we expect of them simply because many of them in the public service are being sweated and forced to work at a rate under a living wage. A case was mentioned the other night by the member for Pilbara in connection with the Lands Department. I would like to mention a case on all fours with that, and I have come to the conclusion there is something wrong in the Lands Department. There was application for a pastoral lease about 12 miles from Day Dawn. It was made by a Mr. Burgess, but his application was refused because it was under the minimum area allowed under pastoral lease. The matter rested at that for a time, and then an application was made by a Mr. Clarkson for the same area, but he applied for 20,000 acres. After some time, although his was the only application in, Mr. Clarkson was informed that the land was withdrawn from selection and that it would be thrown open at a later date. The excuse of the department was that Mr. Burgess had called at the office and had been informed that they could not entertain his application because it was under the minimum area. It only shows that in a case like this if the department want to fake anything or to show favour to any individual they can merely say that he has been misled by

the department and that in justice to him the case should go before the Land Board. I want to know the qualifications necessary to obtain this land; how the Land Board decide it.

The Treasurer: They take evidence.

Mr. HEITMANN: There is no evidence to be taken when there is only one application in. When the department suddenly withdraw land from selection even after the application is lodged, it seems to me there is something funny with the Lands Department. Another member has a similar case to mention. It is time the mistakes of the department ceased, because it leaves it open to certain influence being brought to bear. I am not going to say whether influence has been brought to bear in this case.

The Treasurer: Have you inquired?

Mr. HEITMANN: Yes. The officers say that Mr. Burgess was misled, and that was why he had not put in an application. He has been the holder of land for many years, and I am inclined to think he knows the Land Regulations very well. So it seems to me very strange, and I believe it is something that should be inquired into by the head of the department. Now I would like to refer to a matter that was brought under the notice of the Premier some time ago in Cne. Like his colleague, Mr. Gregory, the Premier was then prepared to promise anything asked for. For years past we have had a railway service on the Northern line anything but satisfactory in the shape of comforts for the travelling public, and we asked the Premier to provide better accommodation in the direction of refreshment rooms along the track. He promised to inquire into the matter, but up to the present we have heard nothing of it. To all intents it seems to have died. Along that railway in one journey the people travel for 27 hours and have only one meal. We asked for accommodation, but I know a good reason why it was refused. It was because vested interests were again at work at a certain portion of the line. They desired to drive the custom and money into Geraldton; and instead of placing the refreshment room where it would be convenient for the public and

serve their necessary wants, they were prepared to force the people to go into Geraldton losing time and spending money where it is unnecessary. In conclusion I make the same remark as I made in my speech in the old Parliament, and that is in connection with the election going on. We have now an election going on between a member of our party and a Minister. It is unnecessary to trace the history of the previous election. That has been traced very effectively from this side of the House more than once during the debate, but it seems to me a remarkable fact, and one that will take a good deal of support from Mr. Gregory, that he was prepared to use his own supporters to defeat his opponent. His own supporters voted illegally and he was prepared to expose them to get back into his old position. I trust that when the numbers go up the mining industry will be for ever rid of an individual who has, times out of number, been proved the greatest enemy legitimate mining has had in Western Australia.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. N. Keenan): It has been said in some quarters that the Address-in-Reply might very well be abolished. I do not hold with those who voice that opinion because in my humble estimation the supreme duty of Parliament is not to turn its attention to legislation but to afford every opportunity for the redress of grievances. Now the Address-in-Reply affords a special occasion when the most humble member in the Assembly exercises and enjoys the same rights and privileges as the most exalted in our midst. I do not, in common with others, feel any objection to any member availing himself of an occasion such as this to voice the requirements of his own constituency. It does not seem to me we are justified in expecting that members should forget that they sit for and represent particular parts of this State. All that we are justified in asking is that when the occasion arises they will put on one side parochial feelings and parochial jealousies and join in working for the common good of the State even if it may mean to some extent a sacrifice of local interests. Let me turn

to the speeches delivered in the debate, and in doing so allowance must be made for the special circumstances under which they have taken place. If that allowance be made it may be we shall find good excuses for the extravagant language some members have indulged in. We all know that an election is pending in one part of the State and it may be that members may think statements that they make in the House may be of use to their particular party and therefore allow ample room to their imagination, and allow their passions to run riot, which otherwise they might attempt to control. Discounting therefore the eloquence we have listened to and under which to some extent we have suffered, I for my part, feel no justification for joining in the debate except that there has been some criticism directed at myself and in regard to a department over which I have control—the Electoral Department. As far as I can gather from having perused some of the reports of those who have spoken in the debate, and as far as I know from having been personally in the House, the only charge made is this, that to some extent a certain section of the Electoral Act was faultily drafted, and again that the learned Judge who presided over the Court of Disputed Returns was wrong in the decision he pronounced in regard to the interpretation of that section. One contention must fall to the ground, because if the learned Judge is right then it follows that the section was wrongly drafted; but if the contention of the learned Judge was wrong then what was there in the section to object to? Therefore I do not propose to deal with these two propositions *seriatim*, as the one is destructive of the other. Let me leave them to destroy themselves. As far as I may express an opinion on the matter I can only say that it is my duty to bow to the decision of the Court, and in doing so it is my duty to investigate the matter which has given rise to the decision and see how far it can be remedied in order that it may more correctly represent the views of the House. Before doing so I would like to be allowed to indulge in a short review of the facts that led to the inclusion of the particular sec-

tion in the Electoral Act. Members will bear in mind that appeals were lodged against the return of Mr. Eddy for Coolgardie, Mr. Carson for Geraldton, and Mr. Holmes for East Fremantle. I propose to take the case of Mr. Carson because around that case are the fewest possible facts that are in controversy. Mr. Carson was returned for Geraldton by a substantial majority. A petition was lodged against his return by Mr. T. L. Brown his unsuccessful opponent. That petition alleged that certain persons had voted in that election who were not entitled to vote, and it appears that the greater number—almost all of them—lived in a place called White Peak. Mr. Carson went to the electoral registrar and inquired of that officer whether White Peak was in the Geraldton electorate. It had been looked on as being in the Geraldton electorate since the redistribution of seats in 1904, and Mr. Carson received as a result of his inquiry written information that White Peak was in the electorate and that the persons residing there were entitled to vote, and in consequence of that information he disputed the petition. On the hearing of that petition it was proved that that particular place was just two chains outside the Geraldton electorate and for that reason the petition was successful. Before passing on to any consideration of these facts let me deal with how it was proved that White Peak was two chains outside the Geraldton electorate. The petitioner in that case sought for and obtained the services of a public officer to prove that fact and the only public officer available in that place was a surveyor of the Lands Department, and he had the services of that officer, and in the ordinary course when the petition was heard and the decision was arrived at the costs of the services of that public officer were debited to the unsuccessful party. In regard to the Menzies election Mr. Gregory availed himself also of the only officer in that part of the State to define the limits of the electorate and he also was a public officer, and the fee of that officer was certainly debited to the unsuccessful party. While in one case we have heard nothing but praise and satisfaction at the result, in the other we have

heard nothing but the most extravagant form of criticism. Let us have one common rule. If we are to look at things in a certain light let it be on both sides of the House. I regard with satisfaction the fact that although Mr. Carson sat on this (Government) side of the House and although he was a supporter of the Government, than whom there was no better, nevertheless when he was unseated and when an application was made, I think to a large extent properly made, for some consideration to be shown to him in the matter of costs, as he had been unseated through a blunder of the department, I refused to entertain his application. Yet members opposite would have the country believe that we do not hold out the same measure of treatment to those who sit on this (Government) side of the House, or the same measure of treatment to those in the country who sympathise with this side of the House as we do to our opponents. We have only one rule and that rule we can say in every instance is a just and common one. And now I would return to the facts in connection with Mr. Carson's case. He was put out of his seat by a declaration that certain persons resided outside the electorate who were always looked upon as residents in the electorate since the Redistribution of Seats Act was passed. Had White Peak been within the electorate there would have been no case against the member. Mr. Carson was obliged to fight his case because in those days although the Electoral Act was in force there were no rules under it, and any person brought into Court as a respondent had no possibility of doing anything except fighting to an issue. There was no rule under which he could say, "I am satisfied whether on my part or on the part of the Electoral Department or anybody else, there has taken place such facts as make the petition a certainty of success, and therefore I no longer wish to oppose it and withdraw." There was no means of doing so until the rules were published under this Act. I find the most extraordinary criticism directed to the rules under the Act of 1907, and I propose to read to the House one of the rules under that Act which was referred to by

the member for Kanowna. It is the rule under which the respondent gives notice that he does not intend to oppose the petition and it is worded in the following terms:—

“The respondent may, at any time, give notice that he does not intend to oppose or further oppose the petition by serving notice thereof, in writing, signed by the respondent or his solicitor, on the Master at the Central Office and on the petitioner or his solicitor. On such notice being served, the Court or a Judge may make an order in the terms of the prayer of the petition on the ex parte application of the petitioner. The respondent shall not be liable for any costs incurred subsequent to such notice unless the Court or a Judge shall otherwise order.”

It is that part that was put in in special terms to enable a respondent, who was an innocent party, who unfortunately owing to the blunder of the department or anybody else, when brought into Court, to escape from the burden of costs to say, “I withdraw my petition,” and in filing the withdrawal he was liable to no costs.

