

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd July, 1901.

Papers presented—Question: Kalgoorlie-Kamballie Railway, Duplication—Question: Tick-infested Cattle, Northern Territory—Question: Rabbit Act, Pasteur Institute—Question: Point Sampson, Expenditure—Question: Contingents in South Africa, Casualties and Illness—Question: Dry Dock at Fremantle, Construction—Address-in-reply, third day of debate—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Annual report of Department of Land Titles; 2, Reserves classified as "B" under Permanent Reserves Act; 3, Stock Diseases Act Regulations; 4, Land Act Regulations; 5, By-laws under Roads Act, Cemeteries Act, and Land Act.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Regulations under Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—KALGOORLIE-KAMBALLIE RAILWAY, DUPLICATION.

MR. W. J. GEORGE asked the Premier, in the absence of the Commissioner of Railways: 1, The cost to date of the duplication of the Kalgoorlie to Kamballie railway, including fencing, station buildings, etc. 2, What had been the financial result of the adoption of the barrier system on the before-named railway.

THE PREMIER replied:—1, The amount expended to date is £37,011 0s. 9d. 2, The barrier system has only been introduced at Hannans Street and Kalaroo, two out of the five stations on the Boulder line, and the information desired is therefore not available.

QUESTION—TICK-INFESTED CATTLE, NORTHERN TERRITORY.

MR. HARPER asked the Attorney General what steps the Government proposed to take to prevent cattle from the tick-infested districts of the Northern Territory from being driven into the tick-free districts of this State, after the Federal Tariff Act comes into force.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. Leake) replied:—The matter had not yet been considered, but inquiries would be made.

QUESTION—RABBIT ACT, PASTEUR INSTITUTE.

DR. HICKS asked the Premier, If communications had already been established with the Pasteur Institute in Paris with a view of obtaining information and, if necessary, securing the services of an expert to deal with the rabbit pest on scientific lines.

THE PREMIER replied:—No.

QUESTION—POINT SAMPSON, EXPENDITURE.

DR. HICKS asked the Premier: 1, What steps are being taken to make Point Sampson an efficient port. 2, What money has to date been spent on this project. 3, If there has been any reappropriation of any portion of the sum of £12,000 voted by Parliament for this purpose.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:—1, Borings have been made to determine nature of the bottom, and plans for a stock jetty are nearing completion. Trial bores to test for best sites for water supply have also been put down, and both fresh and stock water have been struck. 2, A sum of £301; made up of £176 on boring for jetty foundations, and £125 on boring for water. 3, No.

QUESTION—CONTINGENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA, CASUALTIES AND ILLNESS.

HON. F. H. PLESSE asked the Premier, What steps were being taken by the Government to have prompt information sent to the State from South Africa as to the casualties which may befall our troops there, and also as to serious cases of illness.

THE PREMIER replied:—A cable has been sent to the Governor of Cape Colony, of which the following is the text, dated 1st July, 1901:—"Complaints are being made that no information of West Australians who are killed, sick, or wounded is being received. Instances are quoted where first news of death was received by letter. Shall be obliged if you will inquire into the matter with view to

altering alleged state of things." No reply has yet been received to this cable.

QUESTION—DRY DOCK AT FREMANTLE, CONSTRUCTION.

MR. F. WILSON asked the Minister for Works, Whether it was the intention of the Government to commence the construction of a Dry Dock at Fremantle at an early date. If not, would private enterprise be permitted to undertake the work?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS replied :—The bulk of the funds originally voted for this purpose having been reappropriated, the Government intended to reinstate them in the next Loan Bill.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO OPENING SPEECH.

THIRD DAY OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the motion for adoption of the Address-in-reply.

MR. J. EWING (South-West Mining): I do not think I should have risen to make any speech on the Address-in-reply had not innuendos been cast by members on the other side of the House as to the position which I occupy in my seat on the cross Opposition bench. I do not at this stage intend to offer any explanation beyond that contained in the few words that I shall have the honour of addressing to this House. But I will say, in passing, that I, as a member returned by a very large and very important constituency, refuse to take the slightest notice of newspaper innuendos or of any innuendos thrown from the other side of the House, challenging my position here. I say, farther, that I am prepared to take the responsibility of my actions, and to let others deal with me in the future if I cannot do right. So far as the policy of the Government is concerned, it is practically the policy which I advocated at the general elections.

A MEMBER: Walk over to this side, then.

MR. EWING: No; I will do nothing of the kind at the present time. So far as the policy is concerned, I will say that there is very little in it. I assure you that had the Ministry taken the speeches I delivered and the ideas I put forward during my election campaign, they would

have had a more progressive and more democratic programme to place before this House. Although it meets with my approval as far as it goes, it does not, in my opinion, go far enough. I am prepared to go a good deal farther, and I am very much surprised that the Government have not thought it necessary to go very much farther, in the direction of social legislation. I have the honour to represent a constituency of working men, and I think that very much is required in the way of social legislation, and that much more might be introduced. But my great objection to the policy of the Government is that it is not a progressive policy. If it were a progressive policy, I would be prepared to throw in my lot on the other side of the House; but I say, when there are works of great national importance in regard to which the country is awaiting developments, I, as the member for a district which demands a work that perhaps has had the misfortune to be brought too frequently under the notice of the public—no doubt hon. members know all about it—want to be satisfied as to how this work is going to be carried out. We are told that the financial position of the State is very bad at the present time, that for many years to come it will be practically impossible for the Government to carry out any works of magnitude.

A MEMBER: No.

MR. EWING: Whether this is so or not—and I trust with the interjector that it is not true—it has been pretty frequently stated. So far as I can see, there is not in the immediate future any chance of this work being carried out. We are told that the indebtedness of the State is something like £17,000,000, and that this represents £94 per head. That, of course, is right: it will be so when all the works authorised by the late Parliament have been taken in hand and duly carried out. Now, I take this stand, that if I, as a member of this honourable Chamber, can bring before it data proving that any work of national importance can be carried out, and will pay interest and sinking fund, and, over and above that, revenue, then I say that it is quite competent and right that this House should consider the advisability of immediately taking in hand that work

and carrying it out. This will, of course, increase the indebtedness per head; but I will say this before I go any further—and whatever else I may lack, I have the courage of my opinions, and anything I have said during my election campaign I am prepared to say on the floor of this House—I will say this, that I am in favour, absolutely and entirely, of the whole of the railway system and the whole of the public works in this State being kept in the hands of the Government if it is possible. If it is found impossible, then I say the members of this Chamber have to consider, and to consider at once, how these works are going to be carried out. If, I say, the Premier will tell me, when he replies to the speeches which have been given in this House on the Address-in-reply, how soon the Government are prepared to take in hand works of this character, we shall know where we are. But if he says that the Government are not prepared to take them in hand, and that the country for the next four or five years must stand still, that we must have stagnation in the State, I for one am not prepared to stand on the floor of this House and agree to a policy of that kind. I can assure you that rather than this should occur, I am prepared to advocate private enterprise. Now as for the newspapers of this State, I take very little notice of them, because as a public man I am perfectly satisfied to be criticised in every possible way, and if I do wrong I am prepared to take the responsibility of my action. I think I should be worse than a coward if I feared to give expression to what I have expressed as a public man. If, as I said before, the necessity for the conservation of the public funds of this State renders it absolutely impossible to carry out public works, then we must go in for private enterprise. I will ask hon. members not for a moment to misunderstand me when I say that I do not advocate private enterprise in any shape or form which will be detrimental to the interests of the State. The private enterprise that I advocate does not include the land-grant railway: it does not mean giving away the patrimony of the people as has hitherto been done. That is a most pernicious system, and would not have my support for a single instant. I believe there are plenty of private people who are willing to put

their money into large reproductive public works in this State. They are willing to do so if they are able to receive a fair and reasonable return for the money which they thus invest. In connection with private enterprise, hon. members will understand I would not for a moment give away what belongs to the people; I would see that their interests were conserved in every possible way; and in allowing the building of a railway or the carrying out of any other public work by private enterprise, I would see that there was a purchasing clause and that the Government were able to take over the work at any time it was convenient to them to do so. In this connection—I regret very much that I have to refer to it—I wish to say that I stand here as the member for the South-West Mining electorate. Hon. members will, I hope, all understand that. I trust that an opportunity will be found at an early date to alter the name, which I have no doubt is a very difficult one. I do not wish to be referred to in this House as the member for Collie, because I am no more the member for Collie than I am the member for Greenbushes or the member for Donnybrook.

A MEMBER: Say, member for the Collie railway.

MR. EWING: I shall come to that presently, and I have no doubt I shall have your support. In his speech on the Address-in-reply the member for Albany, when touching on one of the paragraphs of the Speech, expressed the opinion that the most important railway to be considered or taken in hand at this time was the Esperance railway. Of course he is entitled to his opinion, and I am entitled to mine. [MR. GARDINER: Hear, hear.] I congratulate the hon. member sincerely for the gentlemanly way in which he referred to the matter; and whatever divergencies of opinion we may have in time to come, whatever side of the House I may be on, I am perfectly satisfied that it will not make the slightest difference to me when we go outside the doors of this Chamber. Therefore I join issue here, though perhaps the present is not the time to bring data and statistics relating to this most important work before hon. members. I have no doubt that as time goes by and as these data are supplied, it will be found that in the

whole of the State of Western Australia there is no more pressing work than the building of the Collie-Goldfields railway line. I do not wish to address myself to this subject in any parochial spirit. I should think that I were unworthy to occupy a seat in this House if I did so. I look upon the question as a national question, and one which in that aspect must of course commend itself to members of this House. If I do advocate it rather more, perhaps, than hon. members who are in opposition to me think I should, they must believe—or at least I trust they will believe—that I am not advocating what would advance my own material interests, or the material interests of any section of this community. I am advocating what I truly and honestly believe is for the betterment and advancement of the whole State of Western Australia. I am perfectly satisfied to leave this matter in the hands of the Public Works Committee, which has been mentioned in the Governor's Speech. This Public Works Committee, of course, is an innovation as far as this State is concerned. I have had a very great deal of experience of Public Works Committees. Although I have never before had the honour to sit in a Legislative Chamber, I have watched very carefully the working of the Public Works Committee in New South Wales; and I will say that I should be sorry to think the Public Works Committee to be placed on the statute books of this State was going to cost as much as is the case in New South Wales. I believe that a Public Works Committee, if it is judiciously managed, is the right thing. Matters of such vital importance as the building of railways and the construction of large public works will come before this committee, and that is very desirable. I say without fear of contradiction, although no doubt I shall be contradicted, I am satisfied to leave the matter of the Collie railway in the hands of a Public Works Committee, for I am satisfied that they will, with the data provided for them, recommend the House to carry out this work. In passing I would say that I do not wish in any way to tread on the corns of hon. members who represent the goldfields. I trust we shall always be able to work hand in hand. If the goldfields members want

only a fair thing, if they can produce data and statistics to prove that their proposals are entitled to more attention than the proposal I bring forward, then of course the House will give them the first consideration. I would also say, as far as surveys are concerned, so long as the Government authorise the survey of the Collie-Goldfields line it matters not to me what other surveys they authorise. But I do object to the tone of the two deputations which waited on the Minister for Works, and not only asked him for the survey of a certain line for fifty miles from Coolgardie, which was to supply wood, but also inferred that they wanted the immediate construction of that line. I must congratulate the Minister on his answer, which was diplomatic, and which showed that he understood the circumstances. As regards the supply of firewood for the goldfields—perhaps I should have mentioned this before—I have on very reliable authority this piece of information, that in a very short time, some two or three years, there will be a very great scarcity of wood on the fields; and if this line is not built for fuel—

A MEMBER: Nonsense. Who is your authority?

MR. EWING: The hon. gentleman says "nonsense," but I have very good authority for this. What has struck me in the matter is the difference of opinion that exists between members from the goldfields with regard to it. Some of them will tell you that the wood will be cut out to a reasonable distance of Kalgoorlie in two years; others say, in fourteen years. Well, how is this supply to be kept going? It means that you have to build railways into the forests: you will have to denude the forests and alter the climatic conditions of the State, and I do not think these are too good now. To obviate this, I say not one mile of railway line should be put down for the cutting of the forests while this national industry of coal-mining is waiting for development. I say it is necessary and right that the coal-mining industry should be developed. Another question I should like to deal with very shortly is that of arbitration in labour disputes. In the constituency I have the honour to represent, it is a very necessary thing that arbitration should be enforced. While

complimenting the member for Subiaco on the speech he made the other day, I say that he did right when he asked the Ministry to introduce this Bill at once; and I am quite sure there will be no opposition to it in this House. It will be carried, and compulsory arbitration will be the order of the day. In the coal-mining constituency I represent to a certain extent, it is very necessary that there should be no cessation of work and that arbitration should be absolutely compulsory there.

A MEMBER: Or anywhere else.

MR. EWING: Or anywhere else. I can assure you that the trouble around us to-day is very serious. I trust it will soon be overcome, but at the same time it should be obviated in the future by compulsory arbitration, and allowing all sections of men, whether they work for the Government or not, to take advantage of the Arbitration Act. As to the apple question, so far as I am concerned I hail with delight the introduction of apples for the benefit of the community. It was only this morning that I found in my rack a letter conveying a resolution, passed by a progress committee in my constituency, asking me in every possible way to prevent or do what I could to prevent the carrying out of the policy which the Government have laid down. As far as I am concerned, I can assure you I would not for a moment entertain such a proposal. I believe the apples should come in; but the policy of caution the Government have indicated in one portion of the Speech should have been instituted in this direction. I regret very much the Government have rushed this matter. From the evening paper I notice that the regulations go through this afternoon. While being entirely in sympathy with the Government on the question, I am of opinion it would have been much better for the sake of a month, six weeks, or perhaps two months, to have a select committee of this House to go into the matter thoroughly, and report any danger that might occur from the importation of apples. I have no idea whether the codlin moth is here; I know the people require the apples; but it would have been much better if that process of caution which I see exercised on the Ministerial benches had been exercised in this particular case. However,

I trust that if the regulations are passed and the apples come in, every care will be taken to see that the codlin moth does not get here. I have been told by those who ought to know that it is almost impossible, or very difficult indeed, to see whether the codlin moth is present or not. I trust there will be nothing detrimental to the State from the course adopted; but I regret that such action has been taken so hastily, and I would have been much better pleased if a royal commission had sat, and had gone thoroughly into the matter.

MR. F. W. MOORHEAD: And report in 1906!

MR. EWING: I do not intend to detain the House any longer. I am perfectly prepared to give the Ministry a fair and reasonable support, and I cannot do otherwise; but I trust that when the Premier is addressing the House he will, as far as he can, disabuse my mind of what perhaps may be erroneous—that he has a policy of stagnation, of standing still altogether, in regard to public works. I hope he will let us see that this will be a progressive Ministry, and that the industries are going to be developed, for as far as I can see it will be impossible to populate this State if there is going to be any stagnation at all. If you want to reduce the indebtedness of the State, which is considerable at the present time, you must get population, and I want to know how population is coming here if railways are not built and people settled on the land. In reference to the Collie-Goldfields line, it is not merely a local question. I took the trouble to go through the district not very long ago, and I can assure you there is perhaps the best land in the State along the route of the railway; and, if the railway is built, a very short time indeed will elapse before the Government are repaid by the populating and taking-up of this land; so you will see we are not altogether selfish in advocating this scheme for the carriage of coal. When the matter comes before the House, of course I shall be prepared to deal with it as far as I can on statistics and data; but I believe that the members from the goldfields will find it their duty, and I trust their pleasure, to afford all the support they can to the scheme. I thank you most sincerely for the kind hearing you have

given me, and I trust that in time to come I may be able to take a different stand in the House from that which I take to-night.

MR. R. D. HUTCHINSON (Geraldton): Before referring to matters contained in His Excellency's Speech, I must state that at the recent election I pledged myself to give a full support to the then Premier (Mr. Throssell), a support, that is, to the policy foreshadowed by him when making his speech at Northam. I do not intend to follow the Governor's Speech through from start to finish, any more than members who have preceded me. I do not agree with members who have said there is nothing in it. It appears to me there is one thing shown in the Speech, and that is a great deal of good generalship. Every matter mentioned is such that it may be dealt with from almost any point of view, and in connection with any of them there appears to be a good line of retreat by which the Ministry can withdraw. There is at least one matter referred to in the Speech—the metropolitan water supply. During the last session the same question came up, and on that occasion I stated I believed the scheme was deserving of the support of every member of the House. I regret to find, as I have stated, that in the way the metropolitan water supply is mentioned here we have no indication whatever as to the lines on which that supply is to be furnished. We are not told whether it is the intention of the Government to provide the funds to obtain the water supply and administer the machinery necessary for providing that supply, or whether a Bill is to be passed into law providing for a metropolitan water supply board that will have power to raise the money, themselves; so that, whatever course may be followed by the Government, we cannot, until they bring forward the measure, deal with it in any reasonable or fair manner. The one or two matters that I intend to mainly touch upon are those that have been left out of the Governor's Speech, and one is a question that not only affects the district I represent, but the whole State more or less. That is the question of the Midland Railway Company. The matter has been a great source of trouble to this State for years, and it appears to be getting a greater

course every day it goes on. For a long time past the whole of the people, I may say, in the Victoria district, and pretty well I think in the Murchison district too, have been longing to see this matter dealt with. I do not think that on any occasion people have tried to influence the Government to give a big price for the railway. We have always recognised it would be unfair to force the Government into a position by which they would give more than the railway and lands are worth; but often have we thought that some measures might be taken that would compel this company, or the official receiver of the at one time company, to deal with the lands in the manner intended by the original contract. This has not been done. I have no hesitation in saying the contract has never been fulfilled at all, and I believe I am justified in asserting that at the present time not only is the contract not being fulfilled, but the line is becoming dangerous. I believe it will be necessary for the Government before very long to make a close inspection of that line, and see whether it is safe for people to travel over. I think it is a well-known fact to most people that for two or three years past everything has been run as finely as it could possibly be; everything possible has been done to save a shilling here or a shilling there; and in the minds of most people the rolling-stock, the railway itself, and everything connected with the matter, are in a very bad condition. I am stating this to show that we do not consider the Government should have purchased this line at any price; but, on the other hand, we think, as I said just now, that some force should be brought to bear to compel the company to carry out their original contract in connection with the matter. This contract cannot have been carried out, I think, if the Premier was correctly reported in connection with an interview a few days ago. The Premier is reported to have said, regarding a speech at Geraldton, the Government did not intend to pay any such sum as had been mentioned by the Colonial Treasurer. He said, "It is far more likely that the Government will insist on the terms of the contract being carried out." I hope the Government will insist on that, and I much regret that some mention of the matter was not made in the Speech. It is not a small matter,

but an important one to the whole of the State, and in asking that it shall be dealt with in this way we are not asking that anything unfair shall be done. The company have had more than fair-play. For years now they have had more consideration than they ever deserved, and to my mind it would be folly on the part of this House and this Parliament to allow that sort of thing to continue any longer.

