

plain on the floor of the House of such treatment, treatment which I believe does not receive the support of many of my Labour friends opposite, although some of them are rabid enough to endorse it. I have pretty well concluded my task; I have pointed out where the Government have utterly failed financially, where the borrowing has been lavish and the expenditure extravagant; that as compared with its condition under the Liberal Administration this country is fast being run into debt up to its very ears, if I may use the term; that the policy of my friend opposite seems to be that the more money we can borrow the better off we are, and the bigger the overdraft we can get the more solvent are we. Such a system has always proved disastrous to the individual, and it will prove disastrous to the nation if the people see fit to permit our friends opposite to carry it on for another term.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned 9.37 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 7th July, 1914.*

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Workers' Homes Board—Reports of the Chairman for the years ended 30th June, 1912, and the 30th June, 1913. 2, Workers' Homes Act, 1911, and Work-

ers' Homes Act Amendment Act, 1912—Financial Statement and Report for the years ended 30th June, 1912, and the 30th June, 1913. 3, State Steamship Service—Audit Report and Balance Sheet for year ended 30th June, 1913. 4, Health Act, 1911—Leederville Municipal Council—Amendment of By-law 24.

### ASSENT TO SUPPLY BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill, £1,379,650.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Fourth Day.*

Debate resumed from the 2nd July.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West): Since last session, the biennial elections for the Council have been held, and while the House has benefited by the accession of new members, I desire to make reference to some of those gentlemen who are no longer amongst us. I wish to refer specially to my late colleague, Mr. Moss, who for many years held prominent positions in Ministries, and was not only a valuable member to the West province, but one who rendered great service to this State, a gentleman whose opinion, hon. members will agree, was valued in this Chamber. I think I should mention this in order to have an appreciation of his services recorded on the pages of *Hansard*. With reference to the Governor's Speech, with the exception of the re-appearance of many old familiar friends, there seems to be little other than a considerable amount of padding, together with a eulogy of the administration of the present Government. While congratulating the hon. Mr. Millington on his speech in moving the adoption of the Address-in-reply, and the hon. Mr. Cornell on his speech in seconding the motion, I agree with the hon. Mr. Colebatch when he said that the hon. Mr. Cornell's idea of mending this Chamber is somewhat different from the attitude adopted by that gentleman when he first took his seat in the House. Doubtless the environment of this Chamber has had some

little steady effect on the hon. member, and I have no doubt that after a few years the mover of the motion will appreciate in the same direction as the seconder evidently has since he first gave voice to his opinions in this Chamber. Regarding the education regulation referred to by the hon. Mr. Colebatch, I have no wish to stress the matter other than to speak of the position as it affects the public school at Fremantle. Nine out of 10 of the boys who gained scholarships last year would not have been eligible to sit for the examination if the present regulation had been in force at that time, and I trust that this class distinction will not be drawn, and that the Minister will see his way clear to amend the regulation. Without doubt there are many parents of children attending public schools who are unable to afford to pay the additional cost to provide higher education for their children. I desire to congratulate the Government in connection with the milk supply in the metropolitan area, but I regret that there is no reference in the Speech to fostering an industry which at the present time would mean so much to the State. In West province alone there is a great area of land fairly adjacent to the city and in close proximity to Fremantle, namely, that surrounding Fremantle, and in the Coogee, Jandakot, Bibra Lake, and Rockingham districts, a large tract of country, the resumption of which should receive the consideration of the Government. The construction of a railway from the present terminus at the explosives magazines to Rockingham would not be very costly. In the early days of Fremantle it was intended that the magazines should be situated at a point further south and close to Rockingham, and in view of the settlement in and around the magazines at the present time, the Government might well take into consideration the question of removing the magazines to a point close to Rockingham. This would necessitate the construction of the railway, and the line at the same time would assist to develop that portion of the State. I have been told on the best of authority that the land is very suitable for dairying purposes, and considering the large sums of money

which are being sent out of the State annually for dairy produce, it would be wise for the Government to foster the industry in this direction. I desire to congratulate the Government also on the fact of the record harvest having been handled successfully by the railways. In addition to 1,300,000 bags of wheat exported from Fremantle alone during the past year, the Government railways were called upon to transport large tonnages of coal from Bunbury, as well as large cargoes from the port of Fremantle, and I have no hesitation in saying that the facilities provided by the transport department last year were equal, if not superior, to those of any previous administration in the Railway Department. Mention is also made in the Speech to the purchase of the tramway system of Perth and suburbs, and although the hon. Mr. Colebatch for the sixth or seventh time criticised the Government for purchasing this undertaking, I feel no regret at having supported the Bill. I believe that all public utilities should be owned and controlled by the State. I understand that the 10 per cent. gross profit, exclusive of the system having been maintained to the highest standard of efficiency, in addition to a fair amount of money having been set aside for renewals, in itself provides confirmation of the view taken by the select committee which inquired into this matter. And, furthermore, as this City progresses and the system extends, no opportunity would be given to any future Government to purchase under more favourable conditions than those under which the present Government bought; and therefore I think the action of the Government in purchasing when they did was in the best interests of this State. The Speech refers to the output of coal as in quantity and value being well maintained, and, indeed, constituting a record for the State. I have no desire to speak at length on the coal question. A Royal Commission is sitting at the present time with a view, if possible, of arriving at a report which will assist this industry. I claim that it is an industry which, in the years to come, will be one of the best assets of the State. The tonnage for

bunkering purposes alone last year in Fremantle exceeded by 50 per cent. the tonnage of any previous year, and the bunkering at Bunbury was also in excess of that of previous years. The Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners in their report refer to the value to the State of the bunkering trade as follows:—

The steady increase in favour of Fremantle harbour as a coaling port for homeward-bound steamers from the Eastern States has to be carefully noted, and there is every prospect of this trade growing to be a heavy and valuable one, especially as these vessels are so often available for picking up comparatively small part cargoes.

It is well known that if a bunkering port can be established in any State or country, the benefits to be derived from it are considerable. As the Harbour Trust report sets forth, it is an inducement for steamers to come here, and will bring in that additional competition which will give the producers of the State an opportunity of exporting at low rates of freight. It will also mean the bringing into this State of a considerable amount of money, because it must be recognised that every steamer coming into the port to bunker, especially to bunker the local product, leaves a considerable amount of money in the State for bunker coal, as well as the money expended in other directions—providing a considerable amount of traffic for our railways and of work for our people. I have no wish to pursue this subject at any length, as I had an opportunity of placing my views before the Commission. That Commission's report, I feel sure, is being awaited with considerable interest by the people generally. I notice in the Speech a reference to the encouragement that is to be given to the Phillips River district by the Government, in connection with the opening of the smelters and the treatment of the ore. I can tell the leader of this House that, so far as Phillips River is concerned, it will be an extremely difficult matter for the Government to afford ample facilities, even by the smelters, under existing conditions. I have personally had considerable experience of the port.

and Phillips River is unfortunately not provided with a decent harbour or port.

Hon. J. Cornell: Who made the port?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Whatever guided those who made that port in making it, has nothing at all to do with me. I have landed more cargo over the Phillips River jetty than any other company trading into that port. That was all the material in connection with the construction of the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe railway. There is practically no water, and for days and days it is impossible for a vessel to discharge. We all know as regards coke, which is the principal commodity in connection with smelting, it is practically impossible to handle coke except at very heavy cost. My opinion is that unless the Government are prepared to open up another harbour, perhaps at Doubtful Island Bay, in order to serve that particular district, it could be better served by junctioning with the Great Southern railway at a suitable point to open up Ravensthorpe and the surrounding country.

Hon. J. Cornell: You will admit that the harbour is placed in the wrong position?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I cannot say that the harbour is in a wrong place, because it is nearest to Ravensthorpe.

Hon. J. Cornell: There is no holding ground.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: There is no holding ground. There is absolutely nothing to recommend the harbour in any respect; and my point is this, that if assistance is necessary to this particular district, then it is necessary that the Government, in order to serve the district, should serve it by railway communication from a point on the Great Southern railway. The Speech refers to railway construction, saying—

Railway construction has been vigorously carried on, and, in addition to those lines handed over since 1st July, 1913, other railways, involving a total of 290 miles, will, it is anticipated, be handed over to the Railway Department by December next. There will, at that date, be a further 295 miles of

railway in process of construction. Surveys of new railway lines totalling 378 miles have been authorised.

In other words, the railways in process of construction, and the railways authorised, come to a total mileage of 783. Now, in view of the Public Works Department construction capacity, which may be stated at approximately 250 miles per annum, it is apparent that it will be impossible to complete all these railways under a period of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  or 3 years; that is, if the present Administration propose to continue on the departmental construction system. If it is not intended to proceed with departmental construction and tenders are to be called, I shall be glad to know whether it is the intention of the Government, supposing the Esperance Railway Bill is passed, to let that railway be contracted or build it departmentally? If it is to be built in accordance with the Government policy, departmentally, do they then propose to give it precedence over the railways which are already authorised? If not, then of necessity some three years must elapse before its construction could be proceeded with. If I am right in this contention, I shall be glad to know what is the urgency, in a short session, to introduce this Esperance Railway Bill again?

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): Will the hon. member take that view on all railways?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: In reply to the Honorary Minister, I consider that if railways are authorised, they are necessary, and that if they are necessary there should be no precedence, and that railways already authorised should not be delayed by any other proposal introduced subsequently.

Member: The Esperance railway is necessary.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: In my opinion, railways should be constructed in accordance with the order in which the measures authorising them are passed. Perhaps the Government realise that the arrears in connection with construction are heavy; and, as they are anxious to build these numerous lines, it is not unreasonable to expect that they will de-

part from their policy of departmental construction and let some of these railways by contract. The Speech refers to harbour accommodation, and I have no desire to approach this subject in any parochial spirit. The Speech says—

Harbour improvements at Fremantle are being actively proceeded with. Schemes for the improvement of the harbours at Albany and Bunbury have been approved, and plans for Geraldton are under consideration. A commencement has been made at Albany, and the work at Bunbury is to be undertaken without delay, whilst a quarry for the supply of stone for the breakwater at Geraldton has been located.

As I said, I have no desire to be parochial in this connection. Undoubtedly, Albany and Bunbury are both entitled to their harbour accommodation. I know that a considerable amount of trade has been lost to this State in days gone by owing to the people of Bunbury not being able to accommodate steamers calling there, in respect to bunker supplies. That trade was lost to the State. However, I would like the Minister to take note of one or two of my objections to matters already raised as regards proceeding with the improvement of these particular harbours, while no policy has been defined in connection with the chief port of the State, though that port is not being altogether neglected. I am willing to concede this point to the present Administration, that, so far as additional accommodation within the existing limits of the present harbour is concerned, the Government have pushed on in order to utilise every available inch of the berthage accommodation within the limits of our inner harbour. That, however, is not the point I desire to stress. The point I do wish to stress is that some two years ago an eminent engineer whom the Government of the day had in their employ, Mr. Ramsbotham, was called upon to report on the harbours of our coasts. That gentleman's reports and plans, I believe were duly completed. Within the last two or three months the Minister for Works has visited Albany and Bunbury. Plans of the extensions

of those harbours have been drawn; and, naturally, the residents of those two ports are jubilant, and are giving every credit to the Government for at last initiating some scheme, and some defined policy, for the extensions of those ports. But, while Mr. Ramsbotham's schemes with modifications have been adopted, there is no reference in the Speech respecting a policy for the Fremantle harbour. To a deputation recently the Premier stated that the present railway bridges at Fremantle were in a state of disrepair, and that a certain degree of danger attached to the running of trains over those bridges. Within the last week we have seen a letter written to Mr. Carpenter, who has a seat in another place, attributing to the Legislative Council, in some measure, the delay, which is owing to the want of policy on the part of the Government. The Premier also said, in reply to the deputation referred to, that if the Legislative Council had passed the Public Works Committee Bill the policy relative to the extension of the Fremantle harbour would have been settled before now. What I am unable to follow is this: if harbour improvements and extensions at Bunbury and Albany can be proceeded with in the absence of the aid of a Public Works Committee, why is it that Fremantle harbour improvements cannot be taken in hand without the aid of a Public Works Committee? This argument has been brought forward in Fremantle and stated on public platforms; namely, that the Legislative Council is responsible for the delay in connection with the policy of the Fremantle harbour. I do not think any member of the House will take such a thing as that seriously, although the question of the extension of the Fremantle harbour, which is the chief port, is more acute than that of the extension of other ports. The position is that we have the vexed question in Fremantle of the inner versus the outer harbour extensions. We have advocates for the inner harbour, and advocates for the outer harbour. Two members representing Fremantle in another place advocate the extension of the outer harbour, while another member,

the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin), favours the inner harbour extension; clearly proving to my mind that the rejection of the Public Works Committee Bill by the Legislative Council has nothing to do with the delay in connection with the Fremantle harbour, that it is purely on account of the Government not wishing to accept the responsibility of declaring for or against one or the other of the alternative schemes. When we take into consideration the acute stage reached in Fremantle, especially the inability to find accommodation, and the further inability of the Harbour Trust Commissioners to reply to queries respecting future intentions, I may be pardoned for reading a few extracts from the Harbour Trust's report of 1913 in order to show the position of the Fremantle harbour. The report is on the Table. It has been circulated only within the last month or two. This is what the Commissioners say—