Mr. Angwin: Why did you not insert a provision in the Act making the officer responsible for costs?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: As far as the department being responsible that means the Government of the day being responsible and the Government of the day have it within their power, whether it is within the Act or not, to foot the bill.

Mr. Walker: Will you do it in Buza-cott's case?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Did we do it in Carson's case, that is the first question. The whole of the hon. member's sympathies turn to his own side of the House. It only remains for the member to learn the first elements of justice when it pinches his own pocket. I know in this House I have heard no word of sympathy uttered for Mr. Carson. It might have alleviated the suffering or pain which he must have felt let alone the monetary loss he was put to; but members now use their super-

lative energies to seek sympathy in regard to the Menzies case.

Mr. Johnson: Did we not assist you to remove difficulties.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When members on this side of the House realised that it might well be thought that the successful candidate had placed on his shoulders a burden he should not be called on to bear, with the concurrence of my colleagues I brought in a measure that was intended to relieve him from that position. I announced to the House our intention in that regard. Now supposing for a moment that our effort had not achieved that result, and supposing the clause had been faultily drafted—and in doing so I am supposing that all the accusations improperly hurled at the learned Judge are not in any sense justified and that the whole blame rests on the shoulders of the Parliamentary draftsman and myself; what does it amount to? Does it justify hon. members opposite in hurling charges against my personal honour by saying that I have been a party to misleading the House? Does it in any sense justify a charge of that character? And yet that is what we have heard. There has been no fair and honest criticism as there might have been of, for instance, my capacity; criticism such as every man who stands in my position must be subjected to. But there has been to the greatest possible extent insinuations against my personal honour.

Mr. Walker: Where?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In this Chamber. One hon. member declared that I had purposely misled him and that my honour was involved. It is in *Hansard* to-day; does that mean nothing? I say it is wholly wrong for members to take up that attitude. Acting not on any suggestion from hon. members opposite but at the wish of my colleagues, and with the concurrence of members on this side of the House, I at that time attempted so to frame the clauses as to secure within reasonable limits the position of those returned as members of this House. If as it seems we have failed to reach the position we tried to reach the only thing remaining

for us to do is what so many Parliaments before us have had to do, and that is to address ourselves again to the object we had in view, and by remedying mistakes of the past to obtain more satisfactory results in the future. I wish in connection with electoral matters only to refer to the request the Leader of the Opposition addressed to me in the form of a question as to whether I was prepared to institute proceedings against those who voted without being entitled to vote at the recent election. Let me inform that hon. member and with him other hon. members that before such a prosecution is justified one must be prepared to establish guilty intent. It is not sufficient because some people have voted who are not entitled to vote that we should institute these proceedings. They may have voted because they thought they were fairly and properly entitled to vote. We have already had the illustration of the people who voted in the Geraldton electorate; then again we have the more recent illustration of the electors who voted in the Menzies electorate, who were on the Menzies roll and until a line was laid down by a surveyor, were considered to be properly on the roll.

Mr. Bath: I had not those in my mind when I asked you that question.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Well, we have the Leader of the Opposition himself who lived for 12 months in Subiaco and then voted in Kalgoorlie; he found himself on the Kalgoorlie roll.

Mr. Bath: That is not correct, I lived for half that time in the Kalgoorlie electorate and resided there for six weeks before the election.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I willingly accept the explanation, but the hon. member has twice before explained the matter by an explanation somewhat different. As I understood him, he had a house in Subiaco, he was not on the Subiaco roll but was on the Kalgoorlie roll, that being the only roll in the whole State which he was on, and I have always accepted that statement, and the further statement that the hon. member voted innocently and with no design of taking any improper advantage but merely because that was the only roll he was

on. And the open charity I extended in accepting the hon. member's explanation on that occasion he should extend to others. Of this I am satisfied, that these people who voted improperly had no guilty intent, no desire to defraud, and I am not going to be a party to unduly harassing them or unduly prosecuting them.

Mr. Bolton: There have been cases where electors have been 18 months out of the electorate.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Each individual case will be inquired into. They will differ materially on their merits, and while in some cases it will be harsh, almost unjust, to do anything in the nature of a prosecution, there will perhaps be other cases where a prosecution will be amply justified. I have no doubt that if any other member in the House accepted my duties he could discharge them with better effect than can I, but while I am in the position I am going to attempt to carry out the duties as well as I can; if I fail it will not be my fault. I have nothing further to say in regard to the criticism on the Electoral Department except this: in many details one can criticise any department, and in details it may be criticism will be found to be justified, as, for instance, in the delimitation of the boundaries of electorates. But when you bear in mind that in many cases in the country electorates the boundary is a mere line on the map; and when you further bear in mind the large and many difficulties we have to face and the small and petty resources we have to face them with, then you will agree that although the department does fall short of reaching the height of perfection, it discharges the duties placed on it with credit to its officers. I have had a knowledge of the rolls of this State for some years, and I venture to say that although hon. members may be able to point to some rolls that possibly in the light of after experience might have been improved upon, still the fact that at the last election we produced a roll which comprised more than 90 per cent. of the electors of the State is something the department can point to with satisfaction as an initial effort

in the administration of the new Act. I may say in conclusion dealing with electoral matters, never can we hope to reach any final measure of success until our efforts are supplemented by the public at large. We must forever depend upon the public coming forward and assisting us, and if members instead of only criticising the Electoral Department were to turn their attention to promoting among the people a desire to assist the department in the discharge of the duties incumbent upon it, I feel sure they would have much less to criticise, and much more to congratulate themselves upon in the future.

Mr. Bolton : I never criticised the Electoral Department; everybody has accorded praise to the chief of that department.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am glad the hon. member has something to praise. At the time of the general election I was informed that he praised the Government; I do not know whether he has repented of that.

Mr. Bolton : It was the Premier, not the Government.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Well, after all the Premier is some part of the Government.

Mr. Bolton : A very small part with three Premiers.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: To some people a joke never becomes stale. Some men are conservative in their jokes. The hon. member will shift in the course of time, and when he shifts let us hope it will be in the right direction. However, I have no desire to address myself to these observations. I only rose to reply shortly to the matters dealt with and not that I thought the debate really demanded that I should utter a contribution to it; because I recognise that many members speak not to the House but to the hustings beyond the House, and I have no intention of assisting them in this by using my place in the House as a position from which I can address the electors of Menzies. The hon. members opposite will acquit me of any desire of doing so to-night.

Mr. Taylor : It is too late now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Before resuming my seat I would like to address myself to the general aspect of affairs. We are in our arduous days, we are faced with many difficulties which we must overcome if we are to achieve any progress in our national life. And we must also recognise that since the advent of Federation there has been taken away from us many of the larger issues that once were ours. We have no longer to deal with great national issues which it was once our privilege and duty, and also to some extent our pleasure to deal with. Now we are to a certain extent confined to keeping our own house in order, and there is nothing like the room there was for any party differences. I have no doubt that not merely on these benches but on those opposite there are many well-wishers of the State. And if it were within my capacity to make an appeal which would be successful, it would be that for the time being, at any rate whilst we are in this stress of weather, a combined effort should be made to achieve success, that some large measure of party opinion should be submerged and that we should work together for the common good. It may be to some that an achievement of that sort would not be anything like so satisfactory as a party triumph, but that is not the case with the majority. Criticism must be offered and accepted in regard to every act of administration. Those who sit as our critics are not prepared in a large measure to support us in our administration, but if they recognise that we are carrying on that administration to the best of our abilities and our knowledge they should be prepared to work with us in the furtherance of the common interests of the State.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) : I desire to make a few remarks on the Address-in-Reply. The Attorney General, who has just resumed his seat, pointed out the advantage members have in laying before the House what they at least believe to be grievances. I was indeed pleased to listen to the remarks of the Attorney General, who also controls

the Electoral Department. I recognise that in the control of that department the work is not so easily or smoothly done as many people may think. As he pointed out, there is a difficulty inasmuch as the people themselves do not assist the department in their endeavour to administer the Act as it should be done. The Attorney General said in reply to an interjection from the Leader of the Opposition, with reference to punishing those who have wrongfully voted in the Menzies electorate, that he was not anxious to rush into prosecutions unless he could establish guilty intent and that the acts were done knowingly. I have some facts which I will lay before him, but I do not want him to say that to-night I am addressing the electors of Menzies. It is idle for that argument to be used, as it is impossible for any remarks made here to-night to in any way influence the election on Friday because the papers could not reach Menzies until midday or one o'clock on Friday. It is an old saying that a man should vote early and some add "often." That being so a number of votes will be cast before the report of any remarks made in this House to-night could be read.

The Treasurer: There is the telegraph.