MR. MOORHEAD: Do you suggest anything to get over it?

MR. HUTCHINSON: During the recent Ministerial visit to the northern part of this State, the Colonial Treasurer (Hon. F. Illingworth) was speaking at Geraldton in two different places. In the afternoon he was speaking at the Municipal Chambers, and in the evening from a public platform in the Masonic Hall. At the Municipal Chambers, where the Midland Railway question was referred to by the Mayor of Geraldton, the Colonial Treasurer said he had gone through the whole of the papers connected with the matter for the last ten years, and he had come to the conclusion that the railway should be purchased now. He said it had been under offer to the late Government for £1,350,000, and he considered that every day the price would be likely to get greater instead of less. Although we are anxious now to have this question dealt with, we recognise that a very great mistake was made by the Colonial Treasurer in speaking in the manner he did. We feel satisfied that the intention of the company, or the remnants of the company, for a long time has been to screw every possible penny they could out of the State; and I am sure I voice the feelings of the vast majority of people north of Perth, when I say we are with other members in the House in insisting that the company shall not get more than a fair price, but that, on the other hand, steps shall be taken at once to compel them to carry out the terms and conditions of their contract. To show that the Colonial Treasurer had studied the question beforehand, he said he hoped the Government would purchase the line and the land of the Midland Company for £1,350,000; and he went on to say that the profit made by the company for the present year would be about £45,000, which meant three per cent.

on a million and a half of money. Going on, he said if the land were purchased by the State, he would advocate that it be treated just in the same manner as the lands of the repurchased estates were treated under the Act. He said this land had railway facilities, and he did not see why the land should be sold at 10s. an acre. In the evening of the same day, referring to the matter again he said, "I do not see why it should be sold at 10s. an acre. I have myself sold some of the Midland land at 30s. an acre." I am quoting these statements to show that the Colonial Treasurer could not mean what he afterwards said, namely that the land, if purchased by the State, would be sold cheaper than if it were sold under the conditions of the land purchase regulations. A protest was made by the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) on that occasion against any attempt being made to deal with the land in a manner different from the land purchased from the Great Southern Railway Company; and desirably so, I think, because the desire of everyone who wishes to get on the land or see it settled is that people shall be able to make use of the land, and that the sales of land should not be made to pay for the purchase of the line. I really cannot understand his action on this matter at all. He appears to have changed his mind many times about it, for I recollect reading a report of a speech he made at Cue during the election campaign, when he was reported to have said he did not want to see the land purchased, but wanted to see the railway purchased by the State. Afterwards he told us that he thought the railway ought to be purchased at almost any price; on a later occasion he spoke about the price which should be put on the lands when purchased by the State; and later again he said we should not get a big price for the land, but should let people have it at five shillings an acre. It would be interesting for me to know where the hon. member obtained the figures, when he spoke of about £45,000 profit being made by the Midland Railway Company for the current year. I do not think these figures can be in the hands of the Government, and if they were obtained from any other source they certainly cannot be looked on as reliable at all. Connected with this matter is also the question of

mining on private property. I notice the Premier referred to it in his speech some time ago, and promised that the subject should have the attention of the Government; but there is no mention of it in the Governor's Speech. Probably the Government think there will be some difficulty in dealing with this mining on private property, because the rights to the minerals have been sold with the land; but if that be the case, I think we can easily get over that by taxation of all unused mineral lands that are held in fee simple by any person in the State. If we pass a law to do that, and I can see no reason why we should not do so, then those persons who hold freehold mineral lands, some of them having held such lands for 30 years or more and have not done anything with them and are not likely to do, would probably make some arrangement whereby other persons should work the minerals. I think the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) saw sufficient during his visit in that district to satisfy him there is a vast area of mineral land north of Geraldton that could be effectively dealt with if people could only have access to the lodes running through private property. Another thing that this mining on private property would help would be that in view of the Midland question not being dealt with in the near future, people who wished to prospect for coal at the Irwin might obtain access to that land. At present no one, however anxious to invest money in the district for that purpose, can get near the land. I know that at present in Geraldton there is one man, not a man of straw, but one who has made a lot of money on the Murchison goldfields, Peak Hill mainly, who is prepared, if he can obtain land in the Irwin country, to get £20,000 to prospect for and open up coal mines there, so that he may be able to provide a supply of coal not only for the shipping that would come to Geraldton, but mainly for the mines in which he is interested on the Murchison. I think it is a great pity indeed if the Midland Company or any such syndicate be allowed to continue in the way the Midland Company are doing in shutting people from the land, however desirous the people may be of developing the land or working the minerals. It has been of no use to help

the company with loan money and that sort of thing. They made a contract with this country, and although they have ever since been coddled and nursed, their bills being backed by the Government and everything possible done to encourage them to go on and assist in developing the lands of the State, yet in return they have done nothing but endeavour in one way or another to get every pound they could out of this country. They do not seem to care a "hang" for what is going to happen afterwards; but it should be our business to see that they do not get all they are striving for, but means should be taken to compel them to carry out the provisions of their contract, or clear out and leave it so that other people may go on with it. I notice that in the Governor's Speech the Government tells us that the works which have been provided for by the previous Government will be carried out. When the present Colonial Treasurer (Hon. F. Illingworth) and the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) were in Geraldton a few days ago, the question of providing police cells was referred to, and I understand the Treasurer then said that if he had it his way no money would be spent on police cells in Geraldton. He said this, notwithstanding that this House last session passed a sum of money for providing police cells at Geraldton. The Colonial Treasurer says that no money will be spent on police cells there whilst other public buildings can be used for the purpose. Is that a reasonable thing to propose, that men should be locked up in cells to be made in public buildings where several other public departments are carrying on business?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: I never suggested it.

MR. HUTCHINSON: The Minister said he would do this; and to bring it back to his mind I will tell him what he did say. He said: "I see no necessity for spending money on these cells while we can take a wing off Mr. Brown."

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: That is all right. "Cells" you said.

MR. HUTCHISON: To prove that I am not referring to this matter merely to get money spent there, I may say that when the late Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Throssell) visited that district some time ago, we proposed to have

him locked up in one of the cells as an experiment. He consented; but before he had been in many minutes he begged us to let him out again. He found the cells as dark as midnight, although the time was about midday, and he said those cells were a disgrace to civilisation. He said, "I will make a note now, and as soon as I can get back to Perth I will ask the Premier to place money on the Estimates for making better accommodation here." Money was placed on the Estimates. It was not asked for by myself or by the member previously representing the district, but was placed there by the action of the Government, and the vote was passed by this House last session without interference. I say now it is the duty of this House to see that any money that has been agreed to be spent on a particular work shall be expended on that work, and we should see that the Government do carry out the works that Parliament has ordered. I do not agree that the Government should be in a position to say they will do this or they will not do that, when a particular work has been ordered by Parliament; but it should be the duty of the Government, as the Premier said a few days ago, to carry out the desires and instructions of Parliament. That is a very proper policy, which I hope to see pursued in the future. In the same list comes the locomotive workshops at Geraldton; and in regard to these I may say that for years this matter has been asked for, and I believe that some years ago money was placed on the Estimates to carry out the necessary alterations. The reason the alterations have not been done, as I understand, is that there has been some difficulty in arranging plans for a building that would suit the site on which the workshops now stand. It is an absolute necessity that something should be done there before long. The place is a disgrace to the Government. Men have to work there night and day, exposed to all weathers; in rain or in fine weather they have to work there all the same, and they should be qualified now to be weather prophets rather than engineers, as most of them have every opportunity of studying the weather in all its conditions. I do not intend to farther trespass on the time of the House. I certainly hope the matters I have referred to

to-night will receive the immediate attention of the Government

HON. WALTER H. JAMES (East Perth): I desire to express my hearty congratulation at the advent to this House of so large a number of new members. I have stated on previous occasions that I thought our last Parliament was the worst Parliament we have had; and I rejoice to see now so many new faces in this Chamber. So far as we can gather from first impressions, these faces represent the intelligence of the electors in supporting the principles that we on this side have previously advocated. I congratulate the member who moved and the member who seconded the Address-in-reply; and I desire to extend my congratulation to the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) and to the member for Northampton (Mr. Nanson). I hope this House will not judge the member for South Perth (Mr. Gordon) by his maiden effort. I have known him too well and favourably to believe he expressed his real views, and I should be sorry to think his opposition to the Government is based, not on their policy, but on the fact that they refuse to give those sops and those bribes which have characterised the past Government for ten years in this State. The present Government are not in favour of a "stand and deliver" policy, as suggested by the member for South Perth, and honourable members will not, I am sure, support the policy of bribing constituencies which that honourable member suggests.

MR. W. B. GORDON: Bunkum!

HON. W. H. JAMES: I like to hear the expression "bunkum"; but I do hope that members in addressing this House will disclaim the suggestion that they are not prepared to support the Government unless the Government are prepared to spend some money in their electorates. I appeal to the House whether I am not using almost the exact words of the hon. member.

MR. GORDON: Pure imagination.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The member for the South-West Mining District has also addressed the House; and I rejoice that, although he scorns the Press, he is feeling its lash and feels called upon to give some explanation of why he takes his seat on that side of the House. His speech has been most interesting to me,

and if it is reported it will be most interesting, I think, to the country to hear the reasons which the hon. member gave. He states that the policy of the present Government was practically his policy, and when an interjection was made he repeated the error of his leader, and said there was nothing in the policy. He told us that what he objected to was the stagnation which he thought this Government would produce, and that it was for this reason he had taken up his seat on the opposite side of the House. Surely the admission sounds honest and straight out.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Hear, hear.

HON. W. H. JAMES: But I want to point out to the House that the member was committed to the Opposition before he heard that party's views or their policy, and before he heard the policy of the Government.

MR. J. EWING: No, no.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The hon. member informed us of that fact. He gets up to state to the country and to his constituents, through us, that the reason why he is opposing the Government is that throughout their policy there is a suggestion of stagnation—[MR. J. EWING: So there is]—utterly overlooking the fact that he had entirely committed himself to and placed himself under the protecting care of the member for the Williams, before even this Parliament met.

MR. J. EWING: Quite untrue.

HON. W. H. JAMES: It is an absolute fact. I appeal to the common sense of this House and to the common sense of this country to properly estimate the statements of the honourable member. Again, the honourable member told us that he sat in opposition because the Opposition party was radical and progressive. I compare that with the reported speech of the Opposition Whip, who declared that he supported the Opposition because they were Liberals: he opposed the Government because they were Radicals. Now, which is right, the Whip or the member for the South-West Mining District? The hon. member has referred to the cumbersome title attaching to his electorate. I, too, have objected to it. But you cannot make it less cumbersome, and at the same time make it truthful—you might call him the member for the Collie-Goldfields railway.

That title, though equally cumbersome, is more fitting. Now we have, all of us, been most anxious, and the country is most anxious, for a change of Government; and I think that those who do not belong to the old party owe some explanation of the position they take up. I sympathise with those who belong to the old party. They find themselves sitting side by side with their old friends. Their opposition is truly honest and justifiable. But those who have not taken up a position on the Opposition benches, as members of the old party, are called upon to give an explanation of how it is they took up opposition to a policy before they heard it. They have not yet given us a satisfactory reason for the change.

MR. GORDON: We do not trust the Administrators.

HON. W. H. JAMES: If, therefore, I take the statement of the member for South Perth, the reason he now gives is that he does not trust the administrators.

MR. GORDON: I said that last night.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The hon. member says he does not trust the administrators. That is a good reason, if it is true; but I rejoice to think that it is not held to be true by a majority, I believe, in this House and by vast numbers in the State. If the hon. member's reason be a true one, then I say it is a gross scandal that men who think we are not honestly fit to be trusted with the administration of the affairs of this State, should sit there with their majority and allow the affairs of the State to remain in our hands. Sitting on this side of the House we say to the members opposite, and through them to the country, "If our policy is wrong, take the only constitutional course, take the only course that honest politicians can take, and see that we, with our dangerous policy and our dangerous methods, are placed in Opposition, where we can do no harm to the interests of the State." I do not for one moment say that members who were returned as independents—of course their electors thought they were politically independent, but some of them are independent of political decency—should commit themselves to this Government or should commit themselves to the Opposition. I say an independent member has a right—it is his duty when he stands as an independent

member not committed to the Government or the Opposition—to wait until he hears the various policies and then to decide for himself. If he does that, no man can possibly blame him. But we have a right to complain when we find so many members, instead of waiting until they hear the policy of the present Government or before hearing the policy of the present Opposition, committing themselves as out-and-out Oppositionists, sitting even as Whips on the Opposition bench with a party that has never put its views before the country.

MR. MOORHEAD: They were all Ministers in embryo.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Now the member for Guildford (Mr. Rason) in the course of his speech—and it is always a pleasure to listen to him, his words are so well-chosen and his language is so eminently fair—protested against the suggestion that the Government were holding over the members of this House the threat of a dissolution. I do not consider he has a right to protest. A threat of a dissolution has never been held over the House by this Government. I think it was indirectly suggested by the member who seconded the Address-in-reply, but the Government were not responsible for that.

MR. RASON: He undertook to speak for the Government.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Surely the hon. member has been in Parliament long enough to know that when a private member undertakes to speak for a Government, the Government are not necessarily bound by what he says.

MR. RASON: The statement was not refuted.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Well, no such threat was made. Whether a dissolution is or is not necessary must be determined by the future. Every member, I think, will realise that it is impossible for any Government to carry on if things continue as they are at present; and members on the Opposition side of the House must distinctly understand that we are not going to sit here and do the unpleasant work, and make enemies—because our policy is a somewhat unpopular one as compared with a public works policy—and then let the old party come in and reintroduce the policy of “spoils to the victors.”

MR. GEORGE: Is that a Ministerial utterance?

HON. W. H. JAMES: The hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. R. D. Hutchinson) spoke on the question. In the previous Parliament he was opposed to the party he is now supporting.

MR. HUTCHINSON: There are no parties. There is no old party. The old party is dead. The whole of the old House is dead.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The member for Geraldton already winces. I am glad of it. It is to his credit. The member for Geraldton, when he was last in this House was supporting that party which now sits upon the Ministerial benches. He tells us he supported the Ministry of Mr. Throssell during the last general election. Well, if that be so, I can only regret that he did not take up a more definite stand from the time he was elected. I regret his position was so vague and unsatisfactory that neither party was certain as to which side he would sit on. This fact is somewhat significant. If one turns to the local paper—which dominates local politics entirely—one finds while that paper was supporting the old Opposition, the member for Geraldton always sat on the Opposition benches, but recently that paper has complained bitterly—

MR. GORDON: Was that before the election or after?

HON. W. H. JAMES: The 28th June.

MR. GORDON: Well, that is since the election. How can that influence the position he took up?

HON. W. H. JAMES: That paper has complained, and complained bitterly, that not sufficient money has been spent in the district; that when recently Ministers visited the district they did not promise all that was asked for up in the North; and the paper protested and said, “We who have borne the heat and burden of the day”—that expression seems quite familiar, coming from this side of the House—“we who have stood in the cold shades of Opposition, now when the power rests with our party, do not receive our reward.” The paper finds that the new Ministry will not have anything to do with the demoralising policy of “spoils to the victors,” which has characterised the past, and the political

views of that paper and of the member change at the same time.

MR. HUTCHINSON: Did they ask for one shilling?

HON. W. H. JAMES: No; not for shillings, but for pounds at a time. What is the grievance the hon. member has? It is that the Colonial Treasurer, when recently in Geraldton, refused to build some new cells; and the member for Geraldton points, by way of contrast, to the action of the late Premier who, with that instinct for advertising which seems to permeate every action of his past, for the purpose of testing whether a cell was good or bad, put himself into it for two minutes and then came out and said, "I am satisfied now: you shall have new cells." I wonder if it could have been this dramatic incident that converted my good friend from being an old Oppositionist to remaining as a new Oppositionist?

MR. HUTCHINSON: No; my opposition commenced before that.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Because, if that did not convert my friend, I want to know what did.

MR. HUTCHINSON: The Midland Railway.

HON. W. H. JAMES: The Midland Railway converted him. The member for Geraldton and his predecessors have constantly been girding at the late Government in connection with the Midland Railway. Why do they not act fairly and give the new Government a "show"?

MR. W. J. GEORGE: A what?

HON. W. H. JAMES: A "show," an opportunity to do what the late Government failed for 10 years to do. It appears the grievance of the hon. member is that the new Treasurer visited Geraldton and saw no reason for building new cells; could see no reason why the existing buildings should not be used for that purpose. And surely every member of this House who has been to Geraldton and has seen the public buildings put up in connection with the local police court, will agree that there has been a scandalous waste of money there, and that the building should be used. The only other suggestion is as to the Midland Railway. Well now, I will appeal to the fair-minded members of this House as to whether the present Government are to blame in that connection. Are the Government to blame for

the present position as regards the Midland Railway? Have the present Government had a possible chance of rectifying that position during the two months or less that they have been in office? On the other hand, it has to be borne in mind that the late Government did have opportunities which will probably never occur again. At the time the Midland Company had to come and ask the late Government for assistance, that Government had an opportunity of removing the evils complained of, which were almost as apparent then as they are now. However, no step was taken. On the contrary, every possible consideration was shown to the Midland Railway Company. I was not in the House at that time, but whilst I have been in the House I have constantly expressed my opinion that the Midland Railway Company ought to be dealt with in a strong and vigorous manner by the then existing Government. I am astonished at the two reasons given by the member for Geraldton. One reason is, "You won't spend useless money," and the second is, "You won't do what the previous Government ought to have done." I am trying, as far as possible, to judge members by their own utterances: I want to apply to them the same tests as the country will apply to them, to see what justification they give for their change of front. What I do emphasise is this: the hon. member seems to have been uncertain, and his friends seem to have been uncertain, and the members on this side of the House seem to have been uncertain, as to which side he was going to take.

MR. HUTCHINSON: That is not my fault.

HON. W. H. JAMES: As a rule there is never any doubt about the side I am going to take.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: What?