What the Commissioners had foreseen for upwards of two years has indeed already come to pass in that the agents of one of the latest additions to the Anglo-Australian fleet appealed to them in July for accommodation for the s.s. "Nestor" in August, but owing to the fact that the depth of water had not been increased the owners refused to allow the ship to call at Fremantle, and she was sent in to Albany instead. It is true she left Albany drawing less water than ships that have already used Fremantle harbour, but she was not loaded down to her maximum, and in any case the fact remains that the circumstances are such that owners will not take the risk of allowing their deep draught ships to enter the port under present conditions. What that means and will continue to mean in a commercial sense is impossible to foresee as a trade such as a regular shipping business is of necessity forced to adapt itself to certain conditions from which certain definite routes and avenues are gradually evolved which it is difficult to afterwards change, and if it is allowed to become a settled principle that a

port is to be shunned for any important reason the results are distinctly detrimental to that port and all those who are endeavouring to do business through it. The question is undoubtedly one of great national importance, and as such the Commissioners have always regarded it, but in the helpless condition in which they are placed they have to rest content with just the measure of assistance in such a vital matter as keeping the chief port of the State in a fit condition to meet the growing demands of the world's sea trade as the Governments of the day see fit to dole out to them. At this juncture, therefore, there is nothing the Commissioners can say further than that they have kept the urgent necessity for immediately deepening the water of Fremantle Harbour steadily before the Government for the past two years and more, and are still in the mortifying position in having to announce no progress beyond a written estimate of cost and the production of a sketch drawing showing the proposals.

Clearly indicating that, although the urgency of this question is so great and the position so acute, the Government, for some reason or other, will not initiate any policy in connection with this extension. As I said, the question is one of the inner versus the outer harbour. Still, I say no excuse made by the Government will justify them in putting the chief port of the State in the position in which it is to-day. They should declare their policy in connection with it, and if the policy of the extension of the inner as against the outer harbour gives rise to some dissatisfaction on the part of some of their supporters, that should not be allowed to delay the Government. Mr. Carpenter moved in another place recently for the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the question. I was sorry to hear Mr. Holmes refer to it as a party movement. I do not believe it. I believe the present Administration are opposed to the appointment of a Royal Commission. From what I can gather as a result of many deputations it is

apparent that they have all the data sufficient for them to come to some settlement at once. There is no question in my mind that the delaying of this is something not altogether to the credit of the Administration. I do not propose to put forward any arguments in advance of the outer as against the inner harbour. What the people of Fremantle desire at the earliest possible moment is some definite policy which will afford them security. There is a feeling at the present time that by the sweeping away of the bridges the securities will be affected in some portion of the town, and trade will be diverted in some other direction. Our anxiety in Fremantle is merely for a fair deal. We want something which will not only be in the interests of Fremantle, but of the State as well, and we ask for some commission to settle this question once for all. In advocating the outer harbour, I do so because we have there an expanse of water in which steamers may manœuvre in any weather. We know that the navigators of to-day, with their large steamers, do not like navigating in narrow waters, and we ask that some commission or some expert should be appointed to settle the question at once. In this regard I propose to read another extract from the Harbour Trust's report. This is what the Commissioners say on the question of harbour extension at Fremantle to-day—

The vexed question of the method to be pursued to increase the existing accommodation of Fremantle Harbour is still unhappily unsettled, though the Commissioners have not allowed the matter to become forgotten, but have kept steadily before the Government the necessity for a definite line of action to be decided upon. The opinions of the Commissioners have never altered from their original recommendation that all increases in inner harbour accommodation should be in an up-river direction, and as is well known, the Commissioners have urged most strongly that the extension of the harbour up to the present road bridge should be put in hand and prosecuted steadily till completed. It has been

pointed out that at the rate the trade of the port is increasing, and the manner in which the ships are steadily growing in size, it is almost certain that even if the extension named, which has been so urgently asked for, were pushed on with all speed, there would be hardly sufficient at the date upon which it could be completed, but yet no action, so far as the Commissioners are aware, has been taken in the matter. Since the failure of the attempt to establish a graving dock at Rous Head, no action has been taken in connection with the subject of providing docking accommodation for the port.

Here we have the concluding sentences of the Commissioners, practically rendered desperate—

That Fremantle should be provided with adequate facilities of this nature is imperative, but the Commissioners feel that the subject is so bound up with the scheme which must, despite the apparent procrastination of Governments, soon be evolved for extensions in harbour accommodation generally that it is probably little use to do more at this juncture than to draw attention to the necessity for keeping this important matter in view.

Here we have the question of this harbour extension which, for the past two or three years, has been exercising the minds of the Commissioners to such an extent that they are not in a position to reply to correspondence relating to the draught at which steamers can enter the Fremantle harbour. To take away the railway bridge, and deviate the railway along the southern shore will, it must be realised, even if the work were put in hand to-morrow, take some years to complete. It would take two or three years even to erect a new bridge and to deviate the railway line. Yet we find that no definite policy has been declared, and to-day vessels are unable to be accommodated at the port of Fremantle. I hope the Government will not shelve this matter any further, but will immediately decide in the direction indicated. If they are not sufficiently satisfied with their engineers to accept the experts' recom-

mendations, then let us have someone else to decide it, and let the world know it, because it affects oversea trade to a very considerable extent. In asking for something to be done in this direction I would like to remind hon. members that the Fremantle Harbour Trust is a very profitable business concern; it is one of the rays of sunshine in connection with the revenue and expenditure of the State, it is one of the departments of State that not only provide interest and sinking fund, but pay large sums of money annually into Consolidated Revenue. On its capital cost of £1,500,000 it pays interest and sinking fund, sets aside a sum for renewals, and then pays a large amount into Consolidated Revenue. The Colonial Secretary, in speaking towards the end of 1912 on the Harbour Trust Amendment Bill, referred to the fact that the Trust was not a very payable proposition, and that for the year then just concluded, the sum of £26,548 in excess of its revenue had to be found by the Government in order to put the harbour into working order. Hon. members would think from that there must be something wrong with the administration of the harbour. The figures I quoted were alarming in point of profit making. Naturally when the Colonial Secretary made this reference to the deficit it must have left a doubt as to the veracity of my statements. The Fremantle Harbour Trust's report was not then published, but the official document is now before all members, and I just wish to say that on the total capital invested in connection with the harbour of Fremantle they have paid nearly 8 per cent. on that amount. I will just read this short extract in order not to weary the House. I have culled out the financial portion of it just to show to the House the chief position from the financial standpoint—

The revenue for the year has been very satisfactory and constitutes a record, the gross earnings reaching £199,768 4s. 4d., the surplus over working expenses being equal to 7.9 per cent. on the capital cost of the harbour. After providing for interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., sinking fund at 1 per cent. on

the capital value of the harbour (£1,566,987 6s. 1d.) and the annual contribution to the renewals and replacements fund (£2,000) there remained a surplus over expenditure of £51,353, an increase in comparison with the previous year of £12,176. Owing to the abandonment of the dock, the reserve, £30,843 15s. 3d. created from harbour improvement rate, to meet the annual charge on this expenditure, was not any longer necessary.

Permit me to say that it is not any longer necessary—the Harbour Improvement rate of 6d. per ton is still in existence—to keep this money set on one side.

This has been carried to the revenue account and has enabled the whole of the extraordinary expenditure, necessary to strengthen the wharves, owing to the ravages of the Teredo navalis, being paid off. Including the expenditure carried over from the previous year, the amount advanced by the Treasury for this special work had reached £47,973 8s. 9d. This advance was repaid and a further sum of £28,529 7s. 2d. forwarded to the Treasury for Consolidated Revenue.

The point I desire to make is that the Fremantle Harbour Trust after a term of some years is enabled to set aside a sum of money to create a fund for maintenance or provide for the wear and tear of the wharf. In one short year after the Treasurer had advanced that amount to the Fremantle Harbour Trust the Commissioners were able to pay the full amount back, namely, £47,000, and pay interest and sinking fund, also a further sum of £29,000 into the Consolidated Revenue of the State. Surely, when you take into consideration a profit making concern or department like the Fremantle Harbour Trust it must be considered to be urgently necessary that the additional works should be proceeded with at once. The Harbour Trust are to-day making sufficient to pay the full amount of interest and sinking fund. If the harbour is extended and more accommodation is provided, if better facilities are offered, and the port made better for shipping, the revenue

would still go up in leaps and bounds, and the profit would increase with the expenditure. I was rather struck with the remarks of Mr. Kirwan when he referred to the finances of the State. He made reference to the dividends. I have no wish to attack the deficit to-day or to refer to any of the enterprises embarked upon by the administration. He made reference to the fact that the deficit of £500,000 which was only one-tenth of the revenue of the State was nothing, and that no business house or commercial firm would take into consideration an overdraft of one-tenth of its revenue. The position is not that at all. To have an overdraft of a tenth of the revenue per annum is not the way in which any commercial house conducts its business. This represents perhaps 5 or 7 per cent. of a loss per month. I venture to express the opinion that if any limited company with a board of directors presented its balance sheet every month with a loss of 5 to 7 per cent. and then continued to present that balance sheet, they would immediately be requested by the shareholders to do one of two things—to mend their ways or to resign. The first question that would be put to them by the shareholders, I take it would be, where are your losses? How are you suffering them and in what departments? If they could put their fingers, as they should be able to do, on the departments of trade which are not profit-making, the shareholders would say, "You must shut down that department or branch or we must get another set of directors."