Mr. TAYLOR: I wish some of my remarks to-night could be heard by intending voters at Menzies. I believe I will be able to establish beyond doubt before I resume my seat that there are electors in that district who intend to vote wrongly. I am sure I should be able to establish guilty intent in their cases. For the sake of argument take the case of one person whom I know well. I have known him for ten years and he has been living all that time at Mount Malcolm. When I first knew him that district was in the Mount Margaret electorate. I want to say this that the gentleman I speak of is, in my opinion, one of the most respectable men to be found in any portion of the State, but he is a man whose political prejudices, I believe, blind his better judgment. I know that that elector is a very warm supporter of Mr. Gregory. Not necessarily a supporter of the Government but I believe

his support on this occasion is purely a personal one. This opinion I have gained from conversations I have had with him during the past eight or nine years. He is a builder and contractor residing in Mt. Malcolm and lives there with his wife and family. He occasionally leaves that town when he gets contracts at Menzies and other towns in the district and may be away from his home for six weeks or two months, rarely longer. He returns home repeatedly at week-ends, travelling thirty or forty miles either on his bicycle or by train. As Mt. Malcolm is situated it is quite convenient for him to return there every Saturday night after knocking off work. His name can be found now on the rolls both of Leonora and Menzies, unless it has been removed from the former since yesterday. With regard to the Menzies roll his name was printed on the copy which was issued on the 4th of this month. This roll is the one on which the election will be decided. He has been on the Leonora roll for ten years. He went to Menzies to do some contract work before the last election and was there, I am sure, not more than five or six weeks. Promptly his name was put on the Menzies roll. He has not been there since he completed the job and his home has always been at Mt. Malcolm. I believe he is going to record his vote at the coming election. I was in Mt. Malcolm the other day and then found out all about the case. If a man who will do such a thing as that is not guilty of intent I do not know who would be. Will anyone say that men like that should be allowed to go unpunished? Does the Attorney General think he is justified in allowing such a man to record his vote without being punished? In view of the decision given by the Chief Justice in the Court of Disputed Returns recently, in which he objected to the scrutiny of postal votes, all those at the forthcoming election who desire to vote by post can do so with impunity for they know that the secrecy of the ballot will be held sacred and that the paper cannot be scrutinised. When the Bill was before the House the idea was conveyed to me, and I believe to the majority of members, that the object of

numbering the postal votes was to enable a scrutiny to follow if anything went wrong. How on earth can a mistake be traced otherwise? The paper has to be numbered in three places; the ballot paper is numbered, the counterfoil is numbered, and so is the butt which is returned to the postal vote officer. The elector has to sign in both places and he leaves his signature on the countrefoil, which is a declaration according to the Act. When the returning officer receives that declaration he is satisfied that the elector has voted, and if he sees the name of the man on the roll he does not have any further difficulty. By virtue of the counterfoil he must accept the vote, for the voter has declared he is eligible, has not voted anywhere else, and has not been out of the district during the period which would enable him to vote. I can cite another glaring instance where the Act is being infringed and where people are anxious to vote in the Menzies electorate who have hitherto not had votes there. I am sorry to say that the Government have not provided for their case. There are two or three sections of the community for whom the Act does not provide; commercial travellers form one. In their case the Act is by no means suitable. It is in this way. Their homes may be in Perth, but they only remain there for say a week and then travel for two or three months. They then return home again for a short period and out to the back country again, and so it goes on for the whole year. The districts through which they travel regularly are the ones they know, and it is the people there whom they know best; but they are not eligible to vote there. There are however six of these commercial travellers who have got their name on the roll at Menzies. As a matter of fact they only remain in that town for one night. The train gets in there after midday, the commercial travellers stay at Menzies for the night and then go on next day further up the line. Menzies is practically the only town in the electorate at which they stop. They certainly pass through Woolgar, where there is one hotel, and there are one or

two places outlying 30 or 40 miles to which they go now and again by coach or by bicycle, but in other electorates through which a railway goes, and through which they travel, there are several large towns and it would be much more equitable if their names appeared on the roll for one of such rather than for Menzies. These travellers should not be able to get their names on any roll except where their head centres are, such as Kalgoorlie and the surrounding districts or Perth and the metropolitan area. The men have had their names placed on the Menzies roll on account of the excitement existing in that district and because they desire to vote against the Labour party and ostensibly because, knowing Mr. Gregory personally, they want to vote for him. They know their vote in that district in opposition to labour is of some value and they also know it would be of no value in the Leonora or the Mount Margaret districts because there the anti-labour vote is so weak that half dozen commercial travellers voting against the labour nominee could not alter the election. In a place like Menzies, however, where the contests have been so keen for the last four years, and it is only by postal votes that Mr. Gregory has been returned during the last three campaigns, the anti-labour votes are valuable. They would be valuable if there were one or two of them, but in this case there are six men who have had their names put on the roll and yet who cannot possibly reside in that district owing to their calling, more than one night every now and then. It may be that those men would be in Menzies one night in three or four weeks, but that is all.

Mr. Hopkins : They are *bona fide* travellers then.

Mr. TAYLOR : They would meet the provisions of the Licensing Act but are rather hopeless as fulfilling the provisions of the Electoral Act. I have no desire to prevent these people from voting and I believe it is necessary that the Act should be amended to enable these men to select some place as the one in which they should be able to fulfil the proper residential qualifications. Pro-

vision should also be made in the Act for even a larger section of people than the commercial travellers. The section which I now refer to is wholly neglected indeed; I mean the shearers. In the North-West and the Kimberleys there are a large number of men who have to travel from station to station and district to district in the course of their occupation and at present have little or no chance of being able to qualify under the Act so as to get their names on the roll.

Mr. Angwin: Seamen also.

Mr. TAYLOR: Of course that is perfectly right. There is necessity for some provision being made by which they should be able to record their votes also.

Member: Is there a Western Australian Marine?

Mr. TAYLOR: There are a lot of "dead marines" between Davylhurst and Mt. Ida. I do think that the two sections of the community referred to should be debarred from having a vote under the Act.

Mr. Foulkes: Commercial travellers can vote at Menzies.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. gentleman is very willing to give his opinion at times, even without the fee of 6s. 8d.. I have often tried to get a legal opinion from him when I thought it would be of value, but the hon. gentleman was very Scotch on those occasions. I want to ask the Attorney General what attitude the department will take up in connection with these votes if they are recorded. To use the very words of these gentlemen when they were going up in the train recently, they declared that they would "bung them all in and give them to Harry." They said too that they had been well advised. The Attorney General wants nothing more than that to show the guilty intent and since the ruling that has been given, how are we going to find out about it when there will be no scrutiny and when the secrecy of the ballot must be maintained. As far as I am personally concerned I think I am perfectly safe in saying that either the learned Judge who tried this case of Menzies in the Court of Disputed Returns was wrong, or the Attorney General of this State was wrong. They cannot both be

right, because there is no doubt that the Attorney General left in the minds of members of this House the belief that these postal votes could be scrutinised, and also he conveyed the belief that he would prevent a recurrence of what happened on previous occasions in the cases of East Fremantle, Geraldton and Coolgardie.

The Attorney General: The hon. member is wrong in saying that I intimated that ballot papers were to be opened for scrutiny. I think if he looks up the records he will find that he is mistaken; that I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member spoke of the necessity for numbering them in order to trace them. Why should they be numbered then, and why not allow them to go in as ordinary votes if the numbers are not required for the purpose of a scrutiny subsequently?

The Attorney General: The hon. member is mistaken. It is quite legitimate to make provision to show that John Smith voted, but not to discover the way in which he voted.

Mr. TAYLOR: I notice that the hon. gentleman was anxious to put in a penal section to punish John Smith if he voted wrongly. There are penal sections in the Act and there are tracks by which you can trace a culprit and having traced him and having this provision for tracing him I also want the provision to punish him. If these ballot papers were not numbered for the purpose stated, what was the object in numbering them? I do say that unless the Attorney General passes a law to prevent electors from voting illegally and irregularly, the existing Act will be flouted from one end of the State to the other. When you find a man apparently burgling your house you do not let him go. You seize him and punish him so as to protect the public for at least 12 or 18 months or perhaps seven years. That acts as a deterrent. When people know they can vote as they choose, whether rightly or wrongly, and that nothing will follow even though there are penal sections in the Act, they will continue to hoodwink those in authority. I am with the Attorney General when he says that the person who votes wrongly

though innocently should not be punished. It would be highly improper and immoral to punish the people who voted at Mt. Ida. They voted wrongly, but they did so ignorantly. That was the fourth election in connection with which these particular men recorded their votes at the same polling booth in the Menzies electorate, and that being so it would be a criminal offence to punish them. They voted because they felt sure they were living in the Menzies electorate. There was no other place for them to vote in. The imaginary line should not have prevented them from voting there. They were at Mt. Ida a distance of 75 miles or so from Menzies, and there is nobody living beyond them unless you go hundreds and hundreds of miles and there are no people living between them and the Leonora electorate, unless you make a bee line for Gwalia, and then you run across the wood line where I believe the Colonial Secretary distinguished himself a few days ago among the wood choppers. That gentleman said there that if he had had a little smattering of the Austrian language and had been proficient in Italian, with his natural brogue he would have pulled through. The Mt. Ida people do all their business at Menzies and I believe the nearest telegraph office is at Menzies, and it was wrong to try and place them in the Leonora electorate. That is the fault of the imaginary line which divided the electorate in 1904. As far as the manner in which the Mt. Ida votes were recorded that is known full well. There were some of these men actually on Mr. Gregory's committee and we know that they voted against Mr. Buzacott. It is necessary that the Electoral Act should be amended and that the best legal brains should be used to assist the Parliamentary Draftsman in preventing a recurrence of these matters. I am speaking especially with regard to these voters at Mt. Ida. I know the country; I have passed through it. I know that imaginary line and I know those people have no association with any other people outside the Menzies people. They voted for three years previously in Menzies and I want to tell the Attorney General that after the last election, which was a pretty

close one for the Minister, the Minister stated that he had something up his sleeve. I have now found out what that something was. I have discussed the question with the Minister and the Attorney General knows full well I have been a consistent opponent of the Minister for Mines for the last seven years. I have fought him in this House and out of it. I have fought him with clean weapons, and I am sorry I am not fighting him to-morrow night in Menzies. I want to say that a lot of these abuses are not unknown to this gentleman. The Attorney General can believe that or not as he pleases. What I would like to know is whether he is going to keep his electoral eye on those men and the manner in which a number of them are going to vote. In dealing with this electoral campaign I know so much about what has happened—having travelled through that district—that one feels that perhaps this is not the place where one should speak on these matters. But while these grievances exist we know what would happen there during a campaign could happen anywhere else. And that being so it is necessary to let the House know as much as I do about this particular affair. When we find politics being dragged down into the dirt, when we find men appealing to every trait in the character of the human being to secure a vote, and appealing to a man's nationality to get a vote, it is high time that someone should raise his voice in protest. As a sample of what has been going on in the Menzies electorate, I shall read a letter from a gentleman in Perth, and the letter itself will speak volumes. It says:—