HON. W. H. JAMES: There was no doubt about the side most of the members on the front Opposition bench were going to take; and when a member gets up and tells us that he stood as a supporter of the Throssell Ministry, and then gets up and tells us if no one knew what his views were he is not to blame—why, he is a charming member of Parliament. But this is the difficulty—

MR. HUTCHINSON: You paid a great deal of attention to it.

[Several interjections.]

HON. W. H. JAMES: I think I am pretty good-tempered about interjections, but let us see if we cannot get on. There is no doubt at all as to the attitude of the hon. member since the time that the article appeared in a local paper, protesting most bitterly that not sufficient money was going to be expended.

MR. HUTCHINSON: That is not true.

HON. W. H. JAMES: That article appeared on the 28th June, and that was the first time we on this (Government) side of the House were aware what attitude the hon. member was going to take, and we ought to have had a keen idea as to what that attitude should have been. We have these speeches of explanation and justification from the member for the South-West Mining District, who will not support this policy because there is stagnation; but he cannot put his finger on one line of the Speech to justify that statement. One does not prove a fact by asserting it, and to say this Speech spells "stagnation" is beside the question.

MR. J. EWING: I was careful to point out that I desired the Government to show it does not.

HON. W. H. JAMES: I should think a member who was going to explain his position would take the affirmative. That is the usual thing. I rejoice to find the hon. member is fearless in regard to his electors, but I have never yet found a member of Parliament at the opening session who was not equally brave and equally effective; but it is astonishing what a change comes over some people before a general election. The hon. member's valiant declaration of fearlessness has not altogether convinced me that his explanation is satisfactory. Is there a member in this House who thinks we ought this session to commit ourselves to the Collie railway?

A MEMBER: One.

HON. W. H. JAMES: I always except him. The Speech says we propose to introduce no public works during this session, but what we propose to do is to take steps for the purpose of obtaining data to enable this House, at the end of the session, to decide whether this work shall be carried out or not. Does the hon. member want more than that?

MR. J. EWING: No.

HON. W. H. JAMES: If he does not want more than that, why is he on that side of the House?

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Because he is comfortable.

HON. W. H. JAMES: It may be because he is comfortable. We have had an explanation by the member for South Perth, fortified by an interjection that he does not trust the present Ministry. I happen to be a personal friend who voted for him, and I do not accept his interjection as really meant. We have heard the explanation by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Hutchinson), and we can all make up our minds as to that. Look at the attitude of the past and the attitude of to-day, and make up your minds on the question. We have had an explanation from those three members, and an explanation from the member for North Perth (Mr. Speight), who said he was returned as an independent member, but waited until he heard the Address from the Throne and also the withering criticism of the leader of the Opposition, and then he said, "I will make up my mind now, and act." If that had been the attitude of other hon. members who had previously been independent, we should have had no cause of complaint. How is it that we so constantly hear the statement that the present Opposition is not the old party. We are constantly hearing that. Is there any action about the old party that the new Opposition should be ashamed of? Why should they be so anxious to sever themselves from the past, and why is it that on every possible occasion, when they can obtain benefit or credit for good work done in the past, they eagerly seize it and say to us on this (Government) side of the House, "Wait until you have done as much as we have done." On that point the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) was straightforward, for he identified himself entirely with the past. To tell responsible people that the Tweedledum Ministry of Mr. Throssell is opposed to the Tweedledee Ministry of Mr. Piesse is absurd. The member for the Williams did not take up that view, but said, "We are a continuation of the old party, and we justify the policy and actions of that party," and he pointed justifiably to the great number of good works accomplished by that party.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I did not make use of the word "continuation."

HON. W. H. JAMES: I am not quoting exact words. I say that in your speech you identified yourself with the past. You justified the financial position occasioned by the past, and you said in sitting down that you hoped members on this side of the House would do as well as our predecessors had done in the past. We cannot get away from the fact that we have facing us a continuation of the old Forrest party. [Several MEMBERS: "Rubbish!"] I regret to hear these interjections, because, although I was consistently opposed to the Forrest Government, I should never have been ashamed to come into this House and say I was a supporter of it, and I should have been glad to look back upon the good done by it. I am glad members on the Government side do not take up that contemptible view of their past. I was saying the member for the Williams loyally identified himself with the past. And how can it be otherwise? When the member for Northam (Mr. Throssell) was Premier, he was continuing the old Ministry, and he was supported by the old party; and we find now that the very backbone of the Opposition consists really of the member for Northam and the party returned to support him. They are entirely justified, no doubt, in supporting the member for Northam; they were returned to support him, and it was their duty to go into Opposition with him. We have no quarrel at all with these members. What I want to point out is that if the Opposition do represent the old party—and I do not see what else they can represent—how is it that at the last general election a number seemed to realize that the country demanded a change, and now, when a change has taken place, they are supporting the Opposition, the men they would not support in power. [A MEMBER: "Nonsense!"] I am glad to hear from one of those independent members that it is nonsense. I shall be pleased to hear his explanation, and I hope he will make a much better effort than has hitherto been made by the members on that side of the House.

MR. W. J. GEORGE: Why all this venom?

HON. W. H. JAMES: I have no venom at all; absolutely none. My desire is to point out as far as I possibly can the attitude taken up by the members who were returned to oppose the old Government, and who are now found on the Opposition side of the House with the remnants of the old Government. What I say is that when a member is returned to Parliament, he must not entirely overlook his obligations to his constituents, the electors who have returned him. No doubt the majority of those who sit on the opposite side of the House have been returned as supporters of the old Government, and their honest duty was to support the old Government, whether in power or in Opposition; but there are others who were returned as independent members, and did not on the public platform say that they were going to support the old Government. That makes a lot of difference. Those members seemed to think there was something about the old Government which caused them to feel they did not care about supporting that Government; but on the other hand they said they would not support the Opposition, but would wait to hear the policy. Those are the people who have been false to their trust, and seem to be regardless of the responsibilities cast upon the men elected to sit in Parliament.

MR. HIGHAM: We have no Government.

HON. W. H. JAMES: I am not talking of the member for Fremantle.

MR. A. J. DIAMOND: "Let the dead past bury its dead."

HON. W. H. JAMES: I am glad indeed to think that a responsible member of the Opposition did not indorse those sentiments. But why did they take the credit of a great deal of the work done by the old Administration? I hope they will not blame us if when the occasion arises—it has not arisen now—we attempt to cast upon their shoulders some of the sins of their political forefathers.

A MEMBER: Only one father; not "four."

HON. W. H. JAMES: Surely we have a right to ask for some explanation of the position in which this House finds itself. If we may judge from the attitude of members before the actual meeting of Parliament, they were returned to see there was a change of Government; and yet when Parliament meets they

forget apparently the whole of that mandate in now supporting the old Government which they were sent to eject from office. I venture to think it is entirely unconstitutional to find a party taking up the attitude adopted by members on the front Opposition benches. I always understood that the theory of responsible government was, that members in the House for the time being were supposed to represent the majority of the people. That is, I think, the constitutional way of looking at the matter.

MR. M. H. JACOBY: I never heard that before.

HON. W. H. JAMES: There are so many things the member for the Swan never heard. It is astonishing. That being the position, the majority of members being supposed to represent for the time being the majority of the people, why should they not accept the responsibility that position casts upon them? Is there any instance of such a situation as we find ourselves in here to-day; of men in Opposition being a numerical majority, and yet not courageous enough to take upon their shoulders the responsibility of carrying out the affairs of the State? If the policy indicated is a bad policy, and one which cannot be accepted, then in the interests of this State the duty is cast upon those on the Opposition side of the House to see that we are ejected from office. If, on the other hand, we are not personally fit to carry out the policy, although the Opposition may indorse that policy; if they disagree with our declared policy or do not entirely accept our personal honesty and sincerity in carrying it out, then it is equally their duty as members of Parliament to have cast upon their shoulders the responsibilities, and to see that men whose policy is bad, whose sincerity is not to be trusted, shall not be allowed for one moment to continue holding the reins of power and enjoying the sweets of office. That, I submit, is the constitutional attitude to take up on occasions like this, and we have the right to expect constitutional methods to be adopted. You place the Government in this position, that while you dare not challenge them, you have not enough courage to sit behind them and support them. I know of nothing more demoralising than for men who sit in direct Opposition, and

who profess themselves to be direct supporters of the Opposition, at the same time say, "We are prepared to give the Government a fair and reasonable support." It is entirely demoralising when we find members claiming the right to sit in direct Opposition, or to sit on the cross-Opposition benches or on the cross-Ministerial benches, and hold these views. If members sit in direct Opposition and yet profess to support the Government, I do not think those members should claim the credit of having the courage of their convictions. I think they ought, by their actions in this House, to show they are here to represent principles, and they should take the responsibility which that position demands. The member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) made a speech which I thoroughly appreciated, because we want to ascertain what is the charge brought against the present Government. We want to know what there is in the policy of this Government which members object to. We want to know what are the grounds of their opposition. Members who are now on the opposite side are in a new position, and the whole State wants to know what is their ground for being in Opposition. I think the State is more anxious to know in this case because we find the majority of members coming into this House to support an Opposition, and the country has no idea what their policy is. We followed the speech of the member for the Williams, as leader of the Opposition, to hear what that policy is. We were quite satisfied he was not "game" to move a motion of no-confidence in the Government. [Several MEMBERS: Oh! oh!] Let me make this as clear and emphatic as possible, that the Government want no condescending support from half-hearted members. We do not want it, and will not tolerate it; and if the leader of the Opposition thinks the present Ministers are not worthy of his support, let him try to turn them out. Let it be distinctly understood we do not thank members on the opposite side for their promise of support, because we know they dare not do anything else. (General laughter.) I hope that, as the result of this speech and the result of this challenge, members on that side will be as good as their word and challenge us. If this policy which we

lay before the country, a policy of domestic legislation which we say is essentially necessary—

HON. F. H. PRESSE: You have been talking about that all your life.

HON. W. H. JAMES: I rejoice at the fact, and am proud of it, that I have at all times been urging the need for domestic legislation, and I am glad to think there are so many Acts on the statute book bearing on domestic legislation which I have had a hand in bringing about. We do not want it thrown at us, as it was thrown at the late Government, that the only object of government is to borrow on more or less ruinous terms, or "fly kites," and leave their successors to pay the bill. In the present financial position of the country, we think it would be gross madness to rush into new works. I do not think that, excepting the member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. J. Ewing), there is any man in the country or any member in this House who thinks we ought to go into fresh works this session. Is there any member who denies the absolute need of economy? That being so, we have it admitted that there is need of domestic legislation, and there is need of economy. We want the abolition of plural voting, which members now on this side have constantly urged when in Opposition.

MR. HIGHAM: How many of them?

HON. W. H. JAMES: In addition to that we want a redistribution of seats; a redistribution in fact, and not in name only, such as was given us by the late Government. We also need good and clean administration, and I think this is far more important than any other item in the Government programme; for although I recognise the need for other measures, particularly mining on private property and the measure suggested by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), I still believe that the one great want is a thorough reorganisation of our public service; and it is desirable the time of Ministers should be available for thoroughly investigating the Ministerial departments. That is the policy enunciated in the Governor's Speech, and it is on that policy we desire to hear criticism. We want to know what are the reasons for members sitting in Opposition, and for other members sitting behind the Government, in regard

to carrying out this policy. It is said we are doing nothing new; that these things have been initiated by the previous Government, and that we are continuing the work of that Government. But how can that seriously be said? I believe the Forrest Government will be judged not so much by what they did, but by what they had opportunity of doing; and it is difficult for us to imagine the enormous powers for good which that Government had, when placed in power with an overwhelming majority, to govern a country with a small population increasing from a few thousands up to 180,000. We had no proposal for domestic legislation until about three years ago. During the first seven years of the Forrest Administration, when the community was growing, they had the best opportunity of dealing with the important question of the liquor laws; but absolutely nothing was done; yet I know of nothing that more urgently needs amendment than the liquor law. Look at the magnificent opportunity the late Government had of dealing with it! They came into power at a time when the State was insignificant, and left it at a time when the State had a large population; yet during the whole of that time the Government did absolutely nothing to deal with that great and urgent question. I say this is a matter of domestic legislation that ought to have been taken in hand.

MR. HIGHAM: It is not true they did nothing. They certainly did something.

HON. W. H. JAMES: I do not mean that you are dealing with the liquor law because you say the compulsory fine of £50 shall be reduced at the option of magistrates; but I do say that absolutely no legislation has been brought forward, that no attempt has been made to deal with the liquor question. Take next the education question: the hands of the late Government were forced both by the action of this House and the advocacy of the *West Australian* newspaper in regard to the education question. The late Government were always behind, were always being dragged on by the people, and we owe it chiefly to the efforts of the *West Australian* newspaper that the education question was dealt with at all. We are promised a Conciliation and Arbitration Bill; and while it is true the late Government passed a Conciliation Act, we know under what circumstances

that measure was introduced, and now that we have it we find that it is waste paper.

MR. HIGHAM: Because you didn't assist.

HON. W. H. JAMES: I presume it was drawn according to instructions given by the Government, and yet now the measure is passed it is almost waste paper. I suppose that if an amending Bill be introduced now and this House passes it, it will be said at some future time that we owe the Conciliation Act to the late Government. We owe to them the title and not the measure. In regard to another social question, the country insisted for years that there has been an absolute need for placing the Public Service on a proper basis, and there has been a constant demand for a Bill to be introduced. A Bill was introduced and passed last session, called a Public Service Bill, but beyond the name it is absolutely valueless, for it does not remove any of the grievances that public servants complain of. Directly the Bill was passed, we had a departmental committee appointed to give effect to it, but they did nothing. There is an instance which totally falsifies the suggestion of the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piessé), that the late Government did this and did that in the direction of domestic legislation. It was I who introduced the Early Closing Act; the member for North Murchison (Hon. F. W. Moorhead) introduced the Seats in Shops Bill; and nearly all such matters were introduced, not by the late Government, but by private members, and several of those met with opposition before they were passed. We want plural voting abolished, and what support will members give to that? The former Government introduced no Act of domestic legislation except two, and neither of those measures will remove the evils the existence of which justified the interference of Parliament on those questions. I am dealing now with the first line of attack by the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piessé), when he tells us the domestic legislation we are proposing now is simply a continuation of the old policy, and that the old party dealt as far as they could with domestic legislation. I have dealt with that first line of attack. Then as to economy in finance, let us inquire what the late Government did.

MR. DIAMOND: I am tired about hearing of what the late Government did. I want to know what the present Government will do.

HON. W. H. JAMES: Now, when we propose to deal with the question of finance, there again the member for the Williams loyally and constitutionally and properly says the finances do not need straightening: they are all right. But that is not what the member for Northam (Mr. Throssell) said. He said his duty would be to straighten out the finances, which were put into such confusion by a Government of which the member for Northam was one of those responsible. One of the astonishing features is that we have the old Ministers constantly coming forward and attacking the old Government. They seem to accept the popular opinion that the old Government was a one-man Government, and one man only. They entirely overlook, when they talk about straightening out the finances, that they as responsible Ministers are just as much responsible as the Premier of that day.

A MEMBER: What about the figures?

HON. W. H. JAMES: An ordinary individual, I cannot understand these figures. The point I want to take is why an ordinary man, not a heaven-born financier, could not understand them. Why should they be in this muddled state that they require experts to interpret them? The hon. member stated that the finances were all right. That is a serious statement, and he has repeated it by an interjection; but how in the name of common sense can that be possible when we find it necessary to have various calculations and discussions as to how the finances of the State do stand—when even among the experts no two men agree on them? The member for Northam said it was his imperative duty to straighten out the finances, which, however, according to the leader of the Opposition, were perfectly true and straight. How can there be a doubt about it when one sees the mess and muddle of appropriations and re-appropriations, excess votes, the use of form "J"—

MR. GEORGE: What about form "I"?

HON. W. H. JAMES: We find all these financial agencies working together, and confusion is inevitable, and confusion reigns—there can be no question about that.

MR. GEORGE: What a tiger you are!

HON. W. H. JAMES: We want these things set right as far as possible. There should be nothing for me to prove: the proof is plain. I have listened to the hon. member's speech and I have read various articles and speeches and reports, and I am sure I do not understand how things stand. I do not suggest that is a test, because I am not a financial expert; but I want to find two financial experts who can agree on anything except this in connection with the finances—that they are in a muddle and want straightening out. On that point there is unanimity, except of course among those who are responsible for the muddle. I need hardly say that they will not admit it. We say economy is absolutely necessary. I have no doubt subsequent speakers will refer to the manner in which, on so many occasions, this House has been misled in connection with the finances. There are instances existing: they can be discovered by anyone going through the various Excess Bills and subsequently reading the Auditor General's report for the following year. I cannot mention these things off-hand, so I propose to leave the matter to those who have the financial knowledge which I have not; but I say there is need for economy, and urgent need for it, because when I hear some members speaking as we have heard them speak in this House, it makes me dread that if the Opposition are returned to power they may reintroduce that old "spoils to the victor" principle which characterised them when they were in office. I have my suspicions—I may be wrong—that the hon. member for the South-West Mining District, who is charged to the muzzle with Collie railway, is not supporting the present Opposition without a reasonable expectation of the Collie railway being built by them when in power.

MR. EWING: That is a national work.

HON. W. H. JAMES: A national work supported by the Opposition. I put it to members of this House and the country whether, when our friends opposite come back to power, the member for the South-West Mining District will not claim his own and say: "I want that railway built in return for my loyal support." The hon. member thinks that it is a work of national importance, and

that he is justified in asking for it. Whilst we, on this side of the House, have no members who want large public works of national importance, on the other hand our friends on the Opposition side have. They have with them those members who want large public works, and who have very strong organisations backing them. I welcome such organisations. Of course, I should much prefer to have their support for this side of the House; but they are organisations which a man has to bear in mind when deciding on which side of the House he will take his seat. On this side everybody should realise how great the need is for economy, and how desirable it is that we should be free from farther loan authorisations at present, except to carry out existing works. You find on the Opposition side all those who have great national public works to carry out, whether it be the construction of the Collie railway or of cells at Geraldton. Let us now take the question of electoral and constitutional reform. Now, is the hon. member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piessé) justified in saying that this is a question on which there is no distinction between the policy of the present Government and that of the past Government? One has only to look at the present House for the fullest possible justification of the need of reform. When you find the majority sitting in Opposition—most of them returned pledged to see a change of Government, but nevertheless now sitting in Opposition—although that majority of members represents by far a minority of electors—

MR. GEORGE: No, no; we will give you our figures presently. You are no authority on figures, you know.