Hon. J. Cornell: The same argument might be applied to agricultural railways.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Certainly not, it is a different thing investing money where you can see that in a few years to come there will be some profit as a result of it. Where you are embarking in trading concerns, and where you have competition, if you are unable to compete successfully now, how are you going to guarantee that you will be able to compete successfully in a year or so? Take the State steamship service. This service to-day is losing money on account of the competition and no benefits are derived from it by any section of the community. I have yet to



learn that anyone has received any benefits.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Three of the cattle kings are getting something.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: If the State steamship service is in the position to-day of losing on account of the competition, how is it going to pay its way during the next month or, say, during the next year? I know that the State steamship service cannot pay under existing conditions. I have no wish to say to-day the reasons why I think this. It will be seen from reference to the pages of *Hansard* two years ago that I stated that the "Western Australia" could never pay. My advice to the Government as regards the "Western Australia" if they cannot sell or charter her, or do something with her, is to lay her up instead of continuing to lose by her—to do away with her altogether so as to minimise or cut their loss. I ventured to say when I was interrupted by the interjection that no firm or company, immediately they are in a position to place their finger on the weak spot in connection with their administration or the profit-making of the schemes upon which they are embarked or the departments with which they are connected, would fail at once to cut out the weak spots. I do not think it would be any discredit to the present administration, as it is part of their policy to advocate the State steamship service if they went into it believing they could succeed and could accomplish something greater than they actually did accomplish, I say it would be no discredit upon them if, finding the scheme was a failure, they shut it down and did not continue with it any longer. I have no wish to say anything further other than to thank the House for the courtesy which it has extended to me.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): Before discussing the Government's programme, I would like just to make reference to something which fell from the lips of Mr. Lynn, and a somewhat humorous remarks made by Mr. Cornell. Evidently Mr. Lynn is an outer harbour supporter. He believes in plenty of elbow room. In fact, he remarked that there was a great deal of water there. I be-

lieve there is an ocean there if only the waves had the good manners not to interfere with the ships' enjoyment of the freedom of such spacious waters! It would be childish to refer a question like the Fremantle harbour to a board of politicians. Such a question should go to the most capable expert whose services could be secured, wherever that expert may be. I may say that I have had to do with this question for some 20 years past. I made it my duty to get the best opinions I could and those opinions were all to this effect. The Fremantle harbour must in the near future go right up to Perth. That is the settlement of the question. There will be such development here that it will not be a matter of Fremantle or some wharfage in Perth, but a very great portion of the river frontage will be composed of wharves. That is the estimate I have obtained from the best experts I could reach. I say that no government would be justified in rushing a question like this because of some remarks made by a harbour trust or a member of Parliament. It is an enormous question, involving millions and millions of money. It is essential that no steps should be taken towards the almost incalculable cost of the outer harbour until the best expert has pronounced his opinion upon such an undertaking. Perth is going to be the second city of Australia. There is no doubt about it. That is the proper forecast and it is foolish to talk of little notions and waste of money on inadequate works, which money will have to be treated as waste in the future. I hope the Government will move slowly and that they will fortify themselves with the best expert opinion upon that point. In this connection, there is no need to speak of Bunbury. Bunbury always comes out right. Bunbury has plenty of champions. There is no fear of Bunbury being overlooked, but there is fear of Albany being overlooked. I am glad to see reference in the Speech to Albany and also the reports of what is about to be done down there. I want to impress upon the representative of the Government in this House that there is need for precaution

against inadequate steps that would have to be partially undone afterwards. I may remind Ministers of a very strong deputation representing not Albany only, but the whole of the hinterland of Albany, which waited upon the Minister for Works. Albany is not for Albany it is for the back country mainly. Albany is the port, but it is the back country producer that will pay for the harbour. The present proposal is woefully inadequate. This Government and succeeding Governments will say "Oh we spent £65,000 for you and you are not making any great use of the wharfage we gave you." Why? The plan is to build a narrow wharf absolutely too narrow to carry stores and the present trouble would not be ameliorated at all. The present trouble is the double handling of produce, and will there not be double handling still if this jetty is constructed as is proposed? The deputation said to the Minister for Works, "We thank you for your interest in the matter, and we beg of you to make that jetty fit for use, because afterwards you will say, 'Why did you not use it?'" "But," said Mr. Johnson, in his cocksure style, "It is all right, and if you cannot use that, by and by we will build another alongside of it. We will double the width of it." Meanwhile, £65,000 will be lying practically idle, earning practically nothing. We thank the Government for going so far towards the legitimate demands of our harbour, but if they cannot go the whole length with the necessary width of wharfage, give us a shorter one. I was tickled the other evening by an unconscious joke from Mr. Cornell. I love a joke even when made at my expense, if it has humour in it. Mr. Cornell said, with regard to the carpenters' strike that this House was only to blame; if this House had only enacted preference to unionists, there would never have been that strike. To take Mr. Cornell's joke in itself, it reminds me of the kind-hearted burglar who was blamed for butchering a palatial front door. He was asked what need there was to smash it as he did, and he said that the bloke who owned

the house had only himself to blame, for if he had left the door open there would have been no need to batter it. It is begging the question to say that if this House had given preference to unionists the carpenters would not have struck to get it. It is something to laugh at, anyhow, but generally the hon. member is too serious and sedate to perpetrate a joke. Coming to the Speech itself, I think the best item in it is that suggesting an early end of the present regime. The country has suffered nearly three years' blight under the present Administration, and the approaching elections will, at all events, afford an opportunity for dismissing the present Administration. This House is not at all concerned about the name or the party colour of the Administration. That is the stand I have always taken. This House is only concerned about its quality and its aims. I know there are half a dozen members in this House who glory in saying that they belong to the Labour Government, and they profess to believe that the other 24 are party men. I would ask the half dozen members what would happen if the other 24 were equally narrow. What could they do? Even those who have failed to realise the non-party ideals, I hold if they are wise men they will try to believe in it and work towards it. It is the only right ideal for a revisory Chamber. The Legislative Assembly must be a party House. It could not last a week on non-party lines. If it were united to-day, it would be divided up into parties to-morrow. This House can realise a non-party ideal. I hold that this House is only concerned with the quality and the aims of the Administration. What is the quality: what are the aims of the Administration? With the exception of one of its members, the responsible Ministers are altogether unequipped for their high positions. Previously they had only to do with narrow affairs. They have not been in the position to qualify, but that is not so much their fault as their misfortune. As to their aims, they are only

too manifest. The Government have publicly declared through their most eloquent mouthpiece that they are out to bleed the man who by thrift and industry has achieved a position in which he can help to develop the resources of the country, and they are out to give their own supporters the time of their lives and to ostracise all others. I am not speaking in imaginations: these are the declarations of Ministers themselves. Now, about the quality of Ministers. They came to two remarkable conclusions at an early period of their term of office, contradictory conclusions. The first was this: "We are not equal to the administration of this State: we must have, at whatever cost, provincial councils to share the burden with us." And the funny part of it is that these are the very men who, twelve months ago on the referendum, voted to bring about unification. They want one Government at Yass-Canberra for the whole of Australia. What a farce! The other conclusion they came to was this: "In addition to the legitimate interests, that we have admitted we are not equal to, we must take on a lot of little tinpot concrete trading concerns. We are not equal to the administration of the whole State, but we will go beyond it and potter with little twopenny things in competition with the taxpayers, whose money we will use." Contradictory as these two conclusions were, they can be explained. It was a more complete confession of inadequacy for statesmanlike administration and a falling back upon smaller things which they thought they could do. But unfortunately even in these smaller things, run on the Government stroke, there are enormous openings for waste of money. I have said that the aims, which I have characterised in a few words, are amply borne out. As to favouring their own supporters, every industrial measure brought into Parliament by this Government has been vitiated by attempts to give privileges to their own supporters. Then in matters of taxation, and in matters of public service, the same thing occurs. Look at the taxation measures which were brought in last session.

The Government said, "We will raise the income tax exemption from £200 to £250 a year, and that will exempt about 98 per cent. of our supporters. On the other hand, land owners—the farmer fellows—are our enemies, what shall we do for them? We will increase the tax on land and we will wipe out all the exemptions which are in existence." The five years' exemption, which was almost a necessity and which was given to allow the selector to get on his feet, they proposed to wipe out in their precious Bill. Of course this House kicked that Bill out ignominiously. What did the Government do then? They said, "We will get at you just the same; we will multiply the freights on manures three or fourfold." And they did. "We will re-impose the terminal charges on the agricultural lines." And they did, exempting, I believe only one, which mainly served their own supporters, that is the Collie-Narrogin line. This was a barefaced and shameless exercise of partisanship; in favour of their own supporters and against the other fellow. Spoils to the victors. But their vendetta has assumed a more acute form in other directions. What is the explanation of the dismissal of Captain Hare, of Mr. Roe, and Mr. Cowan? There is only one explanation. It is utterly vain for Ministers to say that the 60 year term is the explanation, because others are retained. Why are these men victimised? Because they had the courage to treat unionist leaders and politicians exactly as they would treat anybody else. They refused, in the administration of their offices, to give privilege to unionist leaders and members of Parliament, and out they must go. I say the administration has been dragged in the mire, and has been made an instrument of petty spite and malice. I think there will be general agreement that the Government did wisely in limiting their programme for this session to a few questions, but have they put the most important and most urgent in the forefront? I fully expected to see large measures proposed for immigration. I fully expected to see that crying want of this country, which Ministers professed to recognise in their early speeches. How

is this matter treated in the Speech? Not the slightest reference, and what is the explanation? There is only one. The masters of the party, the conference which sat at Fremantle forbade it and Ministers obediently and subserviently dropped it. They are absolutely afraid to allude to it. It may be said they can encourage immigration just the same. Look at the numbers that came in during the first and second year of their administration. I make bold to say that in both those years it was a harvest of the work done by the previous Government. Take the figures supplied by Mr. Colebatch. They are simply unanswerable. The whole tendency of this Administration on this question has been in harmony with the doctrine of certain labour leaders. These labour leaders say, "We have quite enough labourers, the fewer we have the more money there will be for those here." Is it possible to imagine a Government professing to administer the affairs of a great State taking up such a view of political economy, that the fewer workers the more there will be for them? Surely there could be no more blind policy in the world than that. By the way, there is an amusing feature of this question. Ordinarily, the leaders of the party take this ground, capitalists are altogether an evil, if they can only be sent away the country would be very much the better. But on the immigration question they have again and again found themselves uttering this view, "Do not bring workers here to compete with us. If you must encourage people to come, encourage people to come with money to add to those who employ us." There is another measure about which the Government was very keen some time ago, and now not a word about it. The Plant Diseases Bill was promised for the first day of the session of 1912, and the fruit growers were so anxious about it that they went round talking to members of Parliament and begging them to get it passed within the first week, but when did that Bill come to this House? It came here, not in the session of 1912, but on the last day of the session of 1913, and when it came it was so murdered that practically every power in it was left to the department.

The department was even to fix all fees, registration fees for orchards, and so on. Everything was left to the department. This House said to the Minister, "You cannot expect such a Bill to be handled on the last day of the session, and the Minister in charge of this House very properly said that it was impossible to do it justice on the last day, and the Bill was read *pro forma* a second time and then went over, and we expected it to come up again this session.

The Colonial Secretary: It was rejected.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Certainly not. That is another of the insinuations hurled at this House, and I am sorry the Colonial Secretary has fallen into that error.

The Colonial Secretary: I am only speaking from memory.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is a habit.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Yes, it is a habit to blame this House. I myself went to the Colonial Secretary and said it was impossible for us to do justice to the Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member moved that the Bill be read this day six months.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Certainly not. I supported the second reading, but urged that at that late hour it should go for further consideration to the next session. What have Ministers done? They have dropped the Bill. Their excuse to the public is this, that the Legislative Council would not pass it. It is monstrous that the Government should so traduce the Council. By the way, in this connection, if the Colonial Secretary will allow me, I may say that he is not the worst sinner in this respect in the Cabinet. I want to point out a matter of fair play and fair dealing. During the recess the Ministers have the ear of the country, and quite right, too, but other members of Parliament have not. Would it not be a fair thing for Ministers to say that because we have the ear of the country and other members have not, we ought to be doubly careful to be just? Instead of that Ministers have never missed an opportunity, good, bad, or indifferent, of attacking the Legislative

Council and charging upon them almost all the sins in the decalogue. We have done everything wrong, and nothing right. I think it is unworthy of Ministers to do that. Regarding the railway Bills, there are six of them. I do not believe there will be serious discussion on any but one. Five will no doubt be passed on the information that will be supplied, and the knowledge of members, with no difficulty. The other, the Esperance Northwards, I am not going to debate at length. It will be time enough when the Bill comes before us, but so much having been said about it, I cannot pass it by in silence. I think the attitude of the majority in this Chamber is this, there is a great deal to be said for connecting the railway system at Norseman with Esperance when settlement has proved that it can be made a paying line in a reasonable time. There is a great deal to be said for that line. But there is nothing that can be said for the building of a railway from Esperance to nowhere. It can never pay, or be of much service to settlement. I am shocked by the figures supplied by Mr. Colebatch—I know something of the country—and if those figures had left out two old farming properties that existed twenty years ago, and they really cannot be counted in the present argument of the Government, if they had been left out, what sort of a report would there have been? It would have been such a display of absolute failure that I do not think even the Colonial Secretary could have said a word for the line.