"Dear Friend,—I am taking this opportunity to appeal to you on my own and on my friends' behalf *re* the Menzies election. The petition which just been heard in the Supreme Court here has brought irregularities to light on the part of Mr. Gregory's opponent which took place at that election, and consequently the election has been upset. As there will be a new election, I take this step and appeal to you in the name of all foreigners in Western Australia not only voting, but also using all your influence on Mr. Gregory's be-

half. He has always been a good friend, not only to all German brethren, but to all foreigners. I can assure you that I know of several cases where Mr. Gregory has paid out of his own pocket persons' fares who wished to go to the fields to work, and had not the money to get there. I also remind you of an incident which gave him a great name, not only in the Commonwealth, but all over the world. That was the Bonnievale disaster, where a miner was entombed. Mr. Gregory saw that a life was in great danger (the man was a foreigner) and acted with great promptitude, sending a special train with divers on board to Bonnievale to rescue the man. Yours faithfully, E. Krug."

Mr. Hopkins: We had that read the other night.

Mr. TAYLOR: I was not here, and I have not read the speech of the member for Murchison, but it is such a good thing that it would be as well if all the people in Western Australia read and re-read it, to show what the Government and their supporters will do to maintain a majority in this House. When they appeal to the foreign instincts and national characteristics of people to obtain votes it is a bit below the belt. Perhaps the member for Beverley could tell me who Mr. Krug is, because I do not know the gentleman, unless it be a gentleman living in William Street, Perth, from where the letter was sent. If it be that gentleman, I do not suppose the member for Beverley would be acquainted with him, and I do not think that gentleman would have any interest in Mr. Gregory's return unless it were purely philanthropic. I do not know whether there would be any necessity for the Minister to retain his position to make Mr. Krug feel more satisfied in the conduct of his business. I do not suppose anything like that could happen, but Mr. Krug is much concerned about the return of Mr. Gregory. The gentleman to whom this letter was written, being a countryman of Mr. Krug's and having lived in the Menzies electorate for so many years, and knowing Mr. Gregory's good qualities and having failed to recognise any of those traits in his

character that Mr. Krug spoke so eloquently of, wrote back to Mr. Krug and asked him to give special instances of Mr. Gregory's kindness. Mr. Krug replied:—

"In reply to your letter of the 6th instant requesting instances of assistance given to foreigners by Mr. Gregory, it is impossible at such short notice to give many particulars as required, and even if it were possible, in the majority of cases the persons who had received kindnesses from Mr. Gregory would not like their private business made public. To my knowledge he has assisted a large number of persons to get to the places where they could obtain employment. When on one of my trips to Kalgoorlie I met Heinrich Fedler there. While talking to him he told me he had been out of work in Perth and one day had gone to the Mines Department, and Mr. Gregory had given him his fare to Kalgoorlie and references so that he could obtain employment. He has equipped individuals and parties for prospecting, and has helped them to get established in mining. A few instances that occur to me at random are those of Mr. Rene Bertranse, a Frenchman of Waverley, assisted in prospecting; Mr. C. F. Mathea, Mikado, miner, Burtville, money advanced for development; Mr. Battaglia of Yundamindera, assisted in prospecting and crushing advances; and further do not forget the Bonnievale affair where Mr. Gregory spared no expense, and sent a special train and divers to rescue Varischetti."

Waverley used to be known as Siberia.

The Attorney General: I received a letter from Senator Lynch the other day introducing a Frenchman to me.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know two of the gentlemen whose names are mentioned in that letter, and though Mr. Mathea may be a countryman of Mr. Krug's, his treatment from the Mines Department for the last four or five years does not justify those remarks of Mr. Krug's, unless this kindness has come about within the last few months. It must have come to him recently, because I have had to speak in this House defending Mr. Mathea against the bad treatment he was receiving from

the Mines Department, and I moved for papers to be laid on the table in connection with the transactions between Mr. Mathea and the Mines Department, so I know what is contained in this letter is wholly untrue. I know that Mr. Mathea would not walk a yard unless to do all he could to keep Mr. Gregory out of Parliament. However, as I have said, I do not know whether the gentleman required or received any assistance during the last few months since the last Parliament sat. As to Mr. Battaglia, he sold out of his show. I know the full strength of it. He and some of his countrymen had a show, and they sold out to Haus Irvine. It is in the battery regulations that if stone is taken from below a certain depth a rebate is allowed on each ton crushed. These men had raised the stone before they sold out, but they did not crush until after they sold, and the Minister did not give them the full rebate, but he gave them half the rebate. At any rate I do not think they put the stone through the battery. I have had difficulty with the Minister is trying to get the legitimate conditions for men in this State, not alone in my own electorate but in other districts. They have not received an act of kindness like this. Rebates for men who sold out for thousands, but in the case of men who are struggling, with the storekeepers chasing them with their accounts, who are faced with bad times, with heavy water in their shafts, and with a scarcity of fuel and crushing-facilities at the worst, they cannot get the assistance that men with money can. This gentleman referred to is an Italian, and as fine a man as is in the State of any nationality; he is a personal friend of the Minister's I daresay; in fact he is the kind of man that no one could meet without being friendly with him; he has all these qualities, and that faculty that enables him to place his case before anybody in such a manner that one will listen to it and be carried away with it; but I know cases in that district that are more deserving of receiving this rebate. I know two of the gentlemen mentioned in this letter. I do not know the others, but if Mr. Krug knew as much as I do

I do not think he would have written the letter. Of course I do not think he has any interest in the matter except that of pure benevolence. I hope the Attorney General will make some effort at least to see that the Electoral Act is not going to be used as it has been in the past. As I have indicated people have put their names on the roll, though not entitled to be there, with the object of voting for Mr. Gregory. One of them was Mr. Judge. I am surprised to see a man with so high a character as he has allowing his political prejudices to carry him away so as to do such a thing. His name is on two rolls. He is justly entitled to have his name on one, but he has no right to have his name on the other. The section under which a name can be transferred after a certain period of absence from one electorate does not apply to a man like Mr. Judge, because he knew he would be back in Malcolm, he had nothing to detain him in Menzies except completing a building, and he knew he was going back to Malcolm where his home and wife and business are. Therefore the section was not intended for him. If the Attorney General were living in Kalgoorlie and had his name on the Kalgoorlie roll, and if he came to Perth to take a case in the Supreme Court and the High Court sat immediately afterwards, detaining him in Perth for five or six weeks, would he dream of putting his name on the Perth roll while he left his wife and family in Kalgoorlie; would he avail himself of the section in the Act under these conditions? But they are the conditions availed of to secure votes for the Minister for Mines. It is shocking, and if the Minister wins on votes like this he will have a hard time to struggle through. It will be only the beginning of the end: he will not live long as the member for Menzies if he has to live under these subterfuges. I believe the Attorney General and other members of the House who have spoken to the Address-in-Reply have told the truth when they dealt with the financial situation and the urgent necessity of administration and the desire that both sides of the House should view that

position apart from party politics. This State is drifting under the able management of the Treasurer. They call it an overdraft, but we are gradually getting far behind. In viewing the reports of this financial year, taking the deficit on the 30th June, 1908, we stand about £350,000 in debt to-day, and it is about time things were altered. I see the member for Beverley is making copious notes, and I daresay there is a hope if the member uses his financial knowledge in assisting the Government there may be some means found of reducing the deficit. It is necessary we should at least try, by the wisdom of the House and by judicious administration on the part of those who occupy the Treasury bench to see if something cannot be done to put the State on a sound financial footing. It is impossible for us to go on building the unremunerative public works without getting further behind. Last session I opposed several Bills for the construction of railway lines on the ground that they would not pay interest and sinking fund let alone return any revenue, and when we look at the big works intended to be gone on with and the authorisations of the last two sessions, and the Government seem anxious to spend the money whether there is any return or not, then things are beginning to look serious. I want to say a word or two about the dock, notwithstanding that the Minister for Works represents the constituency in which the dock will be constructed and members on this (Opposition) side of the House represent adjoining constituencies. I hope the Government will pause before they spend £320,000 in the construction of a dock in view of the report of Sir Whatley Eliot who states that the construction of the dock will cost £325,000. When I spoke on the second reading of the Bill I challenged the estimate of the Minister for Works and I asked the Minister, as *Hansard* will prove, that the Engineer-in-Chief should be held responsible for the estimate and that the work be completed within the estimate or within £10,000 or £20,000 of it. And the Minister said in his lordly attitude, that most decidedly it could be constructed

within the estimate. But one of the greatest experts in England has come out here and reported on two things, one the best site out of three in which to place the dock, and as to the estimate of cost, and his estimate was £325,000. Had his inquiry been more extensive and gone into the details of the construction of the dock we may have had some more glaring facts brought under our notice. When I had gone over the reports of docks which had been built in other countries, and under more favourable circumstances than we can build the Fremantle dock, I came to the conclusion that the work could not be constructed for under £300,000. The Minister interjected then, "Does the member know more than the Engineer-in-Chief?" I know it is impossible to build the dock for the sum estimated by the Engineer-in-Chief when we compare the Fremantle dock with docks built in other places. I am pleased to note that my idea is supported, some months after, by so high an authority as Sir Whatley Eliot.