HON. W. H. JAMES: I do not think it is right that there should be this interminable dissension on the Opposition benches, because the hon. member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piessé) admitted that fact, although he did not unduly emphasise it; and I do not think it right for the Whip to dispute the words of his revered leader. I say that there can be no doubt that the majority of the electors are represented on this side of the House.

MR. GEORGE: Question?

HON. W. H. JAMES: That, I think, is a matter as to which there is no doubt.

But the existence of this House, and the existence of some members of it, justify a farther reform that I do hope the present Government will bring in. It is a matter that I have not spoken about to any member of the Government, and it is a matter not, therefore, forming part of the Government policy; but I do thoroughly agree that there is no use in insisting on single electorates unless we insist on a candidate getting a majority of the votes polled, or otherwise take another ballot. If that had been the law at the last general election, my friends opposite would not have had such large support. I have been dealing in my observations with the objections raised by the member for the Williams, and his contention that the policy involved in the Speech is a continuation of the old Government policy. I do not know how it is, but what I thought mostly characterised his utterance was apples. On that point he thinks there is a great grievance. I am sure it must have conveyed a great deal of information to us when the hon. member for the South-West Mining District said he had heard from a progress association which wanted him to oppose the abolition of the restriction. Well, we know what progress associations are. They are all composed of very energetic men. Some of them consist of half-a-dozen men, some of six or seven hundred. But it does not magnify an opinion whether it comes from three men as individuals or from three men calling themselves a progress association. Under federation we shall very shortly have uniform duties, and we cannot then, under any circumstances, farther continue the prohibition.

MR. GEORGE: Yes, you can.

HON. W. H. JAMES: I want to put my contention before the House. We will not be able to maintain the prohibition.

MR. GEORGE: Where is the kudos to your Government, then?

HON. W. H. JAMES: Of course if it can be shown that by no regulations, by no restrictions, can you keep out the insect pest, this restriction may perhaps be continued. Then it might be contended that the former prohibition was a justifiable one; but I think we shall find some very serious difficulty in convincing the federal authorities that absolute prohibition is necessary. There will be a

strong inclination on their part to take the other view, and so far as we can see and so far as we can learn from the public Press, the regulations can give us practical protection. That is generally admitted. Now I do think that hon. members in dealing with the question should be fair to this Government. The present prohibition rests entirely upon an Order-in-council—entirely. Those who support the present Government represent constituencies every elector of which would be glad to see that prohibition removed.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear. So would we.

HON. W. H. JAMES: If the hon. gentleman who is the leader of the Government desired to secure popularity, all he had to do was, by a stroke of the pen, to remove the prohibition and restriction. That would have given him enormous popularity in the constituencies returning members sitting on this side of the House. I think when members sitting on the opposite side attack the Administration in connection with the apple question, they overlook this, that had the Premier desired to secure popularity he could have secured it far more promptly and effectively than by his present action—action which he has taken for the protection of the fruit-grower, and through which he has gained more unpopularity from his own supporters, the members who now are supporting his Government, than he has gained popularity from the other side. I do hope that members on that side of the House, in a spirit of fairness, will recognise that these restrictions are all adverse to the inclinations of the great majority of the electors represented on this side of the House. Now in regard to the immigration question, which is involved in the policy set out in the Speech, I want to express my disagreement with the views put forward by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish). I do not believe that we shall succeed in getting for this State an immigration of farm labourers if we are restricted to the old country; nor do I believe that we have in our present condition of affairs a sufficient number of labouring men to supply the wants of the farming community. It is a fact that most men would almost rather starve in the towns than go

into the country. If a man has been brought up in a town, has been living in a town, and especially in a mining town, it is only the direst necessity that drives him to the country. He does not go of his own choice. Such men have no inclination for farming life, and if they do under stress of necessity go into the country, they sooner or later drift back to the cities. The difficulty we have to face is that there is a great stringency in the market for agricultural labour now; and how is it to be overcome?

A MEMBER: Pay the men decently.

MR. JACOBY: They get 7s. now.

HON. W. H. JAMES: All through the world you do not find the agricultural labourer being paid on anything like the same scale as the town labourer. Let us hope that the time will come when the farmer will have his labour-saving appliances to the same extent to which invention has supplied them to other industries, so that he will be able to do with fewer hands, receiving bigger pay and working shorter hours. In the meantime, while hoping and praying for this improved state of affairs, we are faced with the fact that our farmers are clamouring, and rightly I think, that the stringency is such that the Government ought to make some effort to relieve it. I yield to no man in point of attachment to the old country, but there is just as great a difficulty in the country districts in the old land as we find here. If you go there you do not go to a market where you will find the men you want. Now, personally, I have a strong sympathy in favour of Scandinavians. Wherever I have fallen across Norwegians or Swedes, I have found that they make admirable colonists. They seem to lose their nationality soon, and become incorporated with the people of their adopted country very quickly.

A MEMBER: What about Boers?

HON. W. H. JAMES: If I were dealing with this question I should certainly be inclined to see whether labourers could not be obtained from those countries, Sweden and Norway; but the question has to be dealt with, and the sooner it is dealt with the better. The farmers have just ground of complaint when they cannot obtain sufficient labour. I very much regret having detained the House so long. ("No, no.")

I regret that I cannot on the floor of this House assume that judicial attitude which I should like to assume. In connection with political matters I feel very strongly and speak strongly, but I do draw a distinction between political sympathies and political war, and personal sympathies and personal feeling. While I attack in the House men whose actions I consider politically deserving of attack, I do not wish that my action should in any degree interfere with personal friendship. I shall have the utmost pleasure in supporting the present Government; not because, as the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) suggests, I have been bought with an honorary portfolio: I shall have pleasure in supporting them because I believe we have holding portfolios in this Cabinet men honestly desirous of doing their duty. They have placed before you a policy at which you cannot cavil, in which you can find no fault. It is not a policy of extreme views; not a policy based on the idea that it shall be like a drag-net, covering everybody; not a revolutionary policy; but a fair and moderate policy. I have a right to expect that a majority of the House will support such a policy, and give to the present Administration a fair and loyal support. In the past we have had Sir John Forrest as our Premier. He has been the dominating influence in the Ministry. It has been a case of Sir John Forrest first and the rest nowhere. In fact, I am right in saying that he was the Ministry. He has left us now, and left behind him a record of magnificent work. But now he is gone, I put it to members on that side of the House, those who sit on the front Opposition benches are just as much untried as we are. The member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) was never in office away from Sir John Forrest, and the member for Northam for only about two months. He had no longer an independent existence than we have had. Now, where you have two competing parties led by equally inexperienced men, what can you do but follow the constitutional usage, and see that the King's Government shall be carried on? I trust that by giving the Government a sufficient working majority, the House will secure that whatever Bills may be introduced shall be brought in by a Government not only strong in

conviction, but brought in by a Government which feels that it has behind it a majority of members of this House. I do hope that support will be given, I do hope that this change will occur, and that the House will accord the Government that support which alone is consistent with political usage. If the majority remain on the other side of the House, then I ask hon. members to attack this Government, then I ask them to see that the power of this House rests with the majority, and not with a mere minority.

At 6:28 o'clock, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. W. J. GEORGE (Murray): I wish to add to what has been said by other members my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to the honourable position you now hold, and I can do so with perhaps more weight, at any rate from my side, from the fact that during the seven years I have been a member of this House I have received from you a generous forbearance on many occasions, which I believe has generated in myself an affectionate respect. I also think it would be unfitting if I did not make some reference to the loss sustained by this Assembly and the country in the death of the late member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest). I tender my sympathy to his family in common with all of us, and perhaps more strongly because, only a fortnight before his death, he and I had agreed to shake hands over a dispute which arose between us last session; and now he has gone, I feel at any rate that the shaking hands with him has taken away what otherwise would have been a sting that would have lasted for the rest of my life. Before I proceed to deal generally with the Speech placed before us by His Excellency, I crave leave for a moment to address a few remarks to this House and by means of the Press to a great number of men who are at present engaged in considering a position which, unless it is met with a fair amount of consideration on both sides, may spell incalculable harm to every industry of this State and every portion of His Majesty's Government.

I am referring to the question which we know now as the railway trouble; and although perhaps it may by some people be considered a little out of place at the present time, I think there is nothing before the country which is of so much importance as that subject on which I shall occupy the time of the House for a few moments. I have nothing to say, at this juncture at any rate, as to the rights or wrongs of either side upon the question in dispute, but I hope to be able to give utterance to a few words which perhaps may have some weight in this Chamber, and I hope outside, in reference to the situation in which we find ourselves placed. There is a dispute between the authorities of the Railway Department and a certain section of men who are employed. That dispute could be, should be, and ought to be settled by means which have been offered by the Commissioner of Railways. To my mind that gentleman has taken an attitude in connection with this matter in which he endeavours to be as just as it is possible for any man to be, who occupies an important position, concerning the livelihood and the convenience of the whole State. The latest phase I have to deal with is the fact that this gentleman has offered what is perhaps the most fair way to meet the question. He has offered to consent to the formation of a board of what I cannot call otherwise than investigation and conciliation, and it is conciliation which is required at the present moment. It was a situation such as we have now before us that was the main factor in the passing of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act last session. I do not say the Act is incapable of improvement, that it does not require amendment, but I assert that it was placed on the statute book of this country with the object of preventing disastrous strikes such as we are threatened with, the intention being that when industrial disputes came about in this State, at any rate efforts should be made to settle them not by bossing, either by the men or by the authorities, but that absolute fairness and conciliation should be displayed so that neither the men's interests nor the interests of this great State should suffer in the slightest degree. That I am right in taking this view is proved by the attitude adopted by

those gentlemen in this House who are known as the labour members. They have taken their course in connection with this trouble, a course no doubt to which their judgment and their experience have guided them. But the development which took place last evening, when they sent forward a circular, signed by one of their representatives in the name of the lot, stating to the men that the course taken by the Commissioner of Railways was the right thing, is an honour to them, and I am glad to welcome them in this Chamber. I would like, farther, to say with regard to those who are the advisers of these men—whether they appear on the pages of printed newspapers, or whether they are their elected leaders—it is for them to consider not merely that the inconvenience of the great bulk of the people of this State will be an aid to them to get their terms, but also to consider whether the course they are pursuing, if it should result in a general strike, will not be the means of throwing out of employment thousands of men in this country who can ill afford it. I know, bringing it down to my own little concern, it was only by an accident this week that I had not to pay off every man engaged in my works; not on account of a shortage of work nor a shortage of wages, and not in consequence of any dispute—for thank God I have never had that yet—but simply because the material needed to allow these men to continue their employment was liable to be locked up in Fremantle. That is only one instance, perhaps a small one amongst a number; and far away from my temporary inconvenience and that of the men whom I am representing in this House, is the fact that as far as the great goldfields in this State are concerned, where they do not produce their food supplies and where the possibility of having a large store cannot be reckoned upon, we have this position staring us right in the face, that unless the works can be carried on, the people on the goldfields will be at a serious inconvenience with regard to their food. If I may be permitted to appeal to any section of the community, if my words will have any weight with them, I would say, "You have no right to threaten the livelihood and the occupation of the people of this State because you have a small dispute,

and to refuse reasonable and just means to obtain a settlement." If the Premier would not consider me impertinent in the matter, I would like him this evening to ask for an expression of the House on the subject; and though we on this side of the House may differ from him on some points, there is no point we can differ upon when we have to consider the interests of the great bulk of this State being set at naught by some few men, who perhaps have not had the full circumstances of the case put before them. For myself—and I believe I am speaking for those on each side of me—we are prepared to support the Government in any loyal measure which is necessary to conserve the true interests of the country in this matter. To come back to the matter that has been debated in this House, many of the members and several on this side have been asked to justify themselves in regard to their election pledges and where they sit. Although I have not been particularly named by any hon. gentleman, I am prepared in this House to give the answer as to my election pledges, which I refuse to all outsiders except my own constituents. I am not noted for beating about the bush; I have been all my life a man for direct measures; and what I say I am generally prepared to stand by. The position I took in the last election is perfectly well known to the present Colonial Treasurer (Hon. F. Illingworth), because I told him I was not very eager to continue in parliamentary life, as it was interfering with my business, but that if I did come up and did obtain election I should probably be found in opposition to him wherever he might be. I felt then that the time might come when a distinct party of one, which had been in this House seven years, might have to merge itself into a large body; not because I thought the principles advocated by the party of one were less true or less needed now, but because having served seven years' apprenticeship in this House, I had found it was possible only to speak with one voice and vote with one vote, and I want to get with those who may possibly give me the strength to carry my views into power when it comes about. As to election pledges, the pledges I gave my constituents were these, that having known my

faults and my virtues for seven years, if they thought I was fit to represent them let them put me in, and if they did not think so, let them put in the other man. I told them I thought the Throssell Government was simply holding office in an *interregnum*; that it would be the duty of the new Parliament to select the strongest men they could to form a Ministry for carrying on the affairs of the country, and that when formed by the united voice of the House, it would be the duty of members to give to those Ministers their assistance in carrying out the things required by the country. These were the election pledges I made; and when I go from them it will be time enough for newspapers, with malicious inaccuracy, to accuse me of doing that which they do themselves every day. I said I was desirous of seeing a change of Government. It does not always come to men in their lives to see their desires carried out; but I do see now an exact change of Government, and I am glad those gentlemen are on the Ministerial benches for this reason, especially, that I would like them to get at the pigeon-holes of the late Administration, and see whether it was right or wrong in what it did. I am equally desirous that those gentlemen having attained to this position, if there is anything in the pigeon-holes that will assist them, they should let us know exactly what the late Government did. I want this, not out of a morbid curiosity, but because I would like it to be understood either that the late Administration was absolutely corrupt, or else that we who thought they were or differed from them have been suffering under a misapprehension. I am not desirous to besmirch the escutcheon of the hon. gentlemen who have occupied those positions before; but I am desirous that the cloud of suspicion shall be either firmly rivetted on their shields or be dispelled, so that we may know the atmosphere is pure. We have had not only in the House this afternoon, but also outside, a certain amount of criticism in regard to the position of parties. We have been told by the Minister without portfolio (Hon. W. H. James), who possibly has been appointed to that position so that he might carry on what I may term a guerilla warfare —

A MEMBER: Another De Wet.

MR. GEORGE: No; not De Wet—he was a worker. He was never member for East Perth. We are told the party sitting opposite, now the Government party, have a majority of votes in this country. How that can be taken seriously I do not know. I do not believe those gentlemen who mouth it so glibly really mean it. I take it to be another example of the admirable art of practising bluff which distinguished that gentleman when he was sitting on this (Opposition) side.

HON. W. H. JAMES: What about your leader, who admitted the fact?

MR. GEORGE: I never go back on my leader. What is the position of the House? I will take the figures from that model of accuracy, the *Morning Herald*, a distinguished intellectual journal published in Perth, Western Australia. I find that it was stated in that journal in cold print, and therefore it must be true, that there were 21 members sitting on the Government side. At the time these figures were printed, that was correct; and the 21 members, it was stated, represent 52,516 voters; but the admirable gentleman who compiled these figures allowed his desire to go farther than his cool sense would have dictated, for he included in the 21 members the six other members who now ornament the back benches, I mean the Labour party. It is said the Labour party represent 25,492 votes; but the Labour party, if I understand it aright, were not returned to this House to support or to oppose the Government on pure political grounds. If I understand the position aright with regard to the Labour party, their business is to represent their constituents, who are not only in the districts represented by those members, but all those in the country belonging to what is generally called the Labour party. I understand that on their platform, as printed, and a copy of which was sent to me by Mr. Croft—

A MEMBER: Sent to you by mistake, I should think.

MR. GEORGE: They represent 25,492 votes. That leaves the Government in the position of an Administration having 15 direct supporters, representing 27,000 voters in the country. We on this (Opposition) side are stated by the same journal to be 27 in number, represent-

ing 36,000 voters in the country; and I make bold to say that, as far as that is concerned, we have the right to consider we represent the majority in the country as compared with our friends now on the Ministerial side. The member for Albany, in his speech on the Address-in-reply and referring to the redistribution of seats, said he hoped it would be done not on a population basis and not for centralisation, but that all interests and all industries in the State would be considered. I ask, are there no industries represented by hon. members sitting on this side of the House?

A MEMBER: Yes; the apple industry.

MR. GEORGE: The apple industry! I do not know whether the hon. member really knows what an apple is. If he does, I am certain he will support the native apple industry far in excess of the imported apple industry, which latter is sought to be introduced into this State in the interests of persons whom I will not name. That shows the numbers of parties both as to votes in this House and as far as the support of the country is at their back. With regard to the attitude of the party now on the Opposition side, speaking for myself, and I believe my views are in accord with certainly the majority if not the whole of this party, we are not playing the game of "ins" and "outs." Were we to respond to the challenge that has been thrown out by the mover and seconder of the Address, and which has been flaunted before us this evening by one Minister like a red rag before a bull, we would have to respond to it probably in the absence of that Minister, who has apparently been glued to his seat on this occasion by the fact that he is an honorary Minister without portfolio. The Ministry of the day, I mean those Ministers who have portfolios, have not yet spoken; therefore I refuse to believe that the member for East Perth, in his injudicious utterances this evening, is a reflex of the Cabinet or of His Majesty's Government. I know the modesty of the new honorary Minister is so great that the only way which they could have toned him down with common sense would have been to give him an office with a portfolio, and sandwich him in between substantial men on the front Ministerial bench. The Premier has

not yet given us his views in this House, but he will do so this evening; and it has been left to those who are desirous of discovering what he intends to do, to peruse the report of the policy speech which he delivered in the Queen's Hall. I noticed that he there uttered the words which have simply been echoed in a more feeble way by those who have spoken on the Government side in this debate, when he said:—

I expect to be challenged, and I will do nothing to prevent my opponents from making an assault on my Administration at the earliest moment.

That is a fair challenge, given in a fair and manly way; and when we (Opposition) want to take up (his challenge we will take it up, not at the dictation of the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James), but at such a time as we consider convenient. Not only did that hon. gentleman give out his challenge, but he also uttered what I consider a significant word at the end of his speech on the question of dissolution. We have been told, perhaps not so much in this House, but certainly out of it, and by the intelligent Press as represented by the *Morning Herald*, that the Premier will ask for a dissolution. Yet on referring to the report of that gentleman's speech in the Queen's Hall, I find he said, speaking of the amendment of the Constitution:—

I do not think we shall propose that alteration during the first session, because an important amendment of that description would necessitate a dissolution, and I do not think members would care to vote for an immediate dissolution.