The Colonial Secretary: You know the boundaries of the district?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: In a general way I have a fair knowledge. I am satisfied that whatever may be done in the future towards connecting Esperance with Norseman, the proper course for Ministers to take would be to examine the proposal for a line from the extreme east end of the Esperance belt through the length of that belt to Ravensthorpe, and on to the Great Southern line. I am satisfied that will be a rational settlement of the question. Later on, if the phenomenal settlement ensues that the Ministry hope for, it may be necessary to

run a line from Esperance to Norseman, but certainly the line of immediate importance is that which will open up the greatest part of the country. Some members may not know that the stretch of country to be served does not run from Esperance to Norseman, but is a narrow strip running across that line.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It does not run from Esperance to Broomehill by any means.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The line from Esperance to Norseman is roughly north and south, but the country to be served lies east and west and about the middle of the north and south line. The line from Norseman to Esperance would only be for 30 miles of its length in country that is worth opening. An east and west line would serve the country round Ravensthorpe as well as the Esperance lands. That line will undoubtedly be built whether the present Government do it or not. However, I shall discuss the Esperance proposal when the Bill comes forward. What have the Government put in the forefront of their programme? They have put forward certain constitutional problems and the re-introduction of the Irrigation and Traffic Bills. With regard to the Irrigation and Traffic Bills I would say that if Ministers are guided by the lessons of the discussions of last session and have improved the Bills in the light of those lessons, this House will undoubtedly do its utmost to perfect these Bills. But on the other hand if Ministers are relying only on pertinacity, I would not hold out much hope for the measures. If it is a matter of pure pertinacity and the bludgeoning through of these Bills by force instead of intellect I have not very much hope for the measures. With reference to the amending of the Constitution are the present Ministers the men to be accepted as Constitution builders, with their doctrines of spoils to the victors and vendetta against everyone else? Are these the men to turn Constitution builders. When the Constitution was framed, wise men who had the work in hand bore in mind that a country like Western Australia would be in great danger from what is known as the float-

ing vote—birds of passage, people who remained in the country for a while and then put on their hats and cleared away. The framers of the Constitution said—“We will allow every adult to have a vote for one House, the Legislative Assembly”—nothing could be more liberal—“but,” they added, “for the revising House we shall limit the vote to the settled people of the country”—not the rich people, for there are rovers who are richer than settled people. The line of division had nothing whatever to do with wealth; it had to do with the attitude of the people to the country. The people who have made this their home and who therefore will take care not to injure its interests by hasty legislation, these are the people who should have the power in the revising chamber. I think this is a happy balancing power.

Hon. J. Cornell: Did not the same power give New South Wales its Constitution?

Hon. W. Patrick: In New South Wales they are learning wisdom.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Not necessarily the same framers; New South Wales has an assembly elected on adult franchise, but has a nominee Council, a weaker House than this. I think the Western Australian Constitution is a happy combination of privileges and powers. Every adult has a vote for one House and the people who make this their home and identify themselves with it, not by wealth, but by their attitude to the country, have a revising voice. Surely this is a liberal franchise—£50 a year freehold; £10 a year as a selector's rent to the Crown; £17 a year rent of house—there are few houses let for less rent than this and it amounts practically to household suffrage. The Constitution builders made a fair balancing of power, but what do Ministers propose?

Hon. J. Cornell interjected.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The whole of Australia carried the Constitution of the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Home Government had to agree to it.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: It was framed by the picked men of Australia.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The Home Government could not initiate.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I am prepared to discuss that question when the time arrives. What do Ministers now propose? If this proposal had not been put forward on their behalf by reliable men one could hardly refrain from laughing and one could hardly believe that it emanated from grown-up men. The proposal is that this House shall submit its fate to this roving vote. These comers and goers could be excited to the same hatred of the Council as Ministers seem to bear; the same desire to slander and abuse as Ministers seem to indulge in. It would be easy to do this; but what a childish proposal! The framers of the Constitution have deliberately saved the country from the risk of this mere nomadic floating vote—people who are here to-day and starting for the other side of the world to-morrow. Do Ministers seriously believe, or are they themselves laughing at the suggestion that this House shall consent to such a silly proposal? Of course it will be dismissed in this House with very little ceremony. I would like, in a few words, to suggest some things which the Government could well substitute for these academic debates which might occupy a great part of the session and come to nothing. They might wisely add to their railway list, not lines like the Esperance railway which have yet to be proved and which I will gladly entertain when proved, but lines to centres where settlers have gone out and are actually producing very nearly enough to make a railway pay, and where they have given evidence that the production could be so multiplied that the railway would pay in a very short time. These selectors have not said—“Build us a railway and we will go out.” but have gone out 20, 30, 40, and 50 miles and have been prepared to wait. I suggest such lines as one from Ongerup to Needilup, an extension of the Tambellup-Ongerup line which would

pay straight away. The settlers are out there on a belt of some 300,000 acres of splendid land in one piece and have been there for three or four years. Let the Government add this line to their list. Then there is the Tambellup westward line through country where the land has been proved and where the settlers have shown their ability to produce freights for a railway to carry. The third proposal is the Mount Barker westward line. This has been entertained favourably by two Governments and yet nothing has been done. I believe that the matter of this line is to be brought before Ministers by deputation during this week and, in an aside, I would ask the Colonial Secretary to save the time of members of Parliament, even if it might cause a little trouble to Ministers, by fixing deputations on Parliamentary days when the country members are in town. This deputation is fixed for Friday when all of us who are not professional politicians must be back at their work. It would be a great concession to country members if Ministers arranged to receive deputations on Parliamentary days. The fourth railway and the last which I will mention is the completion of the line from Albany to Bridgetown, the bridging of the gap between Denmark and Wilgarup, a splendid area of country which would pay magnificently and through which a railway ought to be built. The other day I came across a most interesting political parable which I would like the House to hear. If hon. members enjoy it as much as I did, they will thank me for having given it. It treats with the enterprise of certain people and the somewhat misdirected enterprise of certain other people and how that enterprise was valued by the proprietor most concerned. Before proceeding to quote it I would like to say apropos of the carpenters' strike, that I am not afraid of strikes. I am willing to give men freedom to strike if we can only have freedom to work.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: The right to work.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I believe that is a plank of the Labour platform—the

right for some people to work and to prevent other people from getting any. That is the interpretation of it. I am not afraid of a strike provided that the country which grants it insists on freedom to work. That is to say any man or set of men can lay down their tools with perfect freedom so long as they do not take upon themselves to prevent other people from working.

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

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: My little parable includes some dialogue, and it would have been much better if I had the help of the Colonial Secretary or Mr. Cornell, though perhaps they might stick at some of the things they would have to say, therefore I shall do my best by myself. The central figure in the parable is a Miss West.

Miss West found herself an heiress of spacious lands and numerous going concerns in various departments of trade and commerce, and, under a wave of feeling, entrusted the management of her affairs to six uncles. Those uncles fervently assured her that the spending of her money would be the worst that could befall, since they hated borrowing, and would go down rather than hypothecate a thing. They were not long in command, however, when Miss West began to get short of money, and to hear bitter complaints from her people that her Uncles were taxing them for fads of their own in competition with the very industries they were taxing. So Miss West called a conference of the uncles and demanded an account of their stewardship, beginning with Uncle Jack.

Miss West: Uncle Jack, my affairs seem to be getting into a bad way. An heiress ought not to have empty pockets, and bills pouring in for accounts she cannot pay. Some cheques in my name have already been marked "payable when funds admit." What on earth has come over my uncles?

Uncle Jack: Oh! they're all right, Miss. Never was a 'appier family. An' you're all right too, Miss, if you'll

only give your uncles time to make good. We've a lot of new concerns in hand that'll make you rich and prosperous.

Miss West: But I appointed my uncles to manage. Instead of that I hear that they have started a lot of tin-pot trading affairs which are competing with my people and losing my money.

Uncle Jack: Yarns, Miss! Old wives' yarns—that is, about the losses. We're making money, we are; or, at least, we are on the sure way to make it.

Miss West: They say, Uncle Jack, that you've started a meat shop, and that you are actually buying at 8d. and selling at 5d. and 7d.

Uncle Jack: Ha! Ha! Miss, that's good. Of course, we've bought some meat at 8d., and we're selling that meat at 5d., 6d., and 7d. That's just a joke on the butcher johnnies. But, take it from me, we're not losing money. You see, we have stock on the big run we bought for you, and that stock we are putting in at 3d. So you see how we can sell at 5d. to 7d.

Miss West: But, Uncle Jack, I knew that before. You spent £140,000 of my money on that run, saying you were going to settle a lot of people on it. You have broken the law by holding it back. The interest on that money is £6,000, and the meat you are selling off that land is worth, not 3d., but 8d., on the market, and has cost me, not pence, but shillings per pound. This may be a joke on the butchers, but it is a costly one. I think, Uncle Jack, you'll have to get a shop of your own.

Uncle Jack: Not for mine. I'm going squatting when my present billet fails.

Miss West: That reminds me, Uncle Jack. I've heard, but put it down to enemies' slander, that my Uncles, using their inner knowledge, had grabbed an immense area of pastoral lands made valuable by public expenditure, and, after forfeiting all right to it by failure to fulfil conditions, were now about to form a squat-

ters syndicate for its exploitation. When this land had been made valuable by public expenditure in its neighborhood, don't you think my uncles should have reserved it for higher terms in my interest?

Uncle Jack: See here, Miss. Your uncles may look a soft lot, but number one must come in somewhere. Sooner or later our friends of to-day will turn on us, and we've just looked ahead and secured a snug place of retreat.

Uncle Bill came next, and so jauntily and cock-surely, that he opened the ball himself patronisingly suggesting that Miss West should give her Uncles time to produce results before bothering to look into such things.

Miss West: But, Uncle Bill, since you are working for me, I like to know how things are going. I understand you have started brick yards, timber mills, and other concerns. How much money will have to be found for all these things?

Uncle Bill: Impossible to say, Miss, but they'll be worth it, if only to show people how those things should be done.

Miss West: But do you know, Uncle Bill, how they should be done? What was your biggest undertaking before you offered to help me? I'm told it was the patching of an old weather-board house?

Uncle Bill: Well, it was a good sized house, anyway. Besides, that has nothing to do with fitness for bigger things. You see, Miss, it's the opportunity that makes the man.

Miss West: Is it true, Uncle Bill, that after giving the men you employ four smoke-ols a day on full pay, you allow them to smoke all the time?

Uncle Bill: Why not?

Miss West: For one thing, it isn't your own money you're wasting. For another thing, with your "sit-down" smoke-ols and all-day smoke-oh added, they won't be men when you are through with them.

Uncle Mick was not long on the carpet, for he was the one man who knew how hollow was the farce he had



to assist in, and he was too straight to attempt any dust throwing.

Miss West: Uncle Mick, about those steamers you started without as much as "with your leave," and at so great a cost to my purse, who would have thought of you as a skipper? Tell me straight, how far are the rocks ahead?

Uncle Mick: I'm playing the game. If it were not for that I'd be glad to see the old hulks scuttled. The cost is about £100,000, and the losses won't exceed £30,000 a year!

Miss West: Uncle Mick, have you no sense of humour? My Uncles told me—after they had spent the £100,000, mind you—that they so keenly pitied the small producers in their unequal competition with the cattle kings, they felt justified in risking my money on those wretched steamers. Up till now one of the boats has been monopolised by one big cattle king, whilst two other big men have had nearly all the service of the other boat! For this fiasco I am losing £30,000 a year!

Uncle Phil came next, and looked so simple and harmless that Miss West let him also down lightly.