The Minister for Works: You had better read the report again.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have read the report; it was on the Table last session, and I believe some member is to move that it be laid on the Table again. I challenge the Minister to say that I did not state the correct amount.

The Minister for Works: Including other works.

Mr. TAYLOR: Works that are necessary so that the dock may be utilised. With less expenditure the dock could not be used. Leading articles in the newspapers put forth the same facts I am stating now, that the lowest possible expenditure must be £300,000.

The Minister for Works: It is pleasing to find the hon. member and the *West Australian* in agreement for once.

Mr. TAYLOR: I do not know that it is pleasing. Perhaps it is pleasing for the member to know that the *West Australian* always agrees with the Government.

The Minister for Works: That paper is conspicuous for its discrimination.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is pleasing to know that is a redeeming feature. Not-

withstanding I hope the Minister for Works and his colleagues will at least move very slowly with reference to the expenditure of such a sum on a work that cannot possibly pay working expenses let alone interest and sinking fund. I venture to say, as I said last year, and I believe I was the only one who opposed the Bill with vigour, that I am confident that the dock will not pay working expenses let alone interest and sinking fund. Fremantle is not a terminal port and will the Minister tell me that ships are going to be docked here when they can go to their terminal ports where labour is cheaper. Until we have the Transcontinental railway line constructed this dock will be of no use, and there is no necessity in the present financial condition of affairs to plunge the country into an expenditure of £300,000 on a dock. The spur railways were to pay from the jump. We found them all enumerated in the Press the other day and the expenditure has been larger by £2,000 odd than the revenue received and this on about eight railway lines. Among these lines is one goldfields line, the Widgemooltha railway, which out of a total return of £1,280 has provided £1,260. The Widgemooltha railway line is carrying the whole of the other spur lines on its back. It is the same thing. The freights to the goldfields are so high that the goldfields lines have to carry the agricultural railways. The people on the goldfields have to pay excessive freights and they carry all the railways of the State. Here is another proof of that. The Government opened seven or eight spur railways in agricultural areas covering distances from 20 to 30 miles and they have to open a goldfields line of 40 miles so as to carry the burden. Is that fair to the goldfields? I say, "No." And that line had to be fought for inch by inch for several years before it could be obtained. The Government of which I had the honour of being a member made a practical suggestion to deal with the question and that Government was responsible for the Widgemooltha line being built to-day. Whether the Coolgardie-Widgemooltha railway line is a failure or a success it lies at the door

of the Labour Government. They took a practical way of dealing with the question. They had a proper system of reporting brought into vogue and the report was favourable to the construction. Now its construction has been accomplished and for three months running it has earned over and above working expenses, £1,260.

The Minister for Works: You did everything but put the Bill through.

Mr. TAYLOR: We did everything. No matter who occupies the Treasury bench this line was made possible by the Labour Government. There has been no line constructed by the Government since they have been in office which has justified itself in the way this line has done, and I say the Labour Government are responsible for its construction.

The Minister for Works: You will begin to believe you built it in a little while.

Mr. TAYLOR: We made it possible for you to build it, the only line which is paying of all those which you have constructed. You have been constructing railway lines for three years and this is the only one that has paid anything, there has been a loss on all the others. It is indeed strange to find during the elections, and when policies and Governments are being discussed, some people ever ready to say, "You must support the Government in power; they are your friends" and yet we hear staunch Government supporters get up and speak in absolute contradiction of what the Government are placed in power to do by those outside. We had the spectacle yesterday of the member for Geraldton telling the Government that there must be no more licenses granted to hotels, that in the future they must shut down. We find the secretary of the Licensed Victuallers' Association writing letters to the Menzies electorate telling the people of Menzies that it is absolutely necessary to support Mr. Gregory so that they may have open play as far as hotel-keeping is concerned. And strange to say we find our dear old friend the member for Claremont, ever ready with his Bill. And I am sure if he had the opportunity, and I was going to say the luck he deserves;

but if he has the chance he deserves of introducing his Bill this session the Government should give him the opportunity of testing the feeling of the House upon it. And we find the members of the Government holding views diametrically opposite to the Licensed Victuallers' Association, who are in favour of keeping the Government in power. Here for instance is a sample of what the licensed victuallers think of the Government: this letter was received in Menzies just prior to the election—

"W.A. United Victuallers' Association, 18 Weld Chambers, St. George's Terrace, Perth, November 6th, 1908. Dear Sir,—I am instructed by my committee to urge licensed victuallers in the Menzies electorate to use every endeavour within their power to secure the return to Parliament of Mr. H. Gregory, who is standing for election in the Ministerial interest. It is of vital importance that the trade should return to Parliament those who are committed to fair play, seeing that an amended Licensing Bill is to be brought forward next session which will materially affect the welfare of all connected with the liquor interest. I might add that the trade have a better chance of securing this from the present Government than from any other source, and it consequently behoves all connected with licensed houses to leave no stone unturned to secure Mr. Gregory's re-election. My association asks that all licensed victuallers shall be alive to this fact, and I feel sure that my committee will not appeal in vain for your loyal and undivided support in the desired direction.—Yours faithfully, Alfred W. B. Mather, Secretary."

Now I do not know how the member for Geraldton and the member for Claremont can allow themselves to be associated with the licensed victuallers, or how they are going to reconcile themselves to the fact that their side is being kept in power by the licensed victuallers and pin their faith upon that body.

The Minister for Works: They have nothing to thank the Government for.

Mr. TAYLOR: I know the hon. member for Claremont has nothing to thank

the Government for. He can thank his own independence and the views he voiced in the House as having put him back here to-day. When we find a straight-out Government supporter opposing him in the town of Claremont we are interested in noting how he stands against the candidate supported by the Government. The hon. member for Claremont would not have been in his place had he docilely followed the Government during last session. Then there is the hon. member for Beverley. We would not have had the hon. member for Beverley where he is to-day had it not been for the docility of his predecessor. We would not have had the hon. member for Collie here to-day but for the docility of his predecessor as a Government supporter. Was not the late member for Balkatta unseated owing to his blind support of the Education Bill and many other things against the wishes of his constituency. The independent Government supporters of last year, named candid friends, have come back notwithstanding the running by the Government of a man against each of them. The Minister for Public Works has nothing to inflate his chest about. The member for Claremont is perfectly safe. He can come down with a Bill without taking it to the licensed victuallers to see whether they like it or not. The Minister for Works could not do that. The Government have sent a man to New Zealand to find out what is being done with the liquor question over there, so that they can determine whether it will suit the Government supporters here. If it does they will bring down the necessary Bill. I do not like to suggest where they chose their liquor taster from, but I know he came from the ranks of those who have a just appreciation of what liquor ought to be.

Mr. Hopkins: Is that a perquisite of the Government or of the Opposition?

Mr. TAYLOR: Presumably he comes from among the supporters of the Government. Still I do not mind admitting that I know the taste of good liquor myself. Few things can come from the Government side without first having to be referred either to the Licensed Victuallers Association or to the Chamber of Mines.

I am sure my old friend, the late member for Boulder, will not go down to the licensed victuallers to get some views on the liquor traffic. I am pleased to know there are some members on the Government side of the House free from the influence of the licensed victuallers. Anyhow, I suppose we will be able to get along while the Government are receiving their instructions from that august body. We find there has been a deal said about the administration of the Mines Department. I want to say that in my opinion it will be a good thing for the mining industry of this State if the control of that department passes into other hands. I say it has not had that treatment which it deserves as an industry. We find that we passed in this House money known as the Mines Development Vote, and we find that our Auditor General, who is the only servant of Parliament, who is the one man that is frightened of no one, who is Parliament's adviser—we have the Auditor General reporting on the mining vote and he finds, or at least he draws attention to the way in which that vote is being used. He states in his last annual report (1907)—

"In November, 1906, £6,028 9s. 6d. worth of rails and fastenings were supplied by the Railway Department to the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Company. The Department was paid this amount by the Mines Department from the Loan Vote Development of Mining. On the 11th April, 1907, an agreement was entered into between the Minister for Mines and the company on the hire purchase system to repay this money without interest by monthly instalments commencing on the 30th November, 1908. The Minister has the right to determine the date for the first payment, but if the company so desire they need not pay until the date mentioned above. Under the Audit Act it is not clear that the right exists to dispose of material without cash. Section 44 (b.) is the only one which may be said to deal with the matter, and the Auditor General is there directed to ascertain whether the whole of the revenue and other collections have been brought to account. But as no

amount is due until 30th November, 1908, the question arises whether this section applies."