We are certainly under the impression that he must have been under, because the *Morning Herald* said so—he must have been under the impression that he would have an absolute majority in this House; therefore the bogey of dissolution can be nicely and quietly put on one side. Now, with regard to the finances of the State, I have gathered a great amount of satisfaction from the speeches which have been delivered by the hon. the Premier and the hon. the Colonial Treasurer; and I am going to read to the House just a few words uttered by the Premier which carried a great amount of satisfaction to my mind with regard to the finances of this State. We shall

await with considerable—I will not say anxiety, perhaps I may say pleasure—farther statements in the same strain. The Premier said :—

There will be a deficit, but I repeat again that there is no cause for alarm, because so sound is the financial condition and so hopeful are the prospects of the country that when any difficulty occurs we are able to make satisfactory arrangements.

“We are able to make satisfactory arrangements.” The point I will make from the statement of the Premier is that, great as may have been the faults of the late administration, what they have left behind them could not have been so bad, otherwise the hon. the Premier would not be able to make his satisfactory arrangements with regard to finance. Because I am not willing to believe that there is so much difference in the methods of men when they are dealing with finance, as to think that a heaven-born financier has taken his seat on that side to find things in a fearful muddle, and after a few days has been able to say that there is no cause for alarm. I may say this, for the purpose of making the minds of hon. members easy. My own mind has been made easy; and I wish to impart that calm and pleasure which I feel to other hon. members who have not perhaps viewed the matter in that way. Referring to the proposed loan of five millions, the same gentleman said :—“I assure you that we have no fear but that we can meet the liabilities and that we shall be able to finance even this large sum of money. We have a grand revenue; we have no cause whatever for alarm; and we have sufficient to administer the affairs of the State with due economy.” I congratulate the hon. the Premier on finding the condition of things so pleasant and satisfactory. Now with regard to the railways. The Speech which is laid before us contains a reference to the railways, and the mover of the Address-in-reply made use of words somewhat similar to these—he believed the profits arising from the railways should be spent in giving extra railway facilities; and the words used by the hon. the Premier were these :—“We do not want to make them (the railways) a great revenue-producing system. Instead of returning actual cash to the treasury chest, a reduction of freights and greater facilities will be more

to the interest of the general public, and we consider that it is necessary to have a revision of the railway rates.” I say that the principle enunciated there is fair. But while I admit so much, I want to impress, if I can, on the hon. gentleman who will have to deal with this matter, that history repeats itself, even with regard to Government railways. As in the old times in Egypt it was necessary in the seven fat years to make provision for the seven lean years, so with freights and profits made on the railways: while it is desirable to give all the facilities we possibly can, still we must remember that lean years will come to Western Australia just as they have come to the railways of the other States. What I am not desirous of seeing is that while we have prosperity in regard to our railway matters, rates shall be lowered so much that, when the inevitable falling off of revenue comes there will have to be in the bad times first a raising of rates, and secondly a lowering of the wages of the men employed. For the wages that can be paid on the railways, as in all other concerns must be governed by the circumstance whether the labour produces the money to pay them or not. If the railway revenue decreases, as it will do and must do in the course of time, unless rates are raised to a big figure, which the country may not be able to stand, and which reacts on the working man inevitably in the cost of his food on the fields, then wages will have to come down. I do not believe in lowering wages. My idea of wages is to give a man a fair wage, and I hope it will be a long time before you will have to make your profits by grinding down and lowering the wages of your men. This is the principle I have always adopted, and I believe that whatever success I have had in connection with managing works in this State is due to the fact that I have been fortunate enough to find employers who have been generous enough to trust me in regard to the question of wages. Then, again, as regards a gentleman who sits on this side of the House, my friend Mr Throssell, I find that, so far as he is concerned, there seems to be one general consensus of opinion with respect to him and his administration. For, taking always the highest authority that I possibly could obtain, I take the authority

of my friend the Premier, and I find he states:

Our land policy will not be a departure from that of Mr. Throssell—

As a proof that I am right in my contention with regard to Mr. Throssell, we find that these words of the Premier were cheered to the echo in the great meeting in the Queen's Hall:—

to whom I desire to pay the public compliment that I believe him to be the most able administrator of the Lands Department the colony has had.

We are told that the present Minister of Lands will follow the same lines, and administer under the same conditions as those which were so successfully inaugurated and carried on for some time by the hon. member who allows me at any rate to sit on his left hand. Therefore, taking all in all, we find that the state of the finances is satisfactory, we find that the lands policy is approved of. Then we have to find out, and I suppose we shall find out in the course of this debate or a little later, what there is or has been wrong in the other departments of the State. I appeal to hon. members who are occupying the Treasury benches at this juncture to let the House and let the country know exactly how they have found things. If there is anything that will not bear the light, let us know about it. If, on the other hand, they have found that the responsibility of office brings with it not only the opportunity for investigation, but also the opportunity for dispelling the doubts which they had, then I ask them to stand up in this House and let us know exactly how they find things. They will not lose votes, but they will gain respect, if they state that they have been mistaken and tell the House and the country exactly what the position of affairs is.

THE PREMIER: What we want to know is, what objection you have to us?

MR. GEORGE: I am going to tell you that directly. I have not the slightest objection to you, except that you sit on that side of the House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Politically, not personally.

MR. GEORGE: So far as the Commissioner of Railways is concerned, I feel honoured if he will allow me to class him as one of my personal friends. As for being a political enemy of his, I do

not think he will give me occasion to be that either. If I differ from his opinions, it will be simply owing to the general character of men. All men differ. It is not necessary to be a man's enemy in order to sit in opposition to him or to differ from his views. Now the member for Albany—the matter is also mentioned in the Speech—made use of words which I very much regret. He made use of words implying that it was necessary to reconcile the farmers and the people on the goldfields. Now, I know a good deal about the farmers; I represent a constituency which has, I believe, an absolute majority of farmers, with their wives and families, so far as the number of inhabitants is concerned. I know any number of farmers in this State, and also a great portion of the goldfields population of this State. So far as I am able to judge—it is only my opinion—the antipathy with which the goldfields have seemed to view the coastal districts has been fanned by the *Kal-goorlie Miner* and papers of that sort, and is not indorsed by the great majority of the people on the fields. The Minister for Mines will remember a meeting held at Menzies some three years ago, in the course of which I stated that the farmers on the coast, at any rate, had no antipathy to the goldfields, that they rejoiced that the people on the fields had come to the colony. I assure you, if there should be any difference between them, it is only necessary to explain it as we do in the case of our personal differences. We should not allow a feeling of bitterness to be engendered either for the purpose of increasing the circulation of a newspaper or of furthering the aspirations of a few ambitious men. Now, there have been uttered during this debate words which have cast the reproach, as it were, on farmers of not doing their duty. But nobody knows better than those who have been in this State during the last 10 or 12 years that it was absolutely foolish for the farmer, until a few years back, either to increase his holding or his cultivation. I know that in the district which I have the honour to represent, fruit was fed to the pigs because there was no means of getting it to market. There are parts of my district now—Marradong—where the farmers grow any quantity of fruit and

are obliged to throw it to the pigs and cattle because they cannot get it to market owing to want of railway facilities. During the last few years the farmers of this State who have seen how the country has progressed, and who have had facilities placed at their doors for bringing their goods to market, have taken heart of grace and have opened and cleared their land, ploughed and cultivated it, sown it, put in fruit trees, and so forth; and these people have risen, are rising, and will continue to rise, and will be able not only to keep the country in food, but to export largely as well. Now there is the question of the apples. It has been mentioned by my friend—I hope I may call him my friend—the member for East Perth that this Government is not too much to blame with regard to the apple question, because federation has finally settled that question.

MR. JAMES: I see no cause for blame at all.

MR. GEORGE: The member for East Perth used words to the effect that if there was any feeling of grievance or soreness—perhaps that is the better way to put it—on the part of the representatives of the farmers in regard to the apple question, it was to be remembered that this Government had merely anticipated the action which must inevitably result from federation.

A MEMBER: Why not have given us a little longer?

MR. GEORGE: That is to say, while we can stop diseased apples or diseased pears from coming into this country, under federation we cannot stop good and sound fruit from coming in. Well, that being so—and I believe the view is correct, as my friend the member for Claremont tells us that such is the law—then I say this Government will not of course receive—at any rate we will not allow them if they want to claim—any kudos which may attach to this apple business. As far as we are concerned, the idea of throwing out the Government on the apple question, making that a question to go to the country on, with an apple stuck on a stick, saying “Will you have it or not?”—that idea is simply ridiculous. We will leave the Government to eat the apple of discord amongst themselves. Now, there has been omitted

from the Governor's Speech an important matter affecting the South-Western district—not only my own constituency, but also electorates represented by other gentlemen; and that is the question of the drainage of the South-Western district. That district I make bold to say—even although on this matter I shall not be in accord with my hon. friend the member for Northam—contains the best agricultural land that there is in this State, only unfortunately, we have too much water. Now the hon. the Premier in his Queen's Hall speech stated this:—“We shall do what we can to develop the lands of the South-West of this colony by a comprehensive system of drainage;” and he said he knew that at Pinjarra and south of Pinjarra there were large areas of ground which simply needed drainage to become productive at once. I thank the hon. gentleman for his mention of the matter in that speech. I wish he had put it in the Governor's Speech, for it would have constituted another item of congratulation and bound him to my very soul. I notice by the Governor's Speech that the Roads Act is to be amended. I think that is a matter which can be very well attended to this session. There is great need for it, too. When the Act comes next before the House, I shall try to interest hon. members for a few moments with regard to the inequalities of power under that Act as regards rating. The other matters which find a place in the Speech will be debated I presume, unless the Government lose heart of grace and commit the happy dispatch by resigning. I hope they will not, so that these matters may be debated, in their proper time. I notice that there is to be a Bill to validate the Acts of last session, and I shall look forward with some considerable expectancy to see what Acts of last session require validation. I hope that hon. members who were members of the late Parliament will also bear in mind the necessity that will be brought to our notice for validating these Acts. If they should not be validated, well I do not know what will happen. It will be for our hon. friends opposite to tell us that. I do not know that I have anything more to say in connection with this matter. It is not a question of trying to badger

the Government, on my part at any rate. I ask them to accept this assurance from me—the Ministry can take it as they please—that if I am at all a judge of the feeling on this side of the House, we all of us are desirous that His Majesty's Government shall continue, if only to give our friends opposite an opportunity of showing what they are made of, and of showing that they know something of the work, and that they are learning their trade as apprentices; and if it should happen in the course of time—we never know what may happen—that there comes a transference from the other side to this, the Opposition in those circumstances will be in a better position than any Opposition has been in before.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: When things have been straightened by us.

MR. GEORGE: The Commissioner of Railways says "when things have been straightened" by them. I say the Government are on their trial, and when things have been straightened by them—

A MEMBER: Chuck them out!

MR. GEORGE: No, not "chuck them out," but give them the reward of their labour by allowing them to continue in office. I would not give them rest, not even "where the wicked cease from troubling" will we give them rest. But what we will do is to give them the reward of their labour, and I say unhesitatingly that if the gentlemen who occupy those benches discharge the duties with credit to themselves and the country, they should be allowed to continue to enjoy the positions they hold. If, on the other hand, I find the administration of His Majesty's Government is not such as deserves support, I shall do my best to sling them out. If the labourer is worthy of his hire, let him have the reward of it. The Premier said:

All I want is to be given a fair trial, and if on that trial I and my colleagues are found wanting, it will be the duty as well as the privilege of our opponents to dismiss us from office.

I echo that. We are prepared to give him and his colleagues a fair trial. Make no mistake about this: we are not only prepared to give him a fair trial in connection with that trouble to which I have referred, but to give him all the support and strength our position in this Legis-

lature will enable us to do. In the time of the crisis of the nation, petty matters must be swept on one side. The needs, wants, requirements, and convenience of the State must take precedence without a single bit of hesitancy over any little trivial matters such as the question of "ins" and "outs" of the Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. G. Leake, K.C.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the encouragement which I have had both inside and outside this House, and it now devolves upon me to say a word or two in further enunciation of the Government policy. It has been said by my friend the leader of the Opposition that the Ministry are not a happy family; but perhaps we are the best judges of our own personal feelings, and, if it will interest him at all to know it, there is a degree of amicability about ourselves which we think did not always exist amongst those who previously occupied these benches. However, we accept the position, and we will do our best to mind our own personal affairs and to conduct the business of the country, and time alone will show whether we are able to do that well. I have purposely refrained, both in the speech which I made in the Queen's Hall and also in the Governor's Address with which he opened Parliament, from casting any reflection upon the past Administration. I do not desire this evening to depart from that line of conduct. There will be abundant time for me to take up that line when I am attacked myself by the remnants of that old party. Whether that is to come sooner or later I do not know. Several speakers from the other side of the House have deprecated a circumstance which they say existed—an event, perhaps—namely, that a threat was used by one or two speakers about an impending dissolution. As I understood those speeches I did not think there was any threat of that kind. If there was, it was not prompted by myself. I am quite aware of this, that for me in my present position to hold out in this House anything like a threat of a dissolution in order to induce members to vote for me, would be grossly and constitutionally improper. I trust I know my work better than to adopt such tactics as those. I will say, however, that if members on both sides of the House

desire a dissolution, I am perfectly prepared, personally, to go to the country. There was undoubtedly a challenge thrown down by my friend, one of the members for Perth.

A MEMBER: East Perth.

THE PREMIER: Well, it is endorsed by the other member I refer to; and whilst members on that side of the House think fit to extend their very gracious patronage to me and to my Ministry, I desire to tell them at once that I do not want it. If I cannot deserve the support of members in this House, I shall not beg for it on my knees. I shall endeavour to deserve the respect of members, and not beg for mercy. I am prepared to indorse the remarks of my friend the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James), and to say that the challenge is ready whenever members opposite desire to test their strength. It can come to-night, if they like, and I say the sooner the better; and, moreover, it can be understood that I will not occupy this position with the sword of Damocles hanging over my head, the thread to be cut by members opposite at their sweet will. If they do not desire to move a vote of no-confidence in this Ministry, I cannot, of course, force from them their reasons; but I am going to know how I stand here, and the country has got to know it too, and I can say this, that it is possible, although perhaps it may be an unusual course, for a member on this side of the House who cannot move a motion of no-confidence, to move that the House has confidence in this Ministry.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Move it.

THE PREMIER: We can get a division on that, and then we will know who are the straight-out Oppositionists. I can assure members that I am not going to occupy these benches at the will of a few individuals, and I do not thank any member on that side of the House who tries to pat me on the back and patronise me. I would rather he fought me. There has been an alteration during the last twelve months or two years in our method of returning members. That is to say, we are now dependent to a certain extent on the women's franchise. Some members on the other side of the House may owe their seats to that extension of the franchise. The fact may, perhaps, have made them timorous. When members

opposite tell me they are going to give me a show, and so forth, I do not thank them, and perhaps I doubt their sincerity, because I do not forget that before this House met some of those who are now sitting opposite to me assured me of their support.

MR. M. H. JACOBY: Name them.

THE PREMIER: Perhaps hon. members did not hear what I said. I said that before the House met, some of those now opposite to me assured me of their support. Members have ventured to criticise the Governor's Speech and the policy of the Government. I have no particular complaint to make with regard to those speeches, except that there has been some difficulty to determine their line of criticism, or, if I happened to find the line, to weigh the criticism or attribute to it any value. There is one gentleman whom I desire most heartily to thank for the observations which have been made during this debate, and for what I believe to have been possibly the unconscious support which he has given to me. I refer to the member for the Williams, the leader of the Opposition (Hon. F. H. Piesse); and if that hon. member is not prepared to advance to the attack with somewhat greater force than he has on this occasion, possibly my rank and file may beat him. I have, during the last four or five years, seen deliberate attacks made on the Treasury benches by a combination of men who, though small in numbers, had perhaps a certain degree of determination and had I led a phalanx such as that which I see before me, there would have been no delay, there would have been no mistake about the attack which would have been made on these benches, and I am only wondering why it is that the attack is not now being made.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: You wanted to get in.

THE PREMIER: I am in, and I mean to stay in, and I defy the leader of the Opposition to put me out. I am told on the one hand that I have enunciated no policy, and on the other hand we are told that our policy is the policy of the old Forrest party. [MR. HIGHAM: Hear, hear.] The old Forrest party ought to know, because they are well represented on the front Opposition bench. Three of them were Ministers, and one was a

blind supporter, whilst another did not know whether he was blind or not; but I am glad to think we know now his real position, and that he no longer sits upon a rail speaking one way, and voting another.

MR. GEORGE: That is incorrect, so far as I am concerned, anyhow.