Miss West: How are my mines doing Uncle Phil?

Uncle Phil: Not so well as I could run them through the unions if I only could get my way. You see, miss, the directors and managers are so conceited that they hardly listen to me, though I've been a practical digger myself.

Miss West: But do you really know anything of mine management? I'm told that your digging was not below—in fact that you only dug post-holes for a fence on a miner's homestead! It's a good thing your face gives you away Uncle Phil, or you might have closed many of my mines, never to be reopened!

Uncle Henry looked still more harmless than Uncle Phil, and it was more in sorrow than in anger that Miss West turned upon him.

Miss West: Of all my Uncles you have the best intentions Uncle Henry,

and yet you have wrought most mischief. My lands are the foundation of everything, and you have, with the best intentions, made a mess of them. Your first blunder was to cast doubts on titles, bringing down all creditors on my unfortunate settlers. Then you warned off all intending new settlers by threatening that I would grant no freeholds in future. You have starved my surveyors, whom I assembled at great cost, and you have turned my lands office into a wilderness!

Uncle Henry: It takes time to reveal the benefit of great ideals. Perhaps if you waited—

Miss West: Are you blind or only crazed, Uncle Henry? Can't you see that my people won't have your notions at any price. Why, look at your experiment at forcing your notions under the Worker's Homes. You actually offered an inducement of one-sixth off the interest, which really means a 16 per cent. bribe, and yet your own immediate friends refuse it. Only one in six of your applicants have taken that bribe. All the rest insist on freeholds. I notice, Uncle Henry, that you secured a good block of land under freehold conditions for yourself before trying to shut the door in the face of later comers. Well, Uncle Henry, this muddling must end, and you were prudent enough to get that soft commissionership for Panama Exhibition. You can't do much mischief there. Your administration here will be remembered as the "blight of blights."

Last of all came Uncle Tom with his never-to-be-forgotten smile on his new-shaven face.

Miss West: I hardly know what to say to you, Uncle Tom.

Uncle Tom: Well, Miss West, let me do the talking. That's my strong point. Of course you and I know what a lot of make-believe is necessary in dealing with the crowd. But between ourselves we can drop all that. You probably think my speechifying to the crowd so much rot—well, it is and it isn't. If you can't cure the troubles of the world, the next best

thing is to divert the mind from those troubles. That's why I rant so much.

Miss West: We'll leave it at that, Uncle Tom, only you must find new fields for your talent. I'm going for a new set of Uncles!

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): It is a little hard on me to have to address the members of this House after the speech that has just been concluded by our hon. friend. One might almost call that speech an anecdote, but I would prefer to say it was a parable, because a parable is usually defined as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. However, to let the last speech alone for a short time, I wish to say that since hearing the Speech of His Excellency read the other day, I have given a little time and consideration to its contents. And it has been so thoroughly complete and includes almost everything, that I find, as far as I may judge, there have only been two real omissions. The first is that the Government have taken no credit to themselves for the rain which has recently fallen. It was not mentioned in the Speech, and I can only put it down to the theory that as the Government never do things by halves they omitted it on purpose because the rain was not general and only extended to certain portions of the State.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It may have been modesty.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The other omission is that little subject known as the deficit. That seems to have been overlooked. It is of but slight importance and evidently it would have been superfluous to have mentioned it in the columns of that wise paper. It has been the custom during the debate to preface speeches with some regret for those who are absent, and I should like to say we shall miss the abilities, efforts, and services of both Mr. Moss and Mr. Connolly. They were men who applied themselves to their work ungrudgingly; they did it very thoroughly, and the many years of experience which each had in the House was of great service not only to himself and other members but to the State. In regard to Mr. Pennefather I have already

made a few remarks, and therefore I come down to our friend Mr. Davis. I can say with genuine regret that I am sorry he is out of the House. He was one of the most fair-minded, unprejudiced men I have ever met, and the only fault about him was that he was to some extent permeated with that awful failing known as unionism. He had not the disease quite as badly as some other members of the House, but there was a certain amount of it grafted on to him. At the same time, he was exceedingly fair-minded and open-minded and he was a good reasoner. I have always looked upon Mr. Kirwan, whose genial smile and pleasing appearance I am glad to see have not been lost to us, as one of our best debaters, and he certainly is an admirable debater; but I looked upon Mr. Davis as almost our best reasoner, because he gave good reasons for whatever he did, and was in all respects a most satisfactory member, his only fault being that his leanings were on the wrong side. I wish him well wherever he is, and without using the words in a funereal sense, I would say of him *requiescat in pace*. Of course I am only echoing the feelings of every member when I say that I deeply regret the illness of Mr. Piesse. He is missed quite as much as any member who has ever been amongst us. Now I come down to the remarks that were made in connection with the Governor's Speech, and time will not permit me to criticise all that fell from the mover and the seconder, interesting as it was. I may state that in 33 years' experience in the House I never was more surprised at the speech of a new member than I was in regard to that of Mr. Millington. For sheer confidence and sheer saying-what-he - thought - without - knowing - altogether-much-about-it, I do not think I ever heard his equal. It is usually considered a little discourteous to criticise speeches of new members, but when I find one come here with such barefaced confidence, and criticising everything and everybody in the terms which he used, I cannot help referring to it with amusement, if not astonishment. I took the trouble to carefully take down some of

the little things he said. Instead of coming into the House with a view of seeing every Bill and judging of it on its merits, his first remark was this—

In speaking to the subject matter contained in the Speech delivered by His Excellency, it naturally affords me much pleasure as a supporter of the present Government—

That does not look as if he came here with an open mind to judge of Bills and other matters. He is an avowed supporter and partisan of the present Government. After a declaration of that kind, he commences to take the House to task. These are the words he used. Mind you, this is coming from a young member who has had no experience, and of whom it may be said that whatever he knows is mere hearsay.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): He may have read *Hansard*.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: This is what the hon. member said—

The position so far as this Chamber was concerned was becoming intolerable. As far as I am concerned, I am safe in referring to this. At the same time I can assure you, at the time, as an outsider myself it appeared to me to be very difficult for mere outsiders to understand how it was that a section of the community, at least a Chamber representing the community, considered they were justified in ignoring what was undoubtedly a mandate from the whole of the electors, or a very large majority of the electors of this State. The time will come undoubtedly when this will have to be decided, when we will see whether the great majority of the electors of this State are to have their ideas put into effect in regard to legislative enactments, or whether a section of the community is to ignore the wishes of those who should have the control of the legislation of this State.

Now, with all due deference, these are very pronounced opinions to come from a young and inexperienced member who has not even yet had much experience of the House. If at his age I had had

the confidence he has, I think I could have been anything. I want to say nothing more about his speech, but will leave the rest of it to take care of itself, and will just make a few remarks about our dear friend and colleague, Mr. Cornell. Of course we know him and expect something from him, and we get it. To take him in all seriousness it seems to me he says a lot of things without consideration, things which afterwards he would prefer not to have said. Here is a little extract from his speech—

When we take the figures of three years' Liberal administration that preceded the present Government, and we find that the Liberal Government introduced 172 measures, of which 115 were passed and two were rejected by this Chamber, and then compare that with three years of the present Government and find that out of 173 measures 122 were passed and 32 rejected by the Council—

There he draws a comparison. What is the obvious answer? Why, that those 32 Bills were not fit to be brought down to the House, that the 32 rejected were rejected on their merits; and I have no hesitation in saying, as he has made the comparison, that if those 32 Bills had been brought down by the Liberal Government they would have had the same treatment at the hands of this House.

Hon. W. Patriek: They were not rejected; for the most part they were dropped by the Government.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Most probably, but I was taking his word for it.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Does it apply to the Redistribution of Seats Bill?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Probably. I cannot remember now any of the details of that measure. I am only speaking to the remarks the hon. member made. If those 32 Bills had been sent down by the Liberal Government they would probably have been treated in exactly the same way; because I echo the remarks of Mr. Cullen when he says that the majority of members of

this House take the Bills that come down here on their merits, independent of what Government may be in power. I can certainly say that of myself. I am only going to weary the House with one more extract from Mr. Cornell's speech. The hon. member went on to say—

And if this Chamber will not bow to the will of the people as expressed through the voice of the people of this State—

Of course the electors for this House have nothing to say in it. The hon. member continued—

then I say the present Government have every right on behalf of the people of Western Australia to appeal to the authority which gave this country its Constitution, equally as the Commons of Britain appealed to the King against the prerogatives of the Lords. Probably that will be done, and I assure hon. members that we are out for gore.

There is language for an Upper House, a House of revision! The hon. member continued—

You have got either to mend or end your ways, or we will do all that is absolutely possible to either mend or end this Chamber and thereby give expression to the will of the people as expressed in the will of another place. There is a nice thing for an hon. member to say to other members of the House! Surely we have a perfect right to be here, despite Mr. Cornell. We were sent here under the Constitution, in a fit and proper manner, and I do not think we should have language like this hurled at us. I know I nearly shrivelled up under it. Who sent us here? There are 50,000 electors on the rolls for this House, and they are 50,000 electors who have proved that they have some interest at stake in the country. That does not seem a great number, perhaps, but I am prepared to guarantee that these 50,000 represent at least three others, or perhaps four, who may not have votes; so I have not much hesitation in saying that the people who vote for this House represent no fewer than from 150,000 to 200,000 persons. And it must be remembered that the

voters are practically all breadwinners. Therefore I say that to make this absurd statement and declare that the House does not represent anybody or anything, or any considerable portion of the community, or only a portion of the community which is not of very great moment, is casting a reflection on them, and particularly when we remember that these 50,000 voters have also a vote for the other House. Under the circumstances, I consider that we have a very great backing when we are sent here. When I hear statements like these made by Mr. Cornell—I suppose the hon. member has some purpose in making them, but I do not know what it is—when I hear statements like these it seems to me they are made from one side of the question only. It puts me in mind of a statement made by Herbert Spencer, who said that the pride of knowledge is humble as compared with the pride of ignorance.

Hon. J. Cornell: It grieved me very much to have to make these remarks.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I am extremely sorry also, and probably you will withdraw them in due time. Whilst feeling with hon. members in this House who have made speeches, I must again refer to the remarks that fell from the lips of the hon. Mr. Cornell, when he said that members of the Ministry had big and particular opportunities for addressing the public during the recess, more so than any members of the House had, and this is exceedingly true. Whenever a Minister goes he is expected to address the people in the district in which he happens to be, and unfortunately at this time I have one fault to find with the hon. leader of this House, Mr. Drew. He is one that I have rarely had to criticise. I am, however, obliged on this occasion to do so, especially after the remarks of the hon. Mr. Cullen. I was present at a meeting when Mr. Drew made a speech. I may say it was the only speech I have heard the Minister make during recess. It was at Geraldton and to a large house. I may say I rather resented the position which Mr. Drew took up at that time. The hon. gentle-

man is not only the Colonial Secretary in the Government, but holds a high and dignified position as leader of this House. I am sorry to say that during that speech, although he stated many facts and a good deal of truth, he did not speak the whole truth. He left a great deal to inference which was damaging to this Chamber. Not only that, but in a very able speech he turned many members of this Chamber into ridicule, and I was one of them. I was rather amused at it. If I had had half an hour to spare to answer it we would have got nearly level I think. I do not think it is quite the place of the leader of this House to go about the country turning members of this Chamber—who have loyally abided by his decisions, and who have always attempted to give the most careful consideration to the Acts which he brings down—into ridicule before his constituents. In looking through the speech I do not propose to refer to a great many subjects. There was one that interests my constituents chiefly, and it is described in about two lines.—“The future of the meat trade in Australia, particularly in this State, is engaging the careful attention of my advisers.” If there is one serious question which affects Western Australia at the present time, if there is one action which I think the Government have been dilatory in carrying out during their term of administration, it is in regard to the establishment of meat works at Wyndham. Wyndham is the port for the centre of the greatest amount of production of beef. The great trouble after growing it and getting it into the port is the shipping of it from Wyndham to Fremantle. There are affected some 300 or 400 producers. I am quite certain that had the Government had the enterprise to establish meat works of some kind up there the meat would not have been the price it is at the present time.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): The hon. member does not believe in socialism.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I believe in the Government undertaking some works which they can carry out