Now here is a blow to a firewood company of £6,028 to purchase rails and fastenings from the Railway Department. If the Minister for Mines were in his place he might be able to explain that it is purely mining development to lend out money and material to the firewood company to enhance its position. We know there are no companies operating in this State that have paid so much money in so short a time as have the firewood companies operating on the Eastern Goldfields. They have made money, not taking into consideration the line laid down by this very company at Lancefield; because they had only been running about five or six weeks when the mine ceased operations and they had to cease work. They made a large amount of money. They have not alone denuded the State forests but have been the means of causing more turmoil and more trouble with their employees than any other company operating in the State. And in the face of this, £6,000 or £7,000 has been taken out of the Mines Development Vote and loaned to the company to buy rails and fastenings. No wonder everybody sings out about how badly the Mines Development Vote is administered. I want to know if the Government are going to continue this. I have before pointed out in this House the danger of the Minister having full control of this vote. That Mines Development Vote has been used largely for political purposes, placating members and sweetening constituencies. And I say this is a proof of how elastic is the Minister for Mines' idea of a mines development vote when he will take money out of such a fund and pay for rails and fastenings and give them to a wood company to which he has already granted a permit to run lines and denude the forests and to place their lines in such a position as to cause trouble among the employees and cause the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger) to make wild and sweeping statements about the relations between the men and the employers and the part taken by the Labour party.

He pointed out that the manner in which the Labour party has gone through the State during the last election will bring disaster. I say it is only when a member of Parliament or a party puts views before the country with some degree of vigour that the country is any the better for having heard those views. It is owing to the lethargy of the Government supporters that we find these votes the way they are. Can a member say he is justified in supporting a Government on party lines if he knows there are things like this occurring? If that be one of the results of party politics this system of governing the country must fail. Men have to be blind indeed to justice in order to keep a party in power and to allow a Minister in charge of a department, who has the handling of a large vote, to use the money as he thinks fit and as it has been used in the case. I have mentioned. Surely they know the money is used for purposes never intended by Parliament? If members of the party know this and take no notice of it merely because the act is performed by the heads of the party to which they belong, then the sooner party politics is swept away the better. In the present case, however, I am sure it is due to the lethargy of the people who support the Government and the want of interest by the electors whom they represent; otherwise this sort of thing could never take place. It could not occur with a Government represented by goldfields men, for the electors of goldfields members would very quickly be alive to the fact that the money was not being spent in a proper way and the Government would be pulled up. Fortunately for the Government the Press do not probe too deeply into what they do. When we know that this company have caused the Government of all time a great deal of trouble, endless annoyance, and considerable cost to the State in the way of money spent in supervision, we realise what a wrong attitude was adopted. It has always been found necessary that surveyors from the Lands Department should go through the forests in order to see that the contractors were keeping within the area set apart for them.

Time after time it has been found that the contractors had encroached on other places, so much so in fact that in one instance they had to pay a fine of £50. Evidently the Government did not mind this, for the company received another permit in another part of the State. Not only that but they allowed the company to have practically £7,000 of the people's money without interest.

The Treasurer: But your Government gave the rails to the hewers at Collie for political purposes.

Mr. TAYLOR: No, they gave rails to a community of people, not to a company, who had to pay interest from the very start. The community did not get one pound without paying interest, and they were a very desirable body of people as against a company of this character. Did not the timber hewers carry out their promises?

The Treasurer: Did not the others?

Mr. TAYLOR: The company have never had one permit without having been keel-hauled before the work was completed. At every place they have gone there has been trouble with the people of the district for encroachment. The company some time ago applied for a permit to run a line north-east from Lancefield, and they ran it south of east for 18 miles, with the result that they finished up 16 miles south of the terminal point and denuded forests they had no business to touch. When that was made known to me I at once set to work, and after some difficulty had it stopped. They have done the same sort of thing always. I am sure the member for Boulder could bear me out in this, if he were here, so could the member for Kanowna, while the member for Coolgardie will remember the trouble that took place in his district before he was elected to this House. This company have never carried out their agreements without being compelled to do so by the Government. By means of backstairs influence in the past they have obtained money from the Ministers when others could get nothing. Applications are now in from mines in my district. On these properties machinery, which has cost large sums of money, is erected, and the owners are anxious to obtain money for

development work; they have tried for the past six or seven weeks to get an advance from the Government on the property but have not been successful. I am referring to the Craigie-More mine. There is a 10-head mill and an up-to-date plant and the owners want a mortgage on it. Although they have been unsuccessful certain companies can get money from the Government free of interest to enable them to buy rails and fastenings for wood lines. Notwithstanding all these things we are told repeatedly of the admirable administration of the Mines Department. If that is what constitutes wise and good administration, I am satisfied. I am sure the mining conditions here now are largely due to bad administration. I hope the remarks I have made as to the Electoral Act and other matters, especially those referring to the Mining Act, will be paid attention to, and I trust the Government will allow no money to be taken from the mines development vote for the purpose of being lent to a company with which to purchase rails and fastenings. If it were not for the watchful eye of the Auditor General, who reports to Parliament annually, we would have known nothing about this case. It is not so much the policy of parties that affects the welfare of the State as the administration of those in office; those who handle the finances are the people who make or unmake a State, make it prosperous or otherwise. Unless the Government exercise great care and devote more time to the administration of departments than they have been doing recently we will drift to such an extent that I feel sure the next time members go to the country there will be quite a different result, and the Premier will not be boasting after the elections of his great support in the country. The shock he received at the last elections and his coming back with a party practically wrecked is nothing to the wreckage that will result from the next elections.

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont): The last speaker said the future depended not so much on the policy of parties as on the fact whether the leaders are good administrators or not. So far as that goes I cordially agree, and there is no doubt,

whatever differences we may have with regard to the question of parties, the future will depend absolutely on the manner in which the Government of this country is carried on in the next few years. None can say he is satisfied with the present condition of affairs. We have the leaders of the Government saying how successful they are in administration, and we have the other side complaining that the Ministers are making a hopeless muddle of affairs. This makes it very difficult for an ordinary member to steer a proper course between these two sides. On many occasions men who are continually boasting of their achievements are not entitled to the credit they take for some of them, while on the other hand men who are continually attacking the acts of Ministers are certainly not justified on many occasions in those attacks. I will first of all deal with the claims made by the Government for various good works they have carried out. I quite admit that on many occasions they have done good work, but with regard to various matters that concern the true welfare of the country I am of opinion they have been particularly negligent. We have the Leader of the Government, who is the Minister for Lands, continually boasting that there has been such a great development in land settlement. I agree that there has been a considerable amount of land settlement during the past few years, but the most unsatisfactory point in connection with the question is with what a very little people are satisfied. We saw in the Press a public announcement that a certain number of acres are being alienated and that a few hundreds of people are coming here. That does not satisfy me, for we hear the continual boast that we have millions of acres well suited for land settlement, and yet we know all we have been able to do in the last few months has been to persuade 4,000 people to come here. I have seen what other countries are doing. Take the Dominion of Canada. They have a much worse climate than ours, and yet the Canadian Government got 200,000 people to settle there last year. Here we have a Government boasting in the Press of the fact that we are able to get

4,000 people to come and settle in the country. The other States are stealing marches on us, for Queensland and New South Wales obtain four or five new agricultural immigrants for every one we obtain. Complaints are made, particularly by the Labour party, that we are doing a wrong thing in trying to encourage immigrants to come here. I believe the reason of their objection—and I give them credit for this much—is that the wrong class of people are being brought here, and to a certain extent I believe they are justified in complaining that we are not getting the right people. One of the Ministers, I think the Minister for Works, when speaking the other night said that if anyone were to look at the file of instructions sent to the Agent General, he would see how strong and peremptory the instructions were on the part of the Government that only suitable agriculturists should be sent here. I know the Government have given instructions to that effect, but what I complain of is that they send the wrong class of men from here to England and the other States to set out the conditions of the country. For some years we sent a man named Scammell from here. I believe he had no experience of this country and that he stayed here once for a month; still he was allowed to remain in London for three years as our agricultural representative in that country. Again, a man has recently left our shores, and I speak of him with the greatest respect for he is a most able journalist, Mr. Wallace Nelson. He is the latest recruit in the Immigration Department.

The Treasurer: What about Mr. Ranford.