THE PREMIER: I mention no name, but the hat that I am making is big enough for anybody to wear on that side. What I said was that the front Opposition bench, and perhaps I may say the two principal Opposition benches, fairly represent the old Forrest party; and I am glad indeed to think the remnants of that party are represented by members in this House, and that we shall still hear, throughout these debates, the echo of the old false political sentiments which we, when on that side, were so accustomed to disparage. It is said we have no policy, but if the Speech is carefully read one will see that there is something in it to discuss. I am told, too, that there is not enough legislation proposed. I must, in fairness, ask not only members of Parliament but the country to remember that we have been in office only a month, and we have accepted our responsibility in the face of difficulties which very few Ministries have ever yet been called upon to face. [MR. HIGHAM: Hear, hear.] It was after an election which was held on a policy declared by our opponents. Conscious of their weakness, they took advantage of an opportunity. Whether that was fair or unfair is not for me to say, but they abandoned their position. They ran away, and left it for us to perform the duties which they themselves dreaded; and we have done so, and have now formulated a certain policy. Judging from newspaper reports and from utterances of public men and private individuals, I have reason to believe—whether I am right or wrong, I do believe—that the policy I have enunciated is acceptable to the people of the country, and consequently I shall go on in the honest belief that I have the country at my back, although I have not the support of a majority in Parliament. It is said that not enough legislation is proposed. I am prepared to admit it, and I want members to understand at once that it is my desire that this session of Parliament shall not be a lengthy one, because I am

not prepared with new legislation. I have not had time to think it out, and I deprecate the practice which prevailed in the past of filling this House up with Bills late in the session, before members had a proper opportunity of understanding them, or perhaps of reading them. I am not going to bring down, if I can help it, anything like slipshod legislation, and I do not propose to bring down any big reform. I will only bring down legislation of necessity. However desirous I might be of doing so, I could not bring down new legislation. Why? Because I have no Parliamentary Draughtsmen. The late Government, just before they resigned, took away the two men in the public service who did that work, and I am left without a proper staff; but I have made up my mind that there shall be a proper parliamentary draughting staff in this State. I intend to have properly qualified men, paid an adequate salary—[MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear]—who will do the work, and will prepare for the session Bills during the recess, so that immediately members meet they may get right away into business, and not wait until after two or three months have elapsed. Again, I want a proper parliamentary draughting staff in order that our Statutes may be properly consolidated and examined into, for I honestly believe that directly and indirectly, if we have good, useful parliamentary draughting, we may save anything between £2,000 and £10,000 a year in the printing bill; and in regard to Parliament and the country generally, we will have the assurance that our legislation will be good and sound, and that laws passed in one session will not have to be tinkered with in the next. It is curious therefore that I should be twitted with not bringing down sufficient legislation. I admit there is much that is not before us in the Governor's Speech which I should have liked to refer to. There are many measures which I know ought to go forward, but which I confess I have not had time to consider. As to this "policy of stagnation," as it is called, I may say I repudiate that. We have no intention of going in for a policy of stagnation. If we did that, it would mean retrenchment all round. I do want to see things on a firm and solid basis, I do want to know where I stand and

what I stand on, and I cannot do that until I know the exact condition of the finances. Who on this side of the House would support a Loan Bill, if I brought it down for the construction of new works? Who would support a Loan Bill for the immediate construction of new works mentioned in the Governor's Speech? Not a single member—I would hardly get even a seconder for the Bill, and I certainly dare not divide the House on it. We have got abundant work before us in attending to the administration of affairs and in learning our work. We cannot learn in ten days what it took other people ten years to learn, and at the end of that time it is not everyone of those persons who can say he was a success. We have got quite enough to do to look after the finances, and to put the railway system on a proper footing. We have undertaken what I believe to be a reform which is approved, namely the separation of the Works from the Railway Department. That meets with the approval of even the leader of the Opposition; and hon. members who do know the inner workings of those two departments will know it is not possible to establish those two departments on a proper working basis immediately. So far as the policy of stagnation is concerned, in order to build the public works which are now in hand we shall have to spend upwards of a million a year. That is not bad; I do not call that stagnation; but if it is stagnation, you must not blame my Ministry, but blame your late leader. We are told, and perhaps there is an undercurrent of humour in it, that what little policy there is in the Governor's Speech has been taken from our opponents. The man who said that forgot to finish his sentence or to round it off, because he might have added that the former Ministry did in turn take their policy from us who were then in Opposition. Where did they get their ideas of progressive legislation? Who was it made the suggestion in the first instance, of progressive legislation and reform? It always came from the Opposition; and, curiously enough, that which the Government had condemned as useless and stupid in one session, they adopted as laudable and constitutional and necessary in the next session. That has been the

history of parliamentary practice since I came into the House in 1894. I will only remind hon. members of one or two measures which were suggested first by the then Opposition, and condemned by the then Government, and which were adopted afterwards by the Government. Take redistribution of seats, take payment of members, take abolition of the food duties, take electoral reform, take women's suffrage: all these came from the then Opposition side of the House, and one if not some of those measures was not only opposed by the Premier of the day (Sir John Forrest), but he said "rather than that should pass" or "before it should pass, it would have to be over his dead body." (General laughter.) Hon. members will recollect that was the phrase absolutely made use of from this very chair; but the very dead-body policy was pushed through the House by the hon. member who had declaimed against it; and it was when we were advocating these reforms that we, then on the Opposition side, were called "traitors and croakers." As I say, I am not going to attack those who have gone before. *De mortuis, nil nisi bonum*. One or two remarks were made in a spirit of criticism by my friend the leader of the Opposition (Hon. F. H. Piessé), and I suppose it will only be courteous on my part to refer to some of his observations. As I say, I thank him for the excellent support which I feel sure I have derived from his utterances of yesterday afternoon; and I find myself in agreement with him when he said it was indiscreet of the late Premier to refer to the necessity for straightening out the finances.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I did not say "the late Premier."

THE PREMIER: The hon. member did say it was indiscreet to refer to the necessity for straightening out the finances; and we know the gentleman who used those words was the member for Northam (Mr. G. Throssell), when he was Premier, and whose mantle the member for the Williams hopes will some day descend on his shoulders. However, indiscreet or not, we thought it was an excellent remark, because there was so much apparent truth in it, and such good, sound, honest advice; and when we realise that this advice was also given by another colleague of the member for

Northam, namely the late Mr. Moran—(general laughter)—we realise that we ought to pay the greatest possible regard to it, and I am sure it will be our very best endeavour to “straighten out the finances.” The task will be a difficult one, but I am glad to know we have an admission from the other side of the House that such a work is necessary, and that a state of affairs exists requiring this herculean task; and I am moreover pleased to think that in that difficult task we shall have, or ought to have, the assistance of those hon. members who formerly assisted in getting the finances into the muddle in which we find them. Of course there would be no time, in a debate of this kind, to give long lists of figures and details; but I can promise that it is not with the idea of keeping anything back from members that I refrain at this moment, because my friend the Treasurer will take advantage of the earliest possible moment to refer at very great length to the finances. I do not know whether I misunderstood the member for the Williams last night, when he referred to a million of Treasury bills which should be redeemed at the end of this year. Perhaps he did not make himself clear; but what I thought he said was that we need not take these Treasury bills into account because they had been authorised. But I say they are current, and have to be met.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: What I said was, you added that amount to the total indebtedness of the State, whereas those Treasury bills had been provided for in the amount of the total expenditure for the year.

THE PREMIER: They had been authorised, of course; but you cannot pay Treasury bills by referring a party to the Act which authorised the borrowing. I am glad to have the assurance of the hon. member that I must have taken a wrong note of what he said.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: It is a serious matter to make out the expenditure to be a million too much, and I want that explained. It cannot be explained away.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member also claims credit for having ordered a tremendous lot of rolling-stock, and said that in my remarks I had claimed credit for ordering that rolling-stock. Nothing of the kind was said by me, but

we say now, and have said for a long time past, that the necessities of the railway traffic require the proper equipment of our railways, and it is going to be one of our chief cares in administration. What is the use of our railways unless properly equipped? We are very pleased to find there has been a large order sent forward for rolling-stock; but great as that pleasure was, our surprise was equally great when we found there was no provision to meet the bill. It is true the hon. member says he and his colleagues may take credit for having ordered that additional rolling-stock; but we, the new Government, have got the trouble of finding the money, and that is one of the difficulties in which we find ourselves; consequently we feel the necessity of going slowly with regard to anything like what has been called in the past a “progressive policy,” namely that of public works known as the policy of beg, borrow, and steal. I am not conscious of ever having said I objected to the railways being properly equipped; although my friend the member for the Williams tells us that when I occupied his distinguished position on the other side of the House, a position which I gladly abandoned, I used to object to the proper equipment of the railways. I was delighted to hear that the late Government had it in contemplation to establish a Harbour Trust, and I am sorry to think so valuable a suggestion was kept so long in the background, as I assume it was if the idea was in contemplation two or three years ago; but now that it will be definitely proposed, I assume we shall have the support of members on that side to give it practical effect. There are other matters in connection with this harbour trust which I am sure will not lead to adverse criticism and discussion, and amongst these I may refer to the question of properly equipping the pilot crew at Fremantle by giving them every facility to visit ships without personal risk and without any absolute danger. I desire and am already taking steps to ascertain whether we can supply those brave fellows with a proper steamer, in which they may go out in all weathers safely. Reference was made as I thought it would be, to the question of the importation of fruit. I do not want there to be any misunderstanding on that

subject. I have said in my speech in the Queen's Hall, that the prohibition of the importation of fruit would be removed; and I may say now that the regulations were finally approved to-day, and will be published in a day or two. I am glad to think they will be published so soon after the meeting of Parliament, because hon. members, if they think fit, may have them cancelled at once. If hon. members pass a resolution that these fruit regulations should be repealed they will probably be repealed, but not by me; and if the country thinks it better to revert to the old system of prohibition, well and good. Of course, we will have to abide by the verdict of this House. One hon. member, I think the member for the South-West Mining District, says it was a pity these regulations have been repealed, although he also said he was strongly in favour of their repeal. I do not know, if a thing is necessary and proper to be done, why it should not be done at once. No good would come of delay in this matter, and I do not know that a select committee to consider this question could do any more than a committee of the whole House. Consequently I see no necessity for referring that question to a select committee; and I would like to remind hon. members that whilst those who represent the apple and pear industry now clamour so loudly for a select committee to inquire into the necessity for repealing the regulations prohibiting the importation of fruit, they were very careful not to demand a select committee when the prohibition was made. That was not done; those regulations were not originally framed on the instructions or suggestions of a select committee of this House; but it was done by the Government of the day. Now the Government of the day, following the course of their predecessors, though perhaps in altered circumstances, think fit to repeal the prohibition. Hon. members may rest assured that the best effect will be given to that repeal, and that fruit will be admitted here, but we trust under what safeguards we can properly set up.

MR. M. H. JACOBY: Will you guarantee that?

THE PREMIER: We desire that fruit shall come in, and we desire there shall be proper inspection at the port of export; and whether the fruit appears

clean or otherwise, it will be subjected to certain tests, and certain precautions will be taken with regard to it on its arrival here. I do not know how long the codlin moth has been in the Australian States—I believe for a good long time, some 30 or 40 years; but at any rate we never heard of it here before 1887, when I think the regulations prohibiting the importation of fruit were first passed. In those days large quantities of apples used to come into the colony, and that too without the care and supervision which we now think ought to be exercised with regard to their importation.

MR. W. F. SAYER: In 1889.

THE PREMIER: Well, 1889. You see I have given you the benefit of two years.

MR. SAYER: There was no importation before then, because the colony produced more than it required.

MR. JACOBY: Will you guarantee clean fruit?

THE PREMIER: Another little matter was referred to by my friend the leader of the Opposition (Hon. F. H. Piessé), and it was to the effect that we claimed the credit for establishing the cottage system in asylums and for the purchase of Whitby. Well, I have never done that at all. I claim no credit for that. Everybody knows that Whitby Falls estate was purchased two or three years ago. But we are aware of this, that not much has been done in the way of the suggested reforms that my friend seems to be so keen on. Well, I think myself that much good will be done by the change of Government. Without being egotistical, I am sure we cannot do much more harm than our predecessors; and I hope we shall be conscious of the existence of constitutional principles, and avoid as far as possible the violating on every possible occasion of every constitutional principle in and out of Parliament. It is said there is nothing suggestive of a policy in the Speech, but I have always understood that questions of policy were questions of principle. I have already referred to the fact that we recognise the necessity for equipping our railways with rolling-stock: that is mentioned. Now I want to read two paragraphs in the Speech, because these two paragraphs have been carefully avoided by my critics

up to the present moment. They are these:—

The expenditure of moneys beyond the votes authorised by Parliament must be discouraged as an encroachment upon the great constitutional principle that recognises Parliament, and Parliament only, as the body to grant supplies for public purposes.

Provision must necessarily be made for unforeseen expenditure, but Excess Bills should not include sums of such magnitude as those mentioned in Bills proposed during last Parliament.

Now, if that does not involve a big constitutional principle, I should like to know what does. I do not wonder that my friends who sit opposite desire to avoid discussion on that question. Year after year when we sat there have we pointed out the great mistakes, almost criminal, of the then Administration in indulging in this unauthorised expenditure: works begun without the authority of Parliament, and moneys spent without the authority of Parliament. That is one of the great difficulties which we, as a new Ministry, have to contend with; and we have got to stop that, and stop it quickly. It is not uncommon to find papers connected with works involving the expenditure of ten and twenty thousand pounds which have been begun without the sanction even of the Cabinet, and certainly without the sanction of Parliament.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Are they in progress now?

THE PREMIER: Well, I stopped one the other day. I do not want to elaborate this principle at the present time, but when my friend the Treasurer delivers his Budget, there will be any amount of time—if you care to let us live until that time, may it please you, gentlemen. If hon. members like, they can make an opportunity for discussion of this question. I only remind the hon. member that these two paragraphs did occur in the Speech, because, perhaps, he may have forgotten them, and may like to refer to them at some later date.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I shall refer to them.

THE PREMIER: The incursion of rabbits is also referred to, and there I must confess we are in a difficulty. We shall honestly seek the advice and assistance of Parliament. In the course of the few weeks at our disposal it has been

impossible for us to do anything; nor could we do anything, because we have not yet the funds. But there will be money: you will be asked to vote supplies for three months, and we intend, if this House thinks fit, to follow up the recommendation of the Royal Commission to place on the Estimates a sum of £30,000, as the Commission recommend, with the idea of constructing a fence. If the House tells us that we should, when the Supply Bill is through, proceed with that work at once on the distinct assurance that the money will be passed when the Estimates come down, we will lose no time in setting to work on that very important matter. I do not think hon. members would expect me, when I have been speaking so strongly against unauthorised expenditure, to enter into contracts to spend £30,000 without the authority of Parliament. Of course I honestly say that we desire to be assisted and informed on this great question; and should the House say there is any better system than fencing, we shall give every weight and consideration to the suggestion. If, on the other hand, the House says we are not to spend anything, then, though with a degree of regret, we should submit to that decision. I can hardly think that there was no policy in the Speech when, in addition to the two paragraphs I have read, we find reference to the necessity for the amendment of the Electoral Act, for the establishment of a system of electoral rights, and for the abolition of plural voting. Now, these surely are big constitutional principles. The question of the abolition of plural voting I fought for in this House last year. I fought for it in the Constitution Bill when that was going through committee, and the hon. members sitting here that night were those who were most violently opposed to that proposed alteration. When the Bill came up for the third reading we desired to recommit it in order that the House might reconsider its determination. But no; still the same strong opposition to that progressive policy, the same opposition was made, and the proposal did not go through. But what happened? As soon as the general elections were on, all the Ministers—at any rate, two or three of the Ministers—were in favour of the abolition of plural voting. And then,

when we advocate the abolition now, we are told that we have filched their policy. Before I leave the question of rabbit policy, I am reminded by a member that in 1897 a gentleman sitting over there then brought this matter prominently before the Government by resolution, and that it was my friend the Treasurer (Hon. F. Illingworth) who insisted on the resolution being put and not withdrawn, so that it might be on record. That resolution was passed, affirming the necessity of dealing with the question. The Minister for Lands of the day, the present member for Northam, declared that this question would be attended to without any delay:—"Steps have been taken to place in the hands of the Stock Department the whole of the work of dealing with the rabbit invasion," he said, "and we shall take active steps to do whatever is necessary, and to undertake fencing if that be found desirable. I want to assure hon. members of this, that the Government have been fully aware of the danger for some time past, and although it may be a question whether rabbits are such a source of danger to Western Australia as they have been in the Eastern colonies, still we feel that no risk must be run in dealing with this danger." All that is to be found on page 923 of the 1897 *Hansard*. I am not going to refer to that book any more to-night. Well, since 1897 to the present day is four years. That time ought to be long enough for most men to perform a promise. However, it rests with us to do what we possibly can. I must thank the hon. member for North Perth (Mr. R. Speight) for the generous observations he made during his speech last night, and I am delighted now to hail him as one of the Government party.

MR. GEORGE: As a brother.

THE PREMIER: As an example which I am sure every budding politician might well follow. The speech of the hon. member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) satisfied me that so long as he elects to remain on my side of the House I have in him a gentleman well versed in debate, and quite capable not only of resisting the attacks of the other side, but of carrying the war into the enemy's camp if necessary. The hon. member for Geraldton (Mr. R. D. Hutchinson) spoke at some length on the question of the Midland

Railway and the necessity for purchasing that concession. Well, I will not disguise the fact that when I see my way to purchase that property at a reasonable figure, I shall be only too pleased to clinch the bargain. But it is, to my mind, a question of price; and I have refrained from mentioning the Midland Railway in the Governor's Speech because I did not think it was a matter which, considering the delicacy of the negotiations which will have to be entered into, ought to find a place in the Speech. We shall, of course, keep our eyes in the direction of the Midland Railway. We are aware that there is a contract in existence. The hon. member has been good enough to suggest that the terms of that contract should be observed on both sides. With that sentiment I readily agree; and I hope that it will be found that the present Government are quite ready to perform their part of the contract and to see that the other side shall perform theirs. But the hon. member might have hesitated before he blamed this Administration for any errors in connection with the Midland Railway. He should rather have attacked his chief, because it was during the administration of that gentleman and his colleagues that this question cropped up; and it is therefore a question of the past, not exactly of the present. We have had absolutely nothing whatever to do with it up to the present moment, but I can promise the hon. member that we shall not lose sight of the matter, and that we shall watch with great care his very valuable suggestions. I am glad the hon. member mentioned the question of mining on private property. That is a matter which he said might have been referred to in the Speech, and he regretted it was omitted; but it was useless to fill the Speech up with suggestions which we know we cannot carry out during this session of Parliament. There are a great many matters I referred to in my speech at Queen's Hall which I did not refer to in the Governor's Speech, because, as I have already said, my desire is to get this session over as quickly as possible, and proceed to work and learn my business as an administrator. There is abundant work before us for the next twelve months. The last gentleman who spoke was the member for the Murray

(Mr. George), who, I was glad to hear, said he did not intend to beat about the bush, as I presume he means to say he used to do in the past, and it is his desire to come off the "rail" and let us know, at any rate this little community here, exactly where he is going to sit. I congratulate myself on the hon. member's position, for now I know where he is, and I shall know that when he attacks me I shall be privileged to reply. [Mr. GEORGE: Hear, hear.] He is a good representative of the old Forrest party; as good as any of them. I am perfectly sure he will do credit to the traditions of that party.

MR. GEORGE: I should not be sitting here if Forrest were here.

THE PREMIER: I was rather astonished, though, to hear him speak of the old Administration as corrupt; at least he thought they were. It was very strange to find him supporting an Administration which bore such an evil reputation. However, I may have taken a wrong note again—I may be accused of doing it.

MR. GEORGE: I am not going to accuse you.

THE PREMIER: I did not say they were corrupt. The hon. member seemed to be rather annoyed with the member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James), but this is not the first time. I have often seen that occur in this House before. He seemed to think the member for East Perth threw down a challenge, or, as he termed it, waved the red rag; and he told us he should take up the challenge at any time he thought fit; that he was going to choose the time.

MR. GEORGE: I?