satisfactorily. On this occasion I am only speaking on the matter because had they spent the money that they have spent on steamers upon these meat works, they would have done something more advantageous to the community, and I have no hesitation in saying it would have had the effect of keeping down the price of meat. What has happened in consequence of their not having initiated the works? The Commonwealth Government have come to some sort of agreement with a private firm to establish them at Port Darwin. I happen to be interested in a large cattle property in the Northern Territory, and I was extremely anxious to see that the products of that particular district were brought to Wyndham and so used in the State. As soon as the railway is finished to the Katherine and these works are established at Port Darwin I am very much afraid that not only will the produce of that station be lost to Wyndham, but that there will not be sufficient cattle left on all those stations around Wyndham to justify another set of works. I hope I may be wrong to that extent. I blame the Government largely for having taken no steps to initiate and erect these works, and so be able to bring down a regular and cheap supply from Wyndham right through to Fremantle, and reduce the extreme cost of meat at the present time. I find that the constituency I represent, which produces thousands of thousands of cattle that cannot be made use of for want of meat works, in the Speech is disposed of in a line and a half. I ask the leader of the House, representing this Government—does he think that the Government have done justice to that large and considerable number of producers? I do not propose to say anything more about it. I hope the leader of the House in his reply will be able to say that perhaps the Government have some plan, that they have some method of utilising the meat up there, and so doing away with the terrible want of it down here. I next come to the question of industrial enterprises. I see some mention is made of sawmills, of brick kilns, and State steamers, and other things. I was and am, and always have been, opposed to

the Government going into these industrial concerns. It is impossible for the Government to carry out successfully any industrial concerns where there is competition. If it was a Liberal Government which had brought these down without any regard to the expenditure I would have taken up exactly the same position. The circumstances are such that it is impossible for them to be able to compete with experienced people who make these businesses their sole consideration. If I were to oppose it for a Liberal Administration how much more would I do so with a Labour Administration, for the simple reason that all those who help to carry out these works and are employed upon them are the masters of those who have initiated them. A Labour Administration is of course dependent entirely upon the workers. They are placed in their positions by the workers, and if they do not carry out the wishes of the workers the workers can put them out again. Take the position of the Minister for Railways for example. Supposing they wanted an increase of some sort and he refused to give it, they would, at the next election, get somebody else in who would. Under these circumstances it is impossible that any industry or business could be carried out successfully, where those who are employed are the masters. These are the reasons why I oppose the State industries. I think, if private money were allowed to be invested in these things, they would be carried out just as well. My theory of Government is that it is their duty to control and regulate the country so that everyone can carry on his natural avocation peacefully and without interruption. It is the duty of the Government to administer the laws made in Parliament and not to undertake a number of industrial enterprises. No doubt when the Government undertook these they did so with the best of intentions. No doubt they were advised and were convinced that they were going to do all that they hoped to do. I am afraid, however, by this time they are sadder and wiser men. The longer they go on the more experience they will have that this will be so. There are one or two exceptions, but still they will not prove the

rule. Taking them all round, it would be very much wiser if the Government would give them up. I come now to the question of harbour improvements, and improvements in various harbours. I can only hope and trust—and I shall do everything I can to assist the Colonial Secretary in trying to get good harbour and shipping appointments at Geraldton—that these improvements will be carried out. Everyone who has visited the Geraldton district knows what a splendid lot of land there is and what wheat-producing capabilities are behind it, and how prolific it can be made by its careful culture and farming. Under these circumstances every encouragement should be given to those who go on the land, so that once they have grown their produce and shipped it to Geraldton there will be no trouble about shipping their produce from Geraldton. A good port and good shipping accommodation, and a first-class method of handling wheat are absolutely necessary. I have no hesitation in saying that Geraldton will probably become the second port in Western Australia, and the largest wheat-producing port in the State. We next come to the various Bills that are to be introduced again. Amongst them I recognise some old friends. I can hardly imagine that they will be submitted again here in the same form as they were submitted before, because it would be a needless waste of time. What is the use of submitting Bills time after time in the same form when they have already been refused? I can hardly insult the intelligence of the Government by supposing that they will bring these Bills down exactly in the same way as they were brought down before. I am looking forward to some changes. If they are brought down in the same way as they were before, how can the Government expect anything else than that they will be again refused? Had there been an election, or had the members of this Chamber been returned from the people, had there been any change of aspect at all in regard to these Bills, and had they then come back, even in their original form, I should have given them the most careful and respectful consideration under the circumstances.

But when we find the same set of Ministers, the same Houses of Parliament, and the same members continually sending down the same Bills when they have once before been returned, it is an absolute waste of time. I cannot understand why this sort of thing is done, unless it is the cry due to the coming election, which I know of course the Government would not take advantage of. Unless it is for that reason I cannot understand why they have been brought down. With reference to railways, I see that the Esperance railway is again before us. I intend to oppose it, as I opposed it before, and upon exactly the same grounds. It is almost like reiteration for me to give those grounds, because Mr. Holmes put them very clearly the other day. I would not support a railway at Esperance, which means a new system, new workshops, new offices, a fresh staff in every way, especially when we have lots of land and many railways which are not fully utilised at present. Then again, if the land were of the very best in the State—which it is not—I would not have it, because there is not a sufficient number of people living in the district. It is impossible that that railway should ever pay, because in addition to the costs I have mentioned, it would be necessary to carry out a whole lot of harbour works as well. So that, under these circumstances, it is an impossible proposition, and, as I suggested last year, rather than spend the amount proposed on that railway, it would pay better to buy out those men and put them somewhere else. I have heard it rumoured that many of those who are holding the land are waiting until they hear the railway pass, and they will give the opportunity to their fellows of taking it up by saying to them, "You can take the land now that the railway is coming." I hardly believe that that is true, but it has been freely rumoured. In regard to the Midland Railway Company, I would like to say that not only this Government but other Governments have treated that company unfairly. It is beyond question that the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway was

specially constructed to irritate and to do harm to the Midland Company.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not a sin of the present Government.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: It is not a sin; it is a virtue.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Whether it is or not, my opinion is that spur lines should have been constructed from the Midland Company's line, and these would have served the purpose. I contend that a railway company which has done so much good to Western Australia, such as the Midland Company, which began the construction of its line at a time when no sane man would have thought of building a railway, a company which has kept the line going all these years without any profit—indeed the profits were so poor that none of the original shareholders got a penny out of the line—a company such as this, should not have been denied fair treatment. Either acknowledge them as being of some use to the country or buy them out by giving them a fair sum of money, but we should not try to damage them by putting up a railway on one side of them, and, as another administration did, establish a steamship service on the other side. That is not the way to encourage people to invest money in Western Australia. I must apologise for having taken up so much valuable time, but it necessary that I should do so owing to the splendid speeches of the mover and the seconder of the Address-in-reply. I can only say in conclusion, in the words that I find at the bottom of the Speech, that I hope our deliberations will be attended with the best good to the country. I have much pleasure in supporting the Address-in-reply.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East): On the hustings, and previous to taking part in my election I was always led to believe that the Legislative Council was a non-party chamber, but sitting here and listening to the speeches which have been made, I have come to the conclusion that it is a party house. I had no intention of referring to the party that I represent to-day, but hon. members have seen fit

to make some mention of it on several occasions, and I think it is my duty to defend it to a certain extent and explain its position in the political arena. Mr. Cornell stated that we were a joint in the tail of the Liberal party. I would tell the hon. member that that is not correct. We are standing as a separate political party, and, so far as I know, we mean to continue on that line. We were in the position that we found existing parties had done so very little for us in the way of good administration, that we were forced to establish this party of our own. We are not allied with any one party. In this respect I might inform hon. members that at the present time we intend to call for nominations from persons willing to contest the Dampier seat, and in addition also to call for nominations from those who may be willing to contest the Senate seats. That will prove conclusively that we have no intention of becoming allied with any other party. We are determined to stand on the ground we took up at the commencement. If we had any intention of becoming allied with any party, what would have been the use of setting out as a separate political body? Rather would we have stepped in and tried to improve existing parties. However, we found ourselves in the position that we thought improvements could be brought about, and the only avenue open to us was the step we have taken of forming the party which is ours at the present time. The results of the recent elections have proved conclusively that a large body of the electors are with us in addition to those who are members of our party. My own contest proved conclusively that I was not sent here by members of the Country party alone, and the huge majority I received over both candidates, shows plainly at the outset that the electors generally are looking for a clean and sound political body, and a body whose views are broad. We have the interests of the whole State at heart, in fact the whole of the Commonwealth, and we are in the position that we stand for the betterment not of one class but of the whole community. The

position of the primary producer in Australia is as a drudge in the body politic. That position may be summed up as follows:—The soldier fights for all, the preacher prays for all, the lawyer pleads for all, the merchants sells for all, but the poor unfortunate producer has to pay for all. That is one of the reasons why we are here to-day. The only time we find that our interests as farmers are looked after, or that promises are made that they will be looked after, is on the eve of an election. We find then that we have lots to look after our interests. But, unfortunately, as soon as the heat of the election is over, and the successful candidates have assumed their seats in the legislative halls, that is the last which is heard of the promises to any extent. The primary producer has opposed to him the great protective interests of the secondary industries. The powerful combination of unionism is protecting the worker, but the farmer has no protection. The primary producer receives no benefit whatever from the protected secondary industries. Here is an illustration: to-day we find 155 capitalists are engaged in the manufacture of agricultural implements, and the cost of these machines, as all know, even those who are outside the industry, is strangling us. Does the worker benefit by the increased cost through heavy protection? Let us glance at his side. The whole of the industry in the Commonwealth employs 1,516 hands and the average wage is £2 1s. 2d. per employee; therefore, for the benefit of 155 chosen persons, our industry is paralysed, and that without any profit to the worker, although the worker is told to-day that protection means bettering his lot. It does not better his lot; neither will the new protection better his lot one iota. We as a country party are not fighting for political power, but for political representation; we are not fighting for the right to govern, but are making a determined fight for the right to live, which I maintain is denied us to-day. The right to live is given secondary industries by parliamentary protection; the right to



live is given labour by a strong and powerful organisation, by the protection of powerful unions. But the primary producer upon whom the secondary industries, the artisan, the merchants, and the State generally, depend, has to fight a long, losing battle, and there are those to-day not only in the outer world but in legislative halls who would deny the right to the primary producer to have direct representation in Parliament. Why should not the backbone of the country have its representatives in Parliament as well as other sections? The primary producer has every duty put upon his requirements, and the commodities he uses, plus the merchants profits, and has to submit to every increase in wages. He has also to bear the high freights, both by land and sea. He has bad roads and incomplete or no railway conveniences whatever. He has to contend against bad seasons and acts of God and when he has reaped his harvest he has to compete in the world's markets against cheap labour, countries like India and Russia, against the better and cheaper handling costs in Canada, America, and the Argentine Republic. And of course it will be remembered that those countries are working without any protection, and are not hampered with the load we are hampered with here at the present time. So that to-day, in this State of ours, it is correct to say that no class reaps less for their labour than the primary producer, the backbone of the country, and the industry that the whole of Australia's success depends upon. I am not ignoring the gold mining industry; it has done splendidly for the State, and as a representative of the Country party it will receive every consideration at my hands. We are not out for one particular part; we are shareholders in this vast State, and every industry will receive due consideration at our hands. At the same time it has been shown conclusively that the very backbone of the State, that the life of the Commonwealth depends upon the primary industries. Now we have a party in power claiming to be friends of the farmers. I have heard some of the leaders of that party