Mr. FOULKES: I will deal with Mr. Ranford afterwards. Mr. Nelson has also been sent to give information as to the agricultural capabilities of this country. Anyway arrangements have been made with Mr. Nelson to deliver lectures with regard to Western Australia. That is the arrangement made and it is that that I complain of. This is not the first time I have expressed the opinion that we are sending the wrong type of man from here to Europe to set out the natural advantages of this State. The Treasurer

said, "what about Mr. Ranford." That is just it—that is what I am complaining about. He is just the type of man who should be sent, but what a long time it has taken the Government to send Mr. Ranford to Europe. He has been in the East for a couple of years and came back here from the other States about four months ago, and it is only a fortnight since he left for home. In Great Britain and Ireland there is a population of forty millions of people and we are sending one man to tell these forty millions what the agricultural resources of Western Australia are. Here in Perth we have commercial firms carrying on trade in the narrow confines of Western Australia and these people send out eight or nine travellers while the Government are satisfied with sending one capable man. And after all we must admit that Mr. Ranford is the only capable man to give information with regard to the capabilities of the State. I know something about this subject because the last time I was in England I took the opportunity of finding out what the Canadian Government were doing. I spent some hours in the Canadian office and learnt that they sent a dozen farmers from Canada to England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, to give information to the farming communities about the agricultural possibilities of Canada. They do not send Home clerks or journalists or men of the type of Mr. Rason; they send Home only practical farmers, and what I beg and implore of the Government to do is to send more men of the type of Mr. Ranford to Europe to influence the people and persuade them to come to this country. If we send men who are clerks you will find that they will never come into contact with agriculturists, and if you want to persuade agriculturists to come out here you must send out the right type of man to talk to them. It is useless sending a clerk to try and persuade a farmer to come out here. What I say is we are neglecting this question and that at least half a dozen farmers should be sent from here to Europe to induce the people to come out. A few days ago the Premier spoke on this question and with a considerable

amount of pride and satisfaction he mentioned the fact that they were actually going to open an office in Sydney. A most astonishing achievement. Why in the world was not that done two years ago? Mr. Ranford was sent to give a certain amount of information to people in South Australia and Victoria and the Leader of the New South Wales Government said his Government would be glad to see an office established in Sydney so that the people of New South Wales might be informed of the capabilities of Western Australia, and actually nothing was done despite the invitation that was given. Our people here seem to be satisfied with so little. Even the Leader of the Government and the public Press are satisfied with so little that they will sit down and allow other people to come in ahead of them. Sometimes I see in the public Press twenty lines appearing on a front page setting out the fact that actually three farmers are leaving Victoria to come to Western Australia. That is considered a wonderful achievement. I am as certain as I am of standing here if we go on constructing these various railways and huge public works like the dock at Fremantle, that unless we have sufficient population to use those works disaster will come upon us. This is not the first time that this question of immigration has been discussed here. Nothing practical unfortunately has ever been done. Mr. Ranford is the first man who has been sent from Western Australia to England to give information with regard to our agricultural possibilities.

Mr. Hopkins: What about the Agents General?

Mr. FOULKES: Yes, they have done it to a certain extent but no one can convince me that a man of the type of Mr. Rason is the right man to convince an agriculturist. You have only to read the record of Mr. Rason's achievements at Home. He has given lectures but where were they given? They were given not in agricultural towns but in places like Bradford. It is not in the towns that you want to have this information distributed but it is in the agricultural districts of Great Britain. I complain that

men of the type of Mr. Nelson—and I speak of him with the greatest respect as I do of Mr. Rason—give their lectures in the cities and that mere fact shows how incapable they are and how hopeless it is to expect them to deal with the subject. What I am asking the Government and Parliament to do is to send agriculturists to Europe, men who will not go to the towns but who will go to the agricultural districts. It is from these places that we want to fetch the people. If we fetch townspeople here we will find in a short time they will drift back into towns for employment. There is another matter I wish to speak about; that is the question of land settlement, and it is owing to the fact that so few people are coming here that we are selling off land in this country at a price that is far beneath its value. Land in this country is being sold at 10s. an acre on 20 years terms which means that this land is being sold at 5s. an acre. If that land were cleared it would be worth at least £4 an acre. I hope that the Government will consider a scheme whereby they will go in for a system of clearing land as is done in many places where they take care to see that the land is ready for cultivation. I am quite sure of this that if they adopted this system it would add materially to the welfare of the country and improve our conditions here. At present what is taking place? Although there is an enormous amount of land alienated it has been taken up in many cases by men who have not sufficient capital to work it. Many of these men come from the Eastern States and foreign parts where land has been acquired, and these unhappy individuals take up land here and for five or six years their labours are devoted to clearing the land, and the result is that their small capital is exhausted altogether in that clearing and in a great number of cases they have not sufficient capital wherewith to buy machinery and to buy horses and obtain necessary equipment to put their crops in. I hope the Minister for Agriculture will now consider the question as to whether he should not increase the lending capacity of the Agricultural Bank, and enable that bank

in some cases to increase the loans from £500 up to even £1,000. I admit in some cases it would be dangerous to make such advances to some people, but there is no reason why a board of capable men should not be appointed to see whether loans, even though they be up to £1,000, should not be given to suitable people who are on suitable land. These loans of £500 although they are giving great assistance to many people unfortunately do not go far enough. From what I have seen in various agricultural districts, although the bank lends £500 to help people to settle upon the land, that money has to be devoted to certain specific improvements. It has to be used for clearing land and building fences and constructing dams. These are practically the only three things on which these loan moneys can be expended, and the result is that unless a man has another £500 or £1,000 of his own he is unable in a great number of cases to make use of this land, because even when the land is cleared it is necessary that a man should have a certain amount of capital, for, as I have pointed out he has to purchase machinery and stock and spend a considerable sum of money in constructing a house and out-buildings. What I would like to point out is that we are parting with our most valuable asset. We are selling off land at 5s. an acre, which land if cleared would fetch £4 or £5 an acre. I need only remind the Minister for Agriculture that ten years ago one could buy any quantity of land for £1 an acre in the Northam district. To-day that land is fetching £6 and £7 an acre and the reason it is so valuable is that it has been cleared and the people are able to set to work and draw an income from it. There are hundreds of places besides Northam and York where, if land were cleared, the Government would at once create an asset which would be worth £4 an acre. I of course believe in the system of the alienation of land, and I do not altogether condemn the leasehold system, and I would like to see the two systems run side by side. Because, looking at it from a business point of view I am certain it would be of great advantage

to the State if the department were to set aside various areas in the agricultural districts and clear them and let them on lease for 30 years, charging a reasonable rent for the land. There are hundreds who would be only too pleased to rent the land provided it is cleared for them, because there are many who have not the courage or the capital to take up virgin country and devote six or seven years of their lives to clearing the lands. I would like to see the Minister for Agriculture consider the question as to whether he should not initiate this system of setting aside various areas of land, clearing them and letting them on long leases. I am quite sure that in 20 or 30 years time we should have a very valuable asset on account of having kept these lands. I know that this is not the first time that this has been proposed. I know the Labour party proposed it, but unfortunately they condemned wholly the system of granting the fee simple. For my part I believe in both systems worked together, because the leasehold would induce a great number of people to take up land. There are some who, like myself and perhaps the Leader of the Opposition, prefer the fee simple; but all the same if I had a good piece of land offered to me to rent, if it were cleared I, and hundreds like myself, would be only too glad to seize the opportunity. A good deal has been said about dealing with economic administration, and there is a paragraph in the Governor's Speech where he is made to say that every effort has been made to keep the expenditure within bounds by careful and economical administration. And the paragraph goes on to say that this policy will be rigorously adhered to in the future. When I read that word "rigorously" it caused my blood to run cold; but I was very much cheered by the reflection that perhaps the Ministry did not really mean it. Because I must say I would like to see them show a little more evidence of their desire to have economical administration carried out. To my mind not sufficient attention has been paid to the saving of money. There is a tremendous amount of money wasted in this country, and

I would like to see the Ministry setting a better example themselves in economic administration. In the Auditor General's report for last year are references to a large number of items of expenditure incurred by Ministers. They are small and trivial in themselves, perhaps, but all the same they are signs that show that Ministers do not realise that the time has come when it is necessary for every Minister to save every possible shilling that he can. Let us take the travelling expenses of Ministers. We know that it is necessary for the various Ministers to travel throughout the State. That is all very well, and I hold with it. I will deal with the travelling expenses of the Premier. Among a few items I notice in the Auditor General's report for last year, are these expenses incurred by the Premier travelling to Bunbury. From the 29th June to July 2nd £3; in November another £3 or £4; again in November another £4 or £5; in October a pound or two; in December 19s. 8d.; on December 8th and 10th another pound or two. Again, the Treasurer goes to Busselton and visits his constituents. The country seems to have to pay for these expenses. Now these are only small items and Ministers and others may say it is not right to complain of small items of this kind. I quite admit that looking at it from that point of view it is trivial to complain of small sums spent by the Ministers.

The Minister for Works: You ought at least ascertain the reason of the visit.

Mr. FOULKES: The reason of the visit is—and this is what I complain of—the Minister goes to visit his constituents and in my opinion he ought to pay his own expenses.

The Minister for Works: I guarantee the Premier charges no expenses when he goes to Bunbury on his private affairs.

Mr. FOULKES: If the Minister goes to his own constituents he ought to pay his own expenses. This is the important fact that I complained of. We must have good examples set us, and I do not care about reading paragraphs in the Governor's Speech to say that in

future this policy of economic administration is to be rigorously adhered to. It is nonsense talking to us like that when Ministers go to their own constituencies and charge this country with the expenses in connection with the visit. The Treasurer, I know—and I give him credit for it—is anxious about the finances of this country. He went down to Busselton in December, 1906, and it cost this State a considerable amount of money; because there were various refreshments to be provided to enable him to get down there. Really the time has gone by when any Government should go in for this lavish expenditure in the way of refreshments. One is astonished to find people coming here with Governor's Speeches in their hands and telling us it is necessary to have rigorous economic measures, and afterwards going off to their constituencies and expecting the country to pay the expense. I do not care what members go down, if they want refreshments they should pay for them themselves. I can tell the Minister for Works that people are complaining all over the State. As soon as a Ministerial train leaves Perth station the conductors are seen running along handing out the lemonade before East Perth is reached.