THE PREMIER: That is what the hon. member said, I think. I appeal to members to say if that is not what the hon. member said. He said that was a challenge he was not going to take up now, but that he would take it up at any time the Opposition thought fit; in other words that the Opposition would choose their own time. One party can force a fight on, sometimes. I wish to say that when I paid a certain compliment to the member for Northam, the old Minister for Lands (Hon. G. Throssell), in my speech at Queen's Hall, I meant what I said, and I am conscious of the good work which that hon. member has always done

for this country. I know his energy, I know his application, I realise his ability; and, as I say, when I paid him the compliment I meant it. But it does not follow that I meant that compliment to extend beyond him, and to embrace any other member on the Opposition side of the House. We are told that on this side of the House we have said the farmers have not done their duty. I do not remember that and if it was said, it is an expression of opinion which I by no means approve of. If there is one class of person for whom I have great respect, it is the agriculturist. I like to see him prosperous, and though I may not be at one with agriculturists on every little point, yet I hope they will realise that at any rate the Government desire to be fair to them. We will encourage the settlement of the land to the best of our ability; we will offer facilities on the railways for bringing produce to the door of the consumer; and we desire, above all things, to see the people on the goldfields in closer touch with their brethren on the coast. They have matters in common. There is no reason for antagonism between these two bodies of people, and if there is anything like an attempt to sow discord, it will not be sown from this side of the House. I can promise members that. Of course, I could speak at far greater length, if it were necessary; but fortunately I have not had to reply to the criticisms of everybody who would attempt to read me in pieces. I understand from the leader of the Opposition that there will be no amendment to this Address proposed, and I honestly tell the House I am sorry for it, because I should like to have known this evening how I stand. I want to know who are the straight-out Opposition, and who are the straight-out Government supporters. I want to know whom I have offended, and I want to know whom I am to attack at the proper moment, and from whom I can expect attack. The sooner I know that, the better I shall be pleased. Inasmuch as it is not the intention of members to make an attack upon me to-night, we will see what we can do on some other occasion. I am going to ask the House to pass a Supply Bill to-morrow. We have no money. We have given the Treasury chest a shake, and there is no responsive rattle, and we cannot do work

unless we have money. We ask you to vote us a sufficient sum to carry us on for the next three months. We say three months, to be on the safe side, because previous to the end of that time no doubt we shall be able to place both the general Estimates and the Loan Estimates before you. Although the Message from the Governor suggests £1,000,000, I shall submit readily to reduce that amount, if the House itself think the sum too large, but I suggest we should have three months' supplies. I shall be satisfied with two, if you think three months too much. I am going to ask the House to adjourn as soon as that Bill is passed, taking care, of course, after consulting the convenience of hon. members generally and the leader of the Opposition, that any special motion which any member desires to bring forward shall be discussed. I do not desire to burk discussion in any way. Do not think that, because I am asking for supplies, directly I have got supplies I am going to urge adjournment, or have a prorogation. Nothing of that kind at all. If members like to go on for the next fortnight or three weeks, I will do so, but I admit that it will be very inconvenient; absolutely inconvenient. We have to be prepared for the royal visit, and if members think somebody else than myself ought to represent the State on that occasion, I will readily give way to them. I can assure members that whilst I occupy this position I will discharge the duties which are cast upon me; but if they desire to turn me out and let someone else undertake the work, I think this is the time to do it. We shall adjourn then until about the first week in August, when I shall ask the Treasurer to be prepared if possible with his Budget speech, and to bring down for your consideration the annual Estimates without any delay. At the same time we should be prepared with as much of formal business as possible, and after that, if we get our Appropriation Bill, I should certainly ask this House to cut the session short, and allow us to get about our business; and particularly do I claim this indulgence because, if the Ministry are to be allowed to continue in office, I hope they will be given every opportunity and time for doing honest and good work. We do

not want to prepare the way for other people. We do not want to do, as it were, all the hard work, and somebody else to come in and reap the benefit of our labour. That is why I say that I think, if members are going to challenge us, they ought to challenge us at once. I ask that in fairness. I ask that as man to man. If you are going to turn me out, for goodness sake get it over. I am reminded that in addition to the Supply Bill, I may have to ask you, gentlemen, to pass a Loan Bill, if not within the next few days, at any rate very early in August, because, owing to our advices from London, we want to be prepared to take advantage of any change for the better in the London market. There is nothing new to tell you with regard to the necessity for this Loan Bill. The public prints contain all the information; and that which we on this side do not know, you gentlemen on that side can get from your leaders. We have nothing up our sleeve, so to speak, with regard to this Loan Bill, but we do want to be in a position to go on to the loan market and borrow as soon as possible. Before I sit down there is one question of this financial policy that I want to speak upon, and it is this. You know we have a system of borrowing here through the medium of Treasury bills. There is a statute which, when a Loan Bill is passed, enables the Treasurer of the day to anticipate the raising of that loan in the ordinary course upon the London market by floating Treasury bills at short date. We deprecate that system, and always did so, and as soon as possible when we have raised sufficient money to ensure the completion of public works and to pay off all the current Treasury bills, I shall ask the House either to repeal that Act or to amend it, so that the Treasurer of the day cannot indulge his fancy in "flying kites." I thank the House for having listened to me. If I have bored some people I do not regret it, because at any rate I know that I have explained as fully as possible the policy which I intend to follow with the assistance of my colleagues as long as we are allowed to occupy this position. Again I thank hon. members for listening to me. I am more than pleased to find myself leading so many as I do to-day. I have never led so many before. I find

there is not quite enough, and if a polite invitation to the gentlemen who sit on the other side of the House would induce them to come over and support us, they shall have it either verbally or in writing.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas): Several hon. members of this House have explained their attitude and stated why they have taken the stand which they have, and why they have, as I think, contrary in some instances to their election pledges, taken a seat on the Opposition benches. I also made statements to my constituents and made several pledges, and I find in reading through my pledges again that the most of those pledges are contained in the Government policy. Therefore I find that to be consistent with the attitude I took up before my constituents I had to take the place I do on the Government cross-benches in this House. I did not take my place here until I heard somewhat of the policy which our Ministry intended to lay before the country. I may say I pledged myself to absolute independence. I pledged myself that I would not be bound to follow any party or be a direct nominee of one; and I want to say that when the Government introduce measures which are not in accord with my views I shall then oppose them, and if it be necessary to throw that Government out, I should join with others in throwing them out. I would say this much in regard to the Government policy, that though mostly it is in keeping with my own, yet in my opinion it does not go far enough. This I will speak of later. As regards the proposed legislation, I certainly think there is radical reform needed in our electoral laws. We want reform in regard to the conduct of elections, for in the last election in my constituency, which is a very large one, many voters had not an opportunity of recording their vote one way or the other, because had there been polling booths for places like Eucla and others nearly as far east, we would not have had the result of the election reported till some months after. I think we want to have the ballot-boxes opened and the votes counted forthwith at the various centres, and the result to be wired through to the head office, so as to give every voter in our various constituencies an opportunity of declaring their views in regard to the candidate

who is selected to represent them. I am pleased to find the Government in favour of redistribution of seats. I also want to see a redistribution of seats with a due regard to the popular voice and a due regard also to every interest in the State. The member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) spoke about land being locked up in his district, and I must say I have been with him in that matter, for in my constituency a lot of good land is locked up in pastoral leases, and I would like to see that land thrown open to selectors. I think it can quite easily be done, and I do not wish to see the men who hold pastoral leases robbed, but the lessees shall receive fair and ample compensation for the land taken from them, and then the land shall be given to selectors who may have opportunity of taking it up, so that we may have a population settled on the land. I was pleased to hear from the Premier that he intends to take immediate steps in regard to the rabbit question. This is a very sore point in the constituency I represent; and when I read the report of the Rabbit Commission on this question, recommending that my constituency should be left out of the area which is to be fenced against rabbits, and proposing to run a fence from Mary Ann Harbour practically to Perth, leaving unfenced all the land to the east of that line, I felt that the recommendations of that Commission would not do justice to a large area of occupied land that is worth protecting against the ravages of the rabbit pest. There is some land in the neighbourhood of Esperance Bay which is worth protecting, and no attempt has been made to protect that land from the incursion of rabbits. In 1897 this question of rabbits was brought before this House, and we then knew that the rabbits were in the country, although interested parties said there were no rabbits. No steps were then taken to cope with the difficulty. I do not say whether a fence is the best thing to keep out the rabbits; but if a fence is the best thing, then I contend that a fence should go east as far as possible, in order to protect most of the land that is worth protecting. I understand that the rabbits have now got a little east of Thomas River; and if so, this would show that we should take the fence as near to that as we can safely

get, and to protect as much of the land in the Dundas constituency as we can, because the people occupying land there are entitled to as much consideration as the farming population in other parts of the State. We have good land in that constituency, and although I have been asked why the land is not taken up if it be good, I cannot imagine anyone being foolish enough to take up land in a place where he can get no market for his produce. There is a little farming community round about Esperance Bay, and I can assure the House that last year there were tons of produce burnt and a great quantity fed to pigs because no market was available to which the produce could be sent, except the small market at Norseman. With regard to mining, we agree it is a great asset, and I am sorry to find there is no specific mention of the mining industry in the Governor's Speech. We want to give our prospectors every encouragement, and I have formed an opinion from the utterances of some Ministers now in office that they intend to bring in measures for the encouragement of prospectors and also to offer bonuses for deeper sinking and for opening up new ground. The Premier has told us that he intends to have a parliamentary drafting staff, and (as one member interjects) a good one at that. I say it is about time, for after reading through the Mining Acts and regulations I can understand the necessity for a proper parliamentary drafting staff, because there are radical amendments needed in almost every page of these Acts. I hail with delight the statement of the Premier that fruit will be allowed to come into this State; and notwithstanding anything which can be said on the Opposition side of the House, I may say that anything which will tend to cheapen the cost of living on our goldfields and induce a greater settlement of the wives and families of miners on those fields ought to be encouraged in every way possible. That remark will apply also to other foods. I do not anticipate that removal of restrictions on the importation of apples and pears will greatly cheapen the cost to consumers on the goldfields; therefore I would like to see the Government do something, if possible, to bring the consumer into more

direct contact with the producer, and to have public markets in some form established in the populous centres, so as to prevent the middleman from robbing the producer of a lot of his profit and robbing the consumer by compelling him to pay more than a reasonable price. I take the opportunity of congratulating the Commissioner of Railways on the fair and firm attitude he has taken with regard to the strike at Fremantle. I feel strongly on this point, for we have had the Labour organisations fighting all through for the principle of conciliation and arbitration, and those members who especially represent Labour in this House have taken a fair and reasonable course in advising the men on the present difficulty; the result being that those men and the representatives of those unions which have been asking so long for conciliation and arbitration now say they will not accept the fair and just proposal submitted to them by the Commissioner of Railways and recommended for their adoption by the Labour members in this House. I am sorry to find, and this is why I cannot in fairness congratulate our Government, that they do not intend proposing the construction of any new works or railways this session. That practically means we are going to hang up the country for some considerable time as regards new works; and I say that in respect of reproductive works, you have no right to allow new works of a reproductive character to lie idle one moment. I say farther that if you make new railways, and by that means bring in an increased revenue and promote an increase of trade, it is our duty to undertake these works, and this House has no right to hang them up. I want to see a railway go northward from Leonora through Morgans and Laverton and that way; I want to see a railway go through the Lawlers district; I want to see a railway go from Esperance Bay to the goldfields, and this is a line that must be made sooner or later. I am sick and tired of the way in which my constituency has been neglected in this matter. It has been said there is no port at Esperance, only an open roadstead; but I would say to members who talk in that way, it would be advisable for some of them to ascertain the nature of the inquiries lately

made by the British naval authorities regarding the port of Esperance. I may say broadly that I am a strong opponent of the principle of centralisation which has been followed too long in this State. I want to see that every port in Western Australia shall get the trade to which its geographical position entitles it. I am glad to note in that connection the words of the member for Albany (Mr. Gardiner), and I will back him up and am sure he will back me up in anything which will tend to open up and develop the different ports of Western Australia. In that respect I feel sure of having strong support from the members for Bunbury and Geraldton as well; and I may even go so far as to say I ought to have the strong support of the Fremantle members. There is a mining district in the constituency which I represent, a mining district which is being ruined for lack of railway communication. I refer to the Dundas goldfield and especially to Norseman. We want a railway badly there, and several attempts have been made to give us that railway. I should like to say here, in common fairness, that many of those who are Opposition members to-day were the ones who tried to give us that railway communication. I must in all fairness say that. I want to point out that a railway to Norseman would open up big mining resources there. Only recently I have almost been compelled to close down a big mine owing to the lack of facilities for working in the district, which means that I have almost had to turn 150 men away. The member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. J. Ewing) spoke to us a little relative to Collie and the Collie railway. I would like to say that I want to see every industry in this country fostered and every industry encouraged. I want to see the farming industry go ahead, because I represent in this House both farming and mining interests in my constituency. I want also to see the great gold-mining industry of the country go ahead, and I want to see proper means of communication and transit granted to the Collie coalfield.

A MEMBER: How about the pastoral industry?

MR. THOMAS: To the pastoral industry, to every industry in the State.

But I certainly maintain that the means of communication which is asked for on behalf of Collie, namely a railway to Narrogin and thence on to Kellerberrin, is not the proper means of communication to be set up between the coalfields and the goldfields. I have taken the trouble to work out some figures in connection with this matter, and I trust that the House will not be wearied if I give some of them. It has been stated repeatedly that there is now a very limited supply of timber on the fields. However, Mr. Kelso, the forest ranger, after making a very careful estimate and going into detailed figures in connection therewith, considers there is from 12 to 14 years' supply of wood there. It has been stated that we ought not to cut that timber for fuel, but ought to conserve it for mining timber. I sent a wire to one of the big mines in Kalgoorlie in order to find out what ratio there was between the fuel used by the mines and the mining timber used by them; and I received a reply stating that during the month of May 2,700 tons of firewood was consumed, while the amount of mining timber was 27 tons. If we have a twelve years' supply of fuel, I leave hon. members to judge for themselves how lasting a supply we have of mining timber. There is no question that sooner or later we shall have to get coal to the fields in order to run our mines. At present the coal is being brought through East Perth to the fields—the little that does go up there. Collie to East Perth is 123 miles, East Perth to Kalgoorlie is 374 miles, thence to the mines 3 miles; total, 500 miles. I have left out of consideration the proposed new extension of the railway to the centre of the fields—I think it is proposed to extend the railway five or six miles. From Collie to Narrogin is 68 miles, Narrogin to Kellerberrin 93 miles, Kellerberrin to Kalgoorlie 242 miles, thence to the mines 3 miles, and allowing for the line not running in a straight line 10 miles, making a total of 416 miles. Now I maintain with all due seriousness, that the proper way to get Collie coal to the goldfields of Western Australia is by Esperance Bay.

A MEMBER: Nonsense!

MR. THOMAS: I am glad the hon. member takes the trouble to interject

"nonsense." I have worked out some figures in this connection. The Commissioner of Railways will, I think, bear me out when I state that the department is losing money on the South-Western Railway for every ton of coal carried, and every increase of coal carried over the present line means piling up the agony and losing more and more. It appears to me that the remedy for a state of affairs like that existing, is the construction of a direct line between Collie and Bunbury. Now, a direct line between Collie and Bunbury would be between 29 and 30 miles—I have estimated 32; and the cost of hauling at a halfpenny a ton per mile is 1s. 4d. I think at the present time the coal is being carried from Collie round by Brunswick into Bunbury for 1s. 9d. From Bunbury to Esperance Bay I estimate the cost at 3s. 6d.

A MEMBER: Ridiculous!

MR. THOMAS: I see some members rather object to that, but I base my estimates on the best of authority. If a coal trade is going to be opened up with the goldfields, you will find that the collieries will have their own steamers or their own sailing vessels, or whatever means of transport may be adopted. An estimate was made by one of the highest authorities in Western Australia for the carriage of coal from Bunbury to Fremantle, allowing for delays to steamers and everything else; and that estimate was that it could be done for 2s. 6d. to 3s. a ton at the outside. Therefore I maintain that for a traffic of this sort, to be built up by collieries having steamers running on their own behalf, a freight of 3s. 6d. a ton is ample to allow.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: It would not pay for the cost of handling.

MR. THOMAS: There is the loading from the steamer into the truck on the wharf, 1s. 3d. That also is an estimate based on very high authority. From Esperance Bay to the mines is 234 miles; carriage at a halfpenny per ton per mile would be 9s. 9d. This makes a total of 15s. 10d. As the railways now are, 500 miles, the haulage would come to £1 0s. 10d.; while for the new line it would perhaps cost 17s. 6d. You have a difference thus of 1s. 8d., which you may add if you will to the 3s. 6d. for which you say the coal could not be carried by

sea. I maintain it could. Then you still have an equality between the two.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: What about wharfage? That is 3s.

MR. THOMAS: I am giving my estimate.

A MEMBER: It is ridiculous! Your figures are absurd.

MR. THOMAS: They are not absurd. The estimate I have given of 2s. 6d. to 3s. per ton from Bunbury to Fremantle is an estimate made by one of our leading shipping men in Fremantle.

MR. TEESDALE SMITH: It won't pay for the handling.

MR. THOMAS: I do not know about that. I was given an estimate of carriage between Bunbury and Adelaide at 7s. 6d. per ton; and on that basis I certainly maintain that 3s. 6d. is plenty to allow for the collieries running their own steamers.

A MEMBER: You keep to cattle.

ANOTHER MEMBER: You keep to ticks.

A THIRD MEMBER: Keep your temper.