say that they have been spoon-feeding the farmers. I cannot see it. A great deal is said about seed wheat and deferred rents, but do the Government forget that they charge interest on whatever money is advanced in that direction? Do they forget that if they had not rendered assistance the selectors would have been forced off their holdings, and no greater calamity could happen to any country? Any administrative body must avoid anything in that direction. If they want to be friends to the farmer, let them assist in reducing the cost of production. They are not doing it to-day. Neither party have done it. Ever since I retired from business and took up farming, 11 years ago, the increase in the cost of production has been going on and to-day it is almost unbearable. We hear it argued that the farmer is not paying the rural workers a decent wage. As a representative of the farmers generally, I want to say that they as a class do their level best to pay a decent wage, but they are not getting it themselves and every member of the House should be perfectly aware of this fact. Assist us to get into a position where the industry will pay so that we can get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. We are not getting it at the present time. The rural worker is reaping more out of the industry than we are. If we receive consideration we will pay any reasonable wage. We have no quarrel with the rural worker; his interests are our interests. We are not out against the rural worker as some people contend. We wish we were in a position to pay him far more wages than he is getting at present. Some of these workers are agitating for eight hours. So are we farmers. We would be glad to get it. Assist us to make the industry pay and we will adopt it right away and I for one as a farmer will be mighty pleased to do it. We must remember also that producers, with all the heavy costs of production, are forced to buy in the highest market and sell in the lowest. We must remember that farmers are faced with one market only, the world's market. We to-day have to pay the highest rates, no

matter in what avenue we purchase, for any commodity we require. The rates are higher than those obtaining in any other country; our distance from the world's market is greater; our freights are higher in every direction and yet we expect the country to advance whilst we cannot export our produce and make it a payable proposition. We have experienced during the last few years, only fair seasons—I will not say bad ones—and when we find this condition of affairs prevailing, we would expect lenient treatment from any Government, but we have not received it. Our rates have been increased all round. Attempts were made to increase the land tax and when they failed, a heavy impost was put on our railrage accounts. The increased rates on fertilisers alone would have more than met the whole of the amount derived from the proposed increased land tax. If any revenue is needed it seems to be the rule for the Government no matter what party are in power, to make the one unfortunate, the man on the land, foot the bill every time. Coming again to the increase in the price of land, this was the most iniquitous proposal ever adopted in a young country. Up to the present time, I have not heard a decent argument in favour of it, and I do not see how anything can be said in favour of it. Our position as a young State should be to produce revenue, not to look for a few extra pounds by increasing the price of land. Our need to-day is land settlement; we want to get our lands into the producing stage.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): Who made that increase in the price of land?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am not here against any particular party. The hon. member must not think that I am against his party. The Liberal party were responsible for that increase, but I am giving my arguments against legislation in the past as it affects the man on the land. We were told by the late Minister for Lands that the reason for the increase in the cost of the land was to provide for railway facilities. Was that a fair and reasonable way to look at things? I say

decidedly no. The people are first asked to go out and open up virgin soils and produce revenue. The very first thing to be done should be to run a railway out, but this is not done. People are sent out to produce revenue and they are also asked to pay for the railway and that railway is provided to assist them to produce revenue upon which practically the whole State will be dependent; in other words, the settlers are asked to find the whole of the facilities for producing the revenue and keeping the country going. Those who have gone out into the dry areas—some of them paid 37s. per acre for their land—have gone out 100 miles further than other favoured settlers. They have gone out past where we thought the rainfall was assured, but they will be successful if they are given an opportunity. But they are not being given an opportunity in any sense of the word. Why put an increased price on the land? Would it not be better to give people the land and impose certain conditions as regards improving it? We want to get the revenue produced, revenue which is lying dormant in the soil. We do not want to place a heavy impost on the man who is opening up the country. It is altogether wrong to do so. The only way is to reduce the price of the land, which should not exceed 15s. an acre. Anything above that would be unreasonable. The payment should be spread over 30 years and the land should be rent free for five years. A new settler would then be given a chance to open up the country and to produce the revenue which the country will be looking to in the near future. The cry has been—"How can we defer rents and give them land rent free for five years?" I reply—"Is it not better than to lose these settlers altogether and to have their lands thrown back on to the hands of the State?" Decidedly it is. I would like hon. members to take a trip through some of the country in which I was electioneering during the last three months, the Dowerin-Merredin country, to see for themselves the disadvantages under which settlers are placed. They would arrive at the same conclusion that something must be done speedily to relieve these people and keep them on their

holdings. Men and women with stout hearts who are facing so many difficulties need all the assistance which any Government can give them. To assist those who are opening up the lands the main things should be railways, roads and water supplies. I do not deery anything which has been done by various Governments in the past. Good work has been done to a certain extent, but we want it doubled; we want to push ahead with it and be progressive. To-day we are not progressive. Look at the small mileage of railway which is being constructed every year, and this in a young country where there has been such a rush on to the land. There are hundreds of people perishing to-day for want of a railway. I would like hon. members to think of themselves in the same position 25, 30, and even 40 miles from a railway. How is it possible to do anything with that land? It is not possible. Shall we ask them to carry their supplies out for that distance and to cart their wheat back over the same distance, wheat at 3s. 2d. a bushel? We are told that the departmental plants are doing their utmost now in the direction of railway construction. This is one very grave mistake which the present Administration are making. Why are they sticking to departmental plant only? For the life of me I cannot understand. Perhaps I wish to be too progressive for them. We should be calling for tenders for the construction of these lines. For every line to be laid down tenders should be called and the department should submit a tender and if their tender is the most suitable, by all means they should construct it. But now is the time to push forward and to put every available penny into opening up the country and constructing railways. What is the use of waiting until those settled on the land have spent their money? Hundreds have done so, and when the railways do come they cannot avail themselves of the facilities. Many railways have been promised and have been hanging fire for years and years. Under these promises, settlers have gone out on to the land. They keep on complaining and agitating for a line but still it comes no nearer, and the Government are content to go along at the old

snailpace of a few hundred miles a year. The excuse that there is no money for further railway construction is of no use at all; it will not hold water. The Government can find money to put into socialistic ventures and State trading concerns. Why should they put all the money into State trading concerns when the country is crying out for railways, roads, and water supplies? There is no justification for it, none whatever. Take the amount of money which was laid out for the benefit of one section of the community only, the purchase of the Perth tramways. I do not hesitate to say that that proposal was altogether wrong. I do not believe in the nationalisation of the tramway system. Let us have municipalisation by all means and the municipalities here were quite agreeable to purchase the trams. They did not hesitate to say so, but the Government stepped in and purchased the trams over their heads. There is three-quarters of a million of money lying in the Perth tramway system to-day which would have constructed between 500 and 600 miles of railways. Think of the amount of revenue which would have been returned to the State and the numbers of settlers who would have been relieved as a result of that expenditure. What right have any Government to drag us as shareholders into a concern like the Perth tramways? They are for the benefit of the metropolitan area only and after all the service was in existence here; it was not as if the Government had merely undertaken to lay down and instal a new service. They had the tram service here. The Government may have improved it to a certain extent—I am not going to dispute that—but there is no justification for their purchasing it. Even had the municipalities not agreed to purchase it, there was no justification for a Government practically hampered for money to open up the country with railways, roads and so forth, purchasing those trams. We find, again, another avenue where a lot of railways could have been built with money that has been spent otherwise. I refer to the loss on the State steamers. We are informed on authority that the loss will amount to £30,000 per annum.

That is a section of an agricultural railway lost to the country.

The Colonial Secretary: The balance-sheet does no show that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The balance sheets are a puzzle. We never really can understand the balance sheets. I would like the Government to adopt proper methods of accountancy, so that we, as shareholders, might know exactly where we stand as regards the State trading concerns. We have no idea to-day.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: You would be too wise then.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I have sat in this Chamber and listened to hon. members referring to the steamship service. Mr. Holmes pointed out that there was a loss, through mortality, on the State steamers greater than on the steamship companies' boats, and that the steamship service was not relieving the position which it was designed to relieve—that is, to assist the small supplier: that the State steamers were running for two or three big suppliers only. Yet, strange to say, Mr. Holmes expressed himself in favour of the service. I cannot for the life of me understand how an hon. member can be in favour of a trading concern when all that he tells us is really against the concern. He has not really shown us one redeeming feature about the service, and personally I cannot see one. I should like to see something done to assist the small suppliers in the North, but it has been proved here—it has not been challenged—that the State steamers are not relieving the situation.

The Colonial Secretary: They are.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I would like the Colonial Secretary to point out to us where they are relieving it, and then I shall be satisfied.

Member: All through.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We may have some State trading concerns that are of benefit to the State; and I certainly would support such; but when we find a position such as has been shown to-day, that these trading concerns are a drag on the Treasury, and of no benefit to the country either directly or indirectly, the one thing for us to do is to put them

out of existence right away. In this connection I was speaking a few moments back of the methods of accountancy. If proper methods were adopted to inform us every half year of the exact position, we would know what to do in reference to the trading concerns. There is the Yandanooka estate in connection with these trading concerns, and I was greatly amused to notice that the Minister for Lands stated that he sold the stock from the Yandanooka estate at the North Fremantle yards to assist the small butchers and keep down the price of meat. Does the Minister not know, or is he trying to mislead us? He was compelled to sell those bullocks at the time. We who have had experience know very well that from December to February are the only months that you can have fat stock. Before that time the stock are not in condition, and after that time they lose condition. I would like the Minister to have better information when he goes to represent this State in America very shortly—more reliable information than he has given the public on this matter. I have no hesitation in saying that the reason for the Government putting the stock on the market at that time was not to relieve the small butcher, but to relieve themselves of the stock, some of which did not arrive in prime condition and were not likely to get into prime condition. I notice that the manager of Yandanooka attended a sale at which sheep were to be disposed of in small lots of 100 to 150. Many farmers came hundreds of miles to attend the sale, and when they arrived there they found the manager of the Yandanooka estate, the Government concern, in opposition to them, and buying the main line of sheep against them at a prohibitive price. Thus we find the State trading concerns in opposition to the small farmers themselves.

The Colonial Secretary: What sale was that?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The sale at Bowes. Now, with regard to the Goldfields Water Supply. A great deal has been said about the good service the department has done to the agricultural

areas by putting in the water supply. I do not think the farmers themselves say that—in fact they do not. The increase of rates on goldfields water supplied to the farmers puts them in the position that it does not pay to have the use of the goldfields water, although they are compelled to take it. I make the average cost of water to the farmers in the agricultural districts 8s. per thousand gallons, and I would like hon. members to show me how it is a payable proposition on a farm. It may be for household purposes, but not for general purposes on a farm.

Hon. W. Patrick: I thought they were charging 6s. now.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The home-stead rate of £5 and fourpence per acre rate works out at considerably over 8s., but I am cutting it pretty fine. Even at 6s. it is not a payable proposition. Now why is it that the Government can take that water as far as Kanowna—three times the distance the agricultural areas are—and sell it to the Kanowna mines at 1s. 6d. per thousand?

Hon. W. Patrick: They cannot do it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: They are doing it to-day. The cost of pumping water to all sections of agricultural areas amounts to only threepence per thousand gallons. Yet we have the Minister for Works telling us that it has been run at a loss of £11,000 per annum. It must be understood, in the first place, that what has been supplied to the agricultural areas is really surplus water. The department would not connect one farmer with the main until they knew perfectly well that they had an over-supply of water beyond the requirements of the fields. The same capital was covering the whole of the operations; so that, after all, it was a good thing for the department that the farmers did take the water. Now, where does the Minister place the loss of £11,000 per annum? We find that he puts down four per cent. interest, three per cent. sinking fund, three per cent. renewals, and two per cent. maintenance. These are rather alarming amounts on a concern like that, and I would like to know—

Hon. W. Patrick: How many per cent. altogether?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Altogether twelve per cent.