The Minister for Works: You may be sure there is some departmental business at the bottom of it.

Mr. FOULKES: It is astonishing how much departmental business has to be done in Bunbury. Here is another matter we have noticed in this Governor's Speech: that it is proposed to introduce a Bill dealing with a Bunbury Harbour Board. That Bill was introduced last year, and it was provided in that Bill that there should be five members on the board. I am subject to correction, but I feel sure that I am right when I say the chairman of this board is to get £100 a year and the other four members £50 each. Now I should like to know what is the necessity for having a harbour board at Bunbury. If it were not that the Leader of the Government is the member for that constituency there would be no talk at all about a harbour board for Bunbury. I have here before me

a summary of the trade in various ports of the State, and it will be interesting to members to learn that there are two ports doing a larger trade than the port of Bunbury.

The Minister for Works: Which are they?

Mr. FOULKES: Albany and Geraldton.

The Minister for Works: Are you going to quote the exports?

Mr. FOULKES: No, I am taking the tonnage the harbour has to deal with; the number of ships that come to it and the number that leave it. It does not matter whether they are full or empty. Here at Albany the amount of tonnage was 141,000 tons, while that at Bunbury was 106,000 tons. That is under steam. Under sail we find that 7,000 tons came to Albany and 19,000 tons came to Bunbury.

The Minister for Works: That is another aspect.

Mr. FOULKES: Yes, I am giving both sides of the question. From the inter-State ports to Albany the tonnage was 469,000 and to Bunbury 74,000. Look at the difference there.

The Minister for Works: Oh, many of them at Albany just call in and go out again.

Mr. FOULKES: That does not matter. From Western Australia and other State ports the tonnage to Albany was 245,000 tons, and to Bunbury 8,000, the total being to Albany 865,000 tons, and Bunbury 190,000 tons.

The Minister for Works: But you have included the White Star line at Albany.

Mr. FOULKES: We have these ships coming here to these places. I draw no distinction as to whether they are White Star liners or of any other company.

The Minister for Works: Don't you draw a distinction between a steamer going to Bunbury for timber and staying a month, and the White Star liner going to Albany for a few hours only?

Mr. FOULKES: Yes, but just the same it is not necessary to have a harbour board at Bunbury.

Mr. Bath: But they are trying to square things. Trying to build railways to concentrate trade at Bunbury.

Mr. FOULKES: I say there is no necessity for a harbour board at Bunbury. The only people who have demanded it are the members of the Bunbury Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Bath: And the lumpers.

Mr. FOULKES: I do not know that the lumpers at Fremantle are any better off because they have a harbour board. There is no reason why the Government officials should not look after the harbour at Bunbury as well in the future as they have done in the past. What I complain of is Ministers preaching economy when they show no signs of economy in their dealings with their own constituencies.

Mr. Bath: Can you expect a good example from the present Ministers?

Mr. FOULKES: Yes. In many ways I am doing my best to teach them, and trying to keep them in the right path. One difference between this side of the House and that is that I am able to discuss and criticise our leaders freely. If I sat on that side of the House I do not know what would happen to me if I spoke of my leader as I have spoken of my leader on this occasion. That is the difference. On this side of the House, we are able to speak freely.

Mr. Bath: They do not take it very kindly; the Minister for Works is ready to eat you.

Mr. FOULKES: It does not trouble me in the slightest. I have given notice of my intention to introduce a Bill to amend the licensing law. I am not going to take up the time of the House to set out the provisions of that Bill, save to say that it is to prevent any licenses being granted until we have local option. I took care when the House first met to give notice of this Bill, because this measure has had a most unfortunate experience. It has been assailed by a great many members who should have supported it. Last session it was introduced by the Government, but, unfortunately, it was at the last moment, and it was not able to get to the Upper House, where, unfortunately, the Government representative is strongly opposed to the Bill. I hope that the Government will give me an opportunity of passing this measure.

Mr. Bath : The Government are going to introduce a comprehensive Bill this session.

Mr. FOULKES : I have heard that before. On one occasion I gave notice that I was going to introduce a Bill of this nature, and Mr. Rason, the then Premier, gave notice that he was introducing a Bill of the same kind. I appealed to him to let me go on with my Bill, but he said it was quite safe, the two could be combined and would get through. But what happened? Somebody moved, "That the debate be adjourned," and we heard nothing further of the Bill that session. What I am afraid of is that unless I have every opportunity given me of dealing with this measure the debate will be adjourned, or the measure will be sent to the other House and strangled there. I do not think the Government realise that there are many people in this State who are very sincere on this question, and who are determined that no more licenses shall be granted until local option is obtained. They are not going to stand any more humbugging on the question. I give the Ministry a certain amount of credit ; because they have honestly opposed the Bill ; they think that it will not deal with the question properly ; but they do not realise that the constituencies are absolutely determined, no matter what the liquor traffic may say, that they are going to have these reforms carried out. Therefore, I hope the Ministry will see that the Bill is carried through this session. Otherwise, as the member for Geraldton has said, there will be most intense dissatisfaction in the ranks of a great many people who have hitherto been most loyal to the Government. It is not pleasing for me to be criticising my own side like this. I do not like to see my own side make mistakes, but I am supporting the Government because I know well that the other side would make far greater mistakes, and I have to make a choice of two evils and put up with the mistakes that have been made. But though I do so, I am not going to remain silent, because I can see that it is a most unkind thing to do to any Government to allow these

mistakes to accumulate instead of strangling them at their birth.

Mr. Bath : You must be one of the reservationists.

Mr. FOULKES : I do not know what they are. Perhaps the hon. member on a more suitable occasion will give the definition of the word. There is not the slightest shadow of doubt that there is urgent need on the part of the Government to put their shoulders to the wheel and see that we have true economical administration. It often happens that if suggestions are made to the Government whereby a certain amount of money can be saved they are received with the utmost contempt. About twelve months ago we had a gentleman in this State by the name of Chinn. He published his views with regard to the railway administration and said that at least £100,000 a year could be saved. He set out his views quite clearly and I must admit he made a certain amount of impression upon me. But how were these views met? We had Ministers abusing Mr. Chinn and calling him all kinds of names.

The Minister for Works : Who abused him?

Mr. FOULKES : The Minister for Railways did. Mr. Chinn was abused by Ministers from one end of the State to the other because he dared to criticise the administration of the railways, but everything Mr. Chinn prophesied has turned out to be correct because the railways have been able to save many thousands of pounds. Mr. Chinn said that if they adopted a certain course the railways would be able to save £100,000 a year ; and now that money has been saved, but no credit has been given to that gentleman who was abused practically by every Minister. We were told that Mr. Chinn was an unfit person, that he knew nothing about the subject and that no regard whatever should be paid to anything he said. However, there will be many opportunities of discussing the various problems that come before us, but I urge upon the House the need for realising that it is necessary for us to give every attention to see that we

have economical administration in this State.

On motion by *Mr. Male*, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.38 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 19th November, 1908.

	PAGE
Papers presented...	245
Personal explanation, Land at Wongan ...	245
Questions: Engine-drivers' examinations ...	246
Land selection, Doodlakine ...	246
Land settlement, Tammin ...	246
Address-in-Reply, fourth day, conclusion ...	246

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Report of the Commissioner of Police for year ended 30th June, 1908. 2, Report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners for year ended 30th June, 1908.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION, LAND AT WONGAN.

Hon. J. T. GLOWREY (South): I desire to make a personal explanation with regard to certain transactions between myself and the Lands Department. Various reports have appeared in the Press, more particularly during the recent elections, and a number of candidates for Parliament have advertised the fact throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia, that I had received certain information which I should not have obtained, and in consequence secured land for myself and family on the proposed route of a new railway. Some explanation is due by me to members, to my constituents, and to the people generally. In the first place I should like to say that I have three sons, two daughters, and a wife, each of whom

applied for 1,000 acres of land. This land is fifty miles from the termination of the suggested railway. I do not know whether the line is yet more than suggested. Some of the land is fully 50 miles from the proposed terminus of the Wongan railway, but the balance of the land adjoins the Midland Railway Company's line. I should like to tell members how I came to secure the land. In the first place it was on the information of that well-known and highly respected gentleman, known to most members, Mr. Gooch, of Gingin, who advised me to look out for some land. He knew I wanted to take up land and advised me to seek for it in the locality where I subsequently took it up, and further told me of a gentleman who knew the country thoroughly. I secured the services of that gentleman and took up some land. That land was available for anyone to take up. As far as getting any information from the Government is concerned, I can safely say that to my knowledge not one member of the Government knew I intended even to apply for the land. Furthermore, as far as I am aware, not one Government official had any knowledge that I was going to apply for land until the applications were handed in at the counter. The statements have been denied, but there are some gentlemen who still persist in suggesting motives which are certainly not very honourable. Perhaps I made a mistake when I applied for the land, and that I should have taken certain gentlemen into my confidence. I should perhaps have consulted Mr. Walker, Mr. Bath, or Mr. Troy, or some of the other members of the Labour party and asked their advice. Had I done this, possibly I might not have been guilty of such a serious offence. I was not aware that I was doing anything wrong. As these gentlemen did not think it worth while to consult me when they were applying for large areas I did not think there was any need for me to consult them. I should not have referred to this at all, for it is a matter of very little concern to me, had I not thought some explanation was due to members in view of the fact that the statements have been made