MR. THOMAS: I never lose my temper. The saving of 1s. 8d. per ton by that line would mean a saving of £25,000 per annum to the Kalgoorlie district alone. These figures are the result of careful preparation, and I would be glad to have them refuted. I shall open a nice theme for argument, if I do nothing else, by producing the figures on the floor of the House. I think I have wearied hon. members sufficiently, and I beg to resume my seat. I am pleased that an hon. member has just referred to something which I have here, because I should not like to have sat down without mentioning it. I go so far as to say that if the Government have not sufficient money to carry out urgent reproductive public works such as railways, we are not going to have these works hung up. I for one would not be a party to that. I would say, let private enterprise step in and construct railways. I have not been converted by the member for Perth (Mr. F. Wilson), since my arrival here. I was returned by my constituents to uphold a principle; but while I am as strongly opposed as a man can be to private enterprise being allowed to hold main trunk lines or to construct main public works, yet I would allow private enterprise to construct as many feeders as it likes to Government trunk

lines, or to do anything which would bring revenue to railways and works owned by the Government. I would also say that if we have to hang up indefinitely our trunk lines for lack of funds, then we ought to allow private enterprise to step in and make them. I would fix the price at which the Government could purchase at any time; I would fix maximum rates for goods and passengers; and I would fix the quantity of rolling-stock per mile. Further, I would have no land grants. In that case there can be no evil in lines being constructed or run by private enterprise, because you have the public interests safeguarded in every particular in which they can be safeguarded. Offers have been made before in this country for the construction of railways; and if I have not been seriously misinformed, an offer was made for the construction of a private railway from Menzies to the mines north of that town. If railways had been constructed when the offer to construct them was made years ago, the country would have owned those railways by this time in return for not a penny-piece. Private enterprise is not going to construct railways for nothing; of course private individuals propose to make money out of them; but if a community pay £10 per ton for cartage, and can get carriage at £3 or £4 per ton through the building of a line by private enterprise, then that community is saving a lot of money; and the owners of the line are making money, most certainly. At the end of the time of the concession you will find the result will be that the owners of the private railway will have made, if you will, a good deal of money; the community which they serve will have saved a lot of money; and the country will have obtained a railway for nothing. Looking at these facts, I cannot but urge that if we are not able to construct our public works and railways from public funds, that if no funds are available, instead of hanging up the development of our country for an indefinite time we should allow private enterprise to come in and construct those works. At the same time we should safeguard every possible interest of the public. I would like to reaffirm that I am in this House as an independent member, and that I was returned as such. I will support

the Ministry so long as they bring in liberal legislation which is in keeping with my own policy and the policy which I was returned to endeavour to carry out; I will give them a cordial support as long as they bring in such legislation as is good for the country as a whole; but if I see them introduce any legislation which I think is not in the best interests of Western Australia, I shall still retain my independence and I shall be one of the first to say to them, "Get out, and let us have some better men in your place."

MR. YELVERTON (Sussex): I, in common with many other members on this side of the House, desire to place on record my deep sense of the loss sustained by this House and the country by the death of the late member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest). Not only do I regret his death because of the irreparable loss to those nearest and dearest to him, but also because I know that by his death we have lost one of those whom we could ill spare; one who by his energy, his keen business instincts, and by his great and generous heart, was so much needed in a country like this. Referring to the policy enunciated by the Government in the speech of His Excellency, and in the speech delivered by the Premier in Queen's Hall, I may say that generally I am in favour of that policy, but I regret very much that in my opinion it does not go sufficiently far. There is a certain amount of new material in the Speech, and a wish to render the Government somewhat in accord with members on this side of the House, which, perhaps, is not altogether desirable. I entered this House as an independent member, and I desire at present to maintain that attitude. I make no apology because I am sitting on this side of the House. I sit here because it suits me best to sit here, and because in doing so I am carrying out those promises I made during my electoral tour. Further, I feel myself more at liberty to, if I choose, even support the present Government, or better still to criticise their actions. At the time of my election I had a very friendly feeling towards the Government, and I still have it, but that feeling on my part, and I believe also on the part of others on this side of the House, was somewhat strained when I heard the speeches made by the

member for Boulder (Mr. Hopkins), and the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson). Perhaps I am taking too much upon myself in saying so, but I think it would be as well for the Premier to advise those who on his side of the House, like myself on this side, are somewhat new to public life, to refrain from delivering speeches such as these which were made reflecting upon the intellect and motives of members sitting on this side of the House.

A MEMBER: I did not include you in that category.

MR. YELVERTON: I am glad to learn by the speech of His Excellency and the remarks of the Premier this evening that we are to have economy in the finances of the country and in administration. I think economy is seriously needed in the finances of this country, and that better administration is also wanted. I hope the pledges made by the Premier will be carried out, but that economy will not be carried too far. I hope that not only will public works promised by the late Administration be carried out, but also that everything necessary in regard to public works in the future will, with due economy, be effected. I regret to notice from the Speech, though possibly it was necessary, we are to have no new railways for a very long time to come. It strikes me that in a country where no new railways are to be constructed, there is a lack of progress which should not exist, and I also regret to learn from the speech made by the Minister for Mines (Hon. H. Gregory) the other day at Greenbushes, that though the Government intend to construct no new railways, they are likewise determined to oppose private enterprise in the construction of railways or other necessary public works. Notwithstanding the errors made in the past with regard to private enterprise in the construction of railways in this country, it is possible to have railways constructed by private enterprise and to safeguard the interests of this country.

A MEMBER: It has not been done in the past.

MR. YELVERTON: One who is not here now, I regret to say, but who was sitting here earlier in the evening, a man who has had a wide experience in railway management, told me he felt sure that in

a short time, in one day in fact, he could draw up an agreement which would safeguard every interest of this country in connection with private enterprise in the construction of railways. I referred to the speech made by the Minister for Mines at Greenbushes. I must likewise refer to a speech made by the Colonial Treasurer (Hon. F. Illingworth) only a few days ago in connection with the Midland Railway. This gentleman said the Government proposed, or he proposed, that the Midland Railway should be taken over at an enormous sum, or that negotiations should be made to take it over. I believe the amount mentioned was £300,000 or £400,000 in excess of the sum for which we know it has been previously offered to the Government. I regret to think it should be deemed necessary at this stage of the affairs of the country to give a higher price for that railway than that at which it has been previously offered. In regard to existing lines of this country, I am glad to learn that at last we are going to get new rolling-stock. For many years it has been promised us. For the last three or four years has gone forth the cry from the people of this country, especially those engaged in developing the industries of the State, that more rolling-stock was needed, and yet for all those years we have been wanting it. It has been promised to us repeatedly, and it has never been given. I do not care by whom the rolling-stock now on order was ordered; whether it was by the late Administration or by the present Administration. All I hope is that now we have definite information that the order has gone forth, it will be filled, and sufficiently filled to thoroughly equip the railways of this country. I regret to notice that nothing has been said in the Speech with reference to the better management of our railways. Nothing has been said in it with regard to the appointment of a paid Commissioner, a man of wide experience, to manage the railways for us. I think possibly we have a man in our midst who could fill the position, a man of wide experience, placed there totally apart from political influence. My firm conviction is that the railways of this country are not managed in the best possible manner. I trust that our friend the Minister who has now been appointed may be able to

do something in that direction, but I maintain that while the head of that great spending department is liable to political influence, we shall never get the results that we should obtain. I am glad, however, to notice that the present Government has in a certain direction made a departure with regard to railways. They have separated the positions of Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works. I think that was very necessary indeed, because I never could believe that one man could properly fill both those positions. I have also learnt that the loan moneys for the construction of new railways, or for the equipment of railways, will be placed, not under the direction of the General Manager of Railways, but indirectly under the direction of the Minister for Works, and by his authority, under that of the Engineer-in-Chief.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The construction of new railways has always been under the direction of the Engineer-in-Chief, and only additions and repairs to existing lines have been carried out by the Railway Department.

MR. YELVERTON: I am glad to learn that this has been done, for I think that it was very necessary indeed. I hope a further departure will be made in connection with the railways of this country by the present Government, and that it will no longer be said of us that the auditing of the accounts of the railways is dealt with by an officer under the general manager of those railways. I think an audit of these accounts should be made, as all other accounts are, under the direction of the Auditor General. I hail with pleasure the information that a public works board is to be appointed. Throughout the length and breadth of this land we have evidence of the need of the appointment of such a board. Wherever you go you may find that money has been spent upon unnecessary public buildings, upon roads and bridges, either unnecessary or placed in the wrong position; on dams for the conservation of water on the top of hills or where there was no catchment area. These works cost enormous sums, indeed, which probably would have been saved if we had then had the benefit of a public works board. I hope another departure will be made by the Government in regard to public

works, namely, that the whole of the public works, as far as possible, will not be carried out departmentally. I should like to see these public works carried out, as far as possible, by contract, so that not only may the Government of this country save money, but the works be carried out efficiently. I am sure that this working by day labour in large public works is an utter mistake, and for my part I should give men with the energy and enterprise, and the means at hand to carry out such works, an opportunity of tendering for them. I am in favour of the redistribution of seats and electoral reform, but I deprecate tinkering continually with the constitution of this country, and while I am in favour of those measures, I think there is no great need to hurry over them. With regard to electoral reform, the present electoral law is not altogether a bad one, and if people fail to record their votes, if they neglect to have their names placed upon the electoral rolls, it is in a great measure their own fault. Still, I would endeavour to help the people even to avoid that fault, giving them greater facilities by granting what are termed electoral rights. I notice in the Speech it is proposed to introduce this measure, and I hope and trust it will be done. Even the police have had to be put on the electoral rolls, but if the people will not take the trouble themselves, I fail to see how you are going to better the condition of things which exists under the present system. I notice the Government say in the Speech—not perhaps exactly in the words I shall use—that they desire to place the people of the coast and the goldfields in closer touch; in fact it is said there is a kindly feeling on the part of the present Government towards the coastal districts, and especially towards the agricultural districts; I might almost say the South-Western districts. I trust and believe that this is the case, but I cannot help remembering the utterances generally of the leading members of the Government in the past with regard to the South-Western districts. Before they took office they showed very little of this kindly feeling which they now desire to express towards those districts, and that is one of the reasons why I am sitting on this side of the House. I desire to see some proof of that kindly

feeling from the Government benches. I may say for myself that when I do see that proof, it will be heartily reciprocated by me and the people I represent; but not only is it in their utterances in the past but by their recent actions they have not yet proved that kindly feeling on their part. First, with regard to removing the prohibition from the importation of fruit, I do not think that is a very kindly action towards the people in districts where the producers have invested large sums in laying down orchards and endeavouring to provide fruit for this country. I have heard it said that it will be years before the local production will overtake the demand; but I have been considerably through those districts in the South-West, and I am not of that opinion, for I believe in a year or two the production will overtake the demand. This I have also heard, and I believe it is true, that the Government intend to depart from the course pursued by the late Administration and particularly the late Premier, that is in regard to the purchase of large estates for cutting up and promoting settlement on the land. I know there are large estates of good value in suitable positions, a good quality of land, that can be purchased and cut up for enabling small farmers to settle on the soil. I have heard that some of the richest land in this country, in the South-West district, has been offered to the Government for this purpose; and I believe the answer was that the Government did not require to buy more land, as they have plenty of Crown land available for settlement. When I heard this was the answer they gave, and knowing as I did how great a benefit it would be to those districts if that particular estate could be purchased and cut up for settlement, I regretted very much, because I am convinced this operation would result in a large profit to the State, as has been the case in some other instances; therefore, I think it was a mistake for the Minister for Lands to say he would not agree to that proposal. I also notice that notwithstanding the kindly feeling which the present Ministers profess towards the agriculturists, nothing is said in the Governor's Speech in regard to the establishment of agricultural colleges and experimental farms. If the Government

are in earnest with regard to this kindly feeling, something should have been proposed in that direction. Something also should have been said by them with regard to extending the scope of the Agricultural Bank, which has been of great assistance to many struggling farmers; for I am convinced that if its scope and powers were extended it would be of still greater benefit to many people who settle on the land. I should like to see, as another instance of this kindly feeling, something proposed with regard to the clearing of land prior to its sale for settlement, so that greater good may be done by enabling occupiers to begin cultivation at once; and I am satisfied that if land were cleared on a large scale and with proper appliances, it could be done at a cheaper cost by the Government than in any other way; and if sold on deferred payment, this system would be of great assistance indeed to people settling on the land. I am glad to notice that a Factories Bill is to be introduced, and I believe it is much needed, especially by those engaged in dangerous occupations and in connection with machinery. I was pleased to hear the Premier in a recent speech say he was in favour of adhering to the sliding scale, for I think if we attempted to depart from the sliding scale it would be a great mistake on our part, as it was on a promise that the sliding scale should continue that we entered into the Federal Commonwealth, and we should adhere to that promise. With regard to the rabbit question, I have felt for some four or five years that this matter was being neglected, almost criminally, by the late Government. Some years ago, when Mr. Surveyor Mason was sent out to make an inspection with regard to the incursion of rabbits, we had ample proof then that there were rabbits in the country; and if there had been an outlay then of some £10,000 or £20,000 in putting up a rabbit-proof fence, we would now be in a position to cope with this pest, whereas hundreds of thousands of pounds may now have to be expended to attain the same end. I am glad to hear from the Premier this evening that he intends to proceed with endeavouring to fence out this pest. I would like to have heard that, not only was it his intention, but (as was indicated by a question put in the House the other

evening) I hoped he intended to spend some little money in endeavouring to ascertain whether it is possible by some scientific means to do away with this pest. If it is possible, as we know it is possible in the case of the bubonic plague which can be spread by rats, it may also be possible to spread by infection some disease among the rabbits which will get rid of the pest, without going to an enormous expense in putting up what is called a rabbit-proof fence. I also notice no reference is made in the Speech as to the intention of the Government to establish Circuit Courts throughout the State. These Courts would relieve magistrates considerably from great responsibility, and be a satisfaction to litigants. I am glad to learn there is to be a consolidation and simplification of the laws of the State, and that is a reform greatly needed. In speeches made by the late Attorney General, it was brought to our minds there was great need for law reform. Referring to the difficulty with regard to the labour question arising out of the strike at Fremantle I am glad to notice the firm stand that has been taken by the Commissioner of Railways. No one desires more than I do to give the Government ample means to ascertain which is the right course, so as to ensure to the workers a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, and duly protect the interests of the whole of the community. But when it was stated that the Commissioner must give in to these men by conceding exactly what they require, and that they will not consent to have a board of conciliation and arbitration in this matter, then I say these men deserve no support from any member of this House; and I am delighted to note the part taken by the so-called Labour party in this House. I trust the Commissioner of Railways will receive not only the support of the Labour members, but the support of every member in this House. I thank hon. members, and you (Mr. Speaker), for the patient hearing given me on this my first attempt to speak in this House; and I trust that in the future my utterances may be of some benefit to the constituency I represent, and to the State generally. I thank you.

Mr. T. HAYWARD (Bunbury): It is my intention to confine my remarks

principally to one paragraph of the Governor's Speech, and that is in reference to immigration and settlement on the soil. As an employer of labour for something like forty years, I never experienced difficulty in obtaining the labour I required until within the last year or two. In my district agricultural labourers are not to be procured at any price. I know that employers have been offering from £1 to 30s. a week with board and lodging for agricultural labourers, and yet cannot get the labour they require, and in consequence a large area of land that otherwise would have been planted with corn this season will be left idle. This applies in a greater degree to the dairying industry, for in my district at the present time there is not half the amount of butter made that was made there 20 years ago, and the reason is that it is impossible for those living on a farm to find time to milk the cows, and labour cannot be obtained. The owner of one of the finest herds of cows in the South-West district, who had not only one of the best farms but also every appliance necessary for the dairying business, has found such great difficulty in procuring labour that he has had to abandon the dairying business; and at present there is not a pound of butter made on that farm. The cows have had to be sold off, and the land is depastured with sheep. That is the case also on other farms in my district. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) said he was opposed to the importation of any but British labour. I have done my best to get farm labourers to come out from England, particularly last year, but I did not succeed; and if hon. members will make inquiry as I did with regard to farm labour in England, they will find there is nearly as much difficulty in getting labour to work the land in England as in this country. The member for East Perth (Hon. W. H. James) somewhat anticipated my remarks as to the means of providing labour. I am under the impression that our only chance is to get, as he said, Scandinavian labour, and I think we should get German labour as well.

A MEMBER: What do you think of the Boers?

MR. HAYWARD: I would also go to Holland for labour. I have had some

experience in employing German labour, and I must say those people make very good settlers. As members are aware, in Denmark and Sweden in particular there is more butter made in proportion to the inhabitants than in any other part of the world. I would also point out that Danish butter is fetching the highest price in the English market. I think the only remedy for this state of things would be, if it were possible, to settle such families on the soil; to give them every facility for acquiring a fair amount of land, so that they can grow food for their cows; and to establish creameries and butter factories, to which they could supply their produce in large or small quantities. A reference was made by the member for Sussex (Mr. H. J. Yelverton) to the proposed purchase of the Stirling Estate. Needless to say it has been reported that the Minister for Lands has decided not to purchase this estate, although it has been offered to the Government at a fair price, on the ground that the Government already possess plenty of land of their own. That is correct; but the land owned by the Government is of such an inferior quality that to a great extent it is not worth fencing, and certainly not worth cultivating; and at the present time that is about the only piece of land available for settlement in that district. I regret very much that it has been decided not to buy the estate. I believe the Commissioner himself examined the land. In conclusion I may say there appears to me to be a disposition on the other side of the House to dictate to those on this side where they should sit. I do not think that is proper. I, for my part, shall not accept dictation as to where I shall sit. I intend to carry out all the pledges I have given during my electioneering campaign, and I intend to sit here and to do my duty to the best of my ability for the whole State, and also for my own district.

On motion by MR. WALLAOE, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the PREMIER, the House adjourned at 10:31 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 4th July, 1901.

Papers presented—Question, Camels Importation—Question, Apples Importation and Restriction—Question, Census Returns—Papers: School of Mines, to establish—Papers: Liquor Sold to Natives, Conviction at Bridgetown—Papers: Mail Services, Esperance—Motion: Royal Vint, Railway Fares, debate resumed—Address-in-reply, fourth day, adopted—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers): 1, Report of the Department of Land Titles; 2, Report on Gaols and Prisoners; 3, Reserves under the Permanent Reserves Act, 63 Vict., No. 24; 4, Regulations under "The Stock Diseases Act, 1895"; 5, Regulations under "The Land Act, 1898"; 6, By-laws under "The Roads Act, 1888," "The Cemeteries Act, 1897," and "The Land Act, 1898"; 7, Documents re Kurrawang Wood Syndicate.

QUESTION—CAMELS IMPORTATION.

HON. R. S. HAYNES asked the Minister for Lands: 1, How many applications have been made to the Government from the 1st January, 1900, up to the present time, for leave to import camels. 2, The name or names of the applicant or applicants. 3, The date or respective dates. 4, What was the reason for prohibiting the importation of camels into the State. 5, Does the reason still exist.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. Sommers) replied:—1, Four; 2 and 3, Faiz Mahomet, 3rd October, 1900, A.U.S.N. Co., 14th January, 1901, Abbeullah and Rassaul, 19th February, 1901, S. D. L. George, 25th February, 1901; 4, Camels were prohibited from coming to Western Australia from Asiatic ports on account of glanders, foot and mouth, and other diseases; 5, Yes.

QUESTION—APPLES IMPORTATION AND RESTRICTION.

HON. G. RANDELL asked the Minister for Lands: If the experts of his department have reported on the question of

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