Hon. W. Patrick: Robbery.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I would like to know why do not the Government charge the same rate on their trading concerns? Where is the difference? Why make the difference? I must commend the Government for establishing a fund for sufferers from miners' complaint. I think it is a splendid idea. We must do something for those men. In this connection, however, I do not think the fund will do a great deal. The proposal, I understand, is to allow 25s. per week and 5s. per child. Families cannot possibly exist on that, though it will relieve the situation. On these matters, however, I would rather see preventive measures adopted in the first place. Although the Government may have the feeling that they would like to relieve the situation, and though they have attempted to do so in this case, I wish to ask them why do they not make use of the regulations and prevent the disease? That is the attitude they should take up. Go to the fields to-day, and what do you find? Some of the best of our people—young men of 36—practically ruined. The Government have had the power in their hands to prevent this, I maintain, and have not availed themselves of it.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): This House is responsible for that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This House cannot be responsible for the non-enforcement of regulations already provided under the Act. Rules 19 and 20 of the Mines Regulation Act read as follows:—

(19) If any dust is produced in the course of mining operations underground, or in mines and reduction works, to such an extent that the inspector considers the health of workmen to be endangered thereby, he shall give notice in writing to that effect, and the owner, agent, or manager shall thereupon provide, and cause to be constantly used, such appliances as will prevent dust from being breathed by workmen.

(20) If spray of water is used, either on the surface or underground, for the purpose of laying dust, the water so used shall be free from pollution with organic or other noxious matter.

I maintain that the Government have the power in their hands to prevent this evil, and have not used that power.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): If this House had passed the chief inspector, we might have done so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: You have inspectors at the present time. I maintain that in the past these regulations have been neglected, and that if they had been enforced as they might have been the evil would have been prevented. What is the use of laws if we do not enforce them? I am of the opinion that, had the law been enforced, some fine men who have been laid low would be well and at work to-day. A complaint has been made about this House not passing measures. As a new member I do not propose to defend the House against that charge—I think the old members are well able to protect the Chamber; but in a case of this sort I think we should enforce the law to the best of our ability. I have been informed that one of the reasons why the law has not been enforced is that it would represent a heavy impost on the goldfields. Which is worse: the loss of life, or the loss of dividends? Let us protect the lives of our workmen, no matter what the cost. Those lives are of more importance to us than any dividends we may gain. Some hon. members have referred in this House to centralisation, and have stated that no such thing exists. How such a statement can be made I do not understand. I have heard here speeches bristling with centralisation. The purchase of the trams is one part of it. The fact that 37 per cent. of our population are within the metropolitan area shows conclusively that centralisation has been adopted, and the fact that other States are worse than ours in this respect is no criterion. We should not be guided by that in any way. Some 15 or 16 years ago several of our outside ports were

doing a fair amount of trade. Gradually that trade was dragged away from them, and I do not hesitate to say that concerning one port which I know particularly well—Albany. Albany was robbed of its legitimate trade. Albany is one of the finest harbours in Australia, and what has been done for it? Nothing. The whole of the vested interests of Perth and Fremantle have drawn everything to the one corner; and, to my mind, following up the debate, there is hardly one section of it that does not come right back to the one thing—centralisation. It is about time that Western Australia, as a young country, dropped centralisation. Other States have been forced to drop it, and it is about time we did so as well. Now we find that the present Government are starting a scheme of decentralisation. Is it not rather late in the day for them? They have promised certain improvements in Albany which are much needed. Albany has been neglected for the last 16 years: no wonder the community down there are dissatisfied. Bunbury has been promised improved harbour facilities, and to my mind, owing to the position of affairs in the political world it savours very much of trying to make the seats safe for the two gentlemen sitting for those constituencies: more especially so if we take a glance at Geraldton, where we find that all improvements are “under consideration.” It seems peculiar, especially seeing that during the recent election an Opposition member was returned for Geraldton.

Member: What about Fremantle?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Fremantle has been very well looked after in the past. In reference to amending the Constitution, Mr. Cornell touched upon what he called “the restricted franchise.” I would like to hear his opinion further on this question. I think the franchise is very liberal, in fact I do not see how it could be improved, at all events not in the interests of the country. Are we going to give the government of the country wholly and solely into the hands of a population that could put up their few things and get out to-morrow if disaster occurred, leaving those with an interest

in the country to bear the burden? Take a case in point. During the recent carpenters' strike we found 30 carpenters collecting their bags of tools and leaving the State. Yet there are those who would put the whole of the government of the State into such hands to-day. Take the question of preference to unionists, where they think fit, although in the minority, they try to compel the majority to agree with them and swallow the principle. Yet they want to reverse the position in reference to the Legislative Council. There are in the Speech certain references to railways. I have not dealt with any particular part of that Speech, because I think it has been dealt with very extensively already. One railway mentioned is that of Esperance. I am a strong supporter of that railway, for many reasons. One is that I know the railway is needed and that as an agricultural railway it will be a profitable concern. I do not say it will be so from the very first, but the country is there—I am a practical farmer with 11 years' experience in this State—the country is there; I know the Esperance country well and I know what I am talking about. The country is there to support a railway.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Would you have it built before other lines already authorised?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Certainly not. I have the assurance of the Premier that the Esperance railway will not be built until those already promised have been laid down, and I am content to take his assurance. I cannot agree with hon. members when they say it would be nonsense to establish another railway system. I would ask them, are we going to block the country for all time? Are we going to open up Western Australia, or are we going to keep it in one little corner as in the past? Is it not time that we started to open up all parts of the State? I say that it is. Mr. Colebatch said there will be no way of getting the produce away from Esperance. If they produce down there, then the commerce of the world will always find a way of disposing of that produce; and we have to make a commencement sooner or later. Mr. Cullen advocated a line running east and west.

If the country is there, and I know it is, to run a line east and west, should not a line run north and south to the port? The hon. gentleman would have us run a line hundreds of miles to bring the produce back to the Great Southern. Why should the settlers pay for all that length of carriage when they have a port close at hand? Mr. Holmes opposed the line, and stated that he was against any separate system. Has there not been a separate system before? One of the oldest lines in Western Australia was a separate system. Mr. Holmes advocated the building of 400 miles of line to connect up the Port Hedland system. It would take only 200 miles to connect up the Ravensthorpe and the proposed Esperance lines, and it cannot be said that the revenue which would be produced by the 400 miles connecting the Hedland line would be anything like that to be derived from the Esperance line.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: What about rainfall?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The country is within the good rainfall of the coast. In reference to the yields, let us take any part of our agricultural areas, put them in the same position as the Esperance country and under the same treatment, with the ground just scratched and without the aid of fertilisers, and what would be the yield? Nothing better than that from Esperance to-day. I say that as a practical farmer. Give these people railway facilities and they will show you the Esperance land can produce equally as well as any other part of the State. I have seen in the Esperance country grass land where one could turn out a horse at night and the animal would be ready for work next morning. That was on forest country, and I know no other part of the State where the same thing could be done. We have several other important lines which I would like the Government to proceed with right away. One is the Bolgart section, traversing some of the richest country we have in Western Australia. Settlement is there. Why not push on with it at once? Never mind about departmental plans; let them call for tenders if they cannot do it themselves.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: It will interfere with the Midland Co.'s land.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We cannot help that; we have to open up our State. I feel that I am representing the whole of the farming community in this. Those people there have no railway facilities. They are settled on splendid country, with a rainfall of some 16 to 18 inches. There is no excuse whatever for delaying the line. I believe it is the intention to proceed with the Kondinin-Merredin section, and in view of the fact that there are numbers of settlers there who are disappointed through the Wickepin-Merredin line not serving them, they should be served right away. There is splendid land in that district, well adapted for wheat growing and suitable for dry areas. There are thousands and thousands of acres there, and it is the best class of country for producing wheat under dry conditions. If that line were run through almost immediately it would relieve the settlers there. There are several of those settlers earning wages in Perth to-day, men who have been on the land for two or three years. When asked what they are doing in Perth they say they cannot do anything else; they cannot cart wheat 30 or 40 miles. Governments of the past have been making a huge blunder in constructing the railways too far apart. Twenty miles should be the very outside, and even then some settlers will be left to cart 14 miles. I would like hon. members to have to load and unload their teams of wheat and do 28 miles a day. Some lines are run on the old style of 25 and 30 miles apart, which means perfect slavery to try and make a living at all. Another line that has been promised is the Wyalcatchem-Mount Marshall. Those settlers were promised a railway years and years back, and the promise has not been fulfilled yet.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Is that line better justified than the Esperance line?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There is more settlement there. The Government have made a start with it, but apparently they pulled up all of a sudden. This line should be taken out immediately. If they

do not supply a line for those persons next summer it will be a calamity. The line should be taken right round Lake Brown and connected up. I know of settlers out in that Lake Brown country who have been there five and six years, and they are not relieved yet, and according to the progress made in laying down these lines they will be very old men when relieved, if indeed they are alive at all. Another line urgently required is the Ucarty-Yorkrakine. A huge mistake was made in laying the Dowerin-Merredin too far from the existing goldfields line, and a line must be laid between the two. There are between 200 and 300 farmers there, from 12½ to 25 miles distant from a line. It is splendid country, yet they are in the unfortunate position that they cannot make it pay. We want to hurry on with these lines. They are the main consideration in a young country like Western Australia. We find the position to-day is that both parties are claiming to be the saviours of the country in the way of doing a lot to relieve the situation, but very little is done. To my mind they savour very much of the elephant and the chickens. An elephant in his wanderings one day saw a hen with a big brood of chickens, about 14 in number. It was raining and the hen was trying to cover them all up beneath her sheltering wings. The elephant noticed this in passing. A few days afterwards he came along again, and the chickens were huddled together with no mother, the mother having been killed in the meantime. The elephant thought that as the hen had covered them up and kept them warm, and was not now there to do so that he would do his best, so he sat down on them and crushed the life out of them.

Hon. W. Patrick: Which is the elephant?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Both. They try to act as godfathers to us, and really crush us out of existence.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: You want a fairy godmother, I think.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What have the Governments of the past done in the way of relieving the situation in regard to the produce which we need in this State?



Practically nothing. Over a million pounds a year leaves this State for butter and eggs, etc. Why do not they assist the men themselves in opening up the south-west of the State and give settlers the land, so long as they will produce the goods. We do not want that million pounds to be going out of the State every year; we want rather to keep it here. During the stagnation in Victoria it was butter that saved the situation. This will show you how vital a part that commodity played. We find here that we are importing most of our butter to-day, while we have thousands of acres of good land which, if opened up, would supply us with as much of this commodity as we require. As a representative of the Country party, I am going to say that we are out for all that makes for good, clean legislation. We are in the position that we are going to do away with the old feelings of personalities and abuse. My position in this Chamber is to consider any proposition that comes forward with an open and unbiassed mind. We want good sound legislation, and we want to do away with any personalities or abuse. Our principles are broad enough to take in all sections of the community. The Hon. Mr. Kirwan refers to revenue tariff as a dead letter. I cannot see it. We must remember that since the days of the old fight to bring about freetrade, the electors have been enlightened on the matter and they have been forced to support it, owing to the heavy drains upon their pockets. We find hundreds to-day, who were protectionists, but who have been brought round to a different way of thinking. It has brought me round to the freetrade side.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I am still on the freetrade side.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I hope the hon. member will always stick to it. I feel sure of success, I feel sure that the Country party will be the national party of Australia and that, too, at no distant date. That may seem big talk. Eighteen months ago it would have seemed big talk if I had said that we would be in the position that we are in to-day.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.18 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 7th July, 1914.*

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

### QUESTIONS (2)—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

Hon. FRANK WILSON asked the Premier: 1, Whether the provisions of the Government Trading Concerns Act have been suspended in connection with any of the State trading concerns? 2, If so, which, and for what period? 3, What was the reason for such suspensions?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. But exemption from the operation of the Act was given up to 1st July, 1913, to those concerns which had only just commenced trading, and prior to the above date proper books are required by the Act had not been kept. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, Answered by No. 1.

Mr. MONGER asked the Premier: 1, Will he state if the balance-sheets of the Government trading concerns submitted at the close of last session have