in this State that the two Houses of Parliament have met together to perform any duty. I am much obliged to hon. members for according to me a vote of thanks. I ask members to kindly sit a little longer, as there is a photographer present who is anxious to take a photograph of the members assembled here.

[Members accordingly adjusted their chairs to suit the position of the camera; artificial flash-light was used, and a photograph of the assembled group was taken.]

The joint sitting terminated shortly after 5 o'clock, and hon. members returned to their respective Chambers.

The Clerk of Parliaments and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly acted jointly during the sitting.

The number of members present was: Legislative Council 22, Legislative Assembly 42, total 64.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 29th July, 1903.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4·30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

Mr. Speaker and hon. members proceeded to Government House for a joint sitting of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly.

At 5·10, Chair resumed.

THE SPEAKER informed the House of the election made at the joint sitting. [See report of joint sitting.]

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: Papers relating to repurchase by the Government of land near Arrino; Papers relating to the exchange of certain Crown lands in the catchment area of the Goldfields Water Supply; Papers relating to repurchase of the Mount Erin Estate.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

QUESTION—MOTOR WAGONS FOR HAULAGE OF PRODUCE.

HON. G. THROSSELL asked the Premier: 1, Whether he has received information as to the utility of motor wagons for haulage of produce on ordinary roads. 2, Whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce one or more of these wagons for use in the country districts. 3, What is the carrying power, speed, and approximate cost of each complete wagon.

THE PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, The type which is to be purchased is not yet determined, but is being carefully considered.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

FIFTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Resumed from the previous day.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): I shall confine my remarks on His Excellency's Speech to a few subjects which I think very important. The first one is the question of preferential trade. Various members have expressed a certain disapproval of the manner in which that subject has been introduced into the Speech. I think that possibly the reference might have been better phrased; but nevertheless, I believe that it really does express the unformed opinion of the people of this State; I mean "unformed" in the sense that the people have not yet had an opportunity of studying the question, and are therefore unable to give an opinion on it. I put preferential trade in the same category as the sentiment adopted by Australasia in the late South African war. If any man a year or two before that war broke out had ventured to predict that this State would send five Contingents out of its borders to an over-sea war, he would have been laughed at and called a fool. The war however gave opportunity for the expression of a sentiment latent in the people; and that

sentiment, I consider, is paralleled in a measure by the feeling underlying the subject of preferential trade. So far as I can glean it, the whole principle underlying the proposition is this: we will trade with our fellow-subjects first. That is to say, for the sake of whatever profit there may be in trade, where our own people can trade with one another they will do so in preference to trading with outsiders. An example of the effect of trade of this kind may be drawn from the late South African war. If the Boers had succeeded in that war, many thousands of people now employed in the United Kingdom, and in Australasia as well, would be idle. The trade of South Africa would have been seized by foreign nations. That really was a leading feature in the causes which produced the war. The attempt to prevent the trade of England from maintaining the position which it has held throughout the world constitutes one of the most important problems of the day. What the Boers meant to do by force of arms, other nations are doing by hostile tariffs. A remarkable instance in point can be drawn from the tinplate trade of the United States. Not many years ago, England did an enormous trade in tinplates with the United States, which had a great demand for the product by reason of the development of the tinned foods industry in California and Chicago. The United States found themselves unable to compete with Great Britain in that trade, and consequently they put on high duties. The American packing trade, however, flourished so greatly that still Britain, in spite of the high tariff, was able to continue to export largely. Thereupon the United States Government raised the duty on tinplates to a prohibitive rate, and so entirely killed the export trade from the United Kingdom to the United States. To follow the course of that trade is interesting, because it will be found that we here, in a measure, are paying for the development of the tinplate industry in the United States. The export of tinned goods from the United States pays the expense incurred in building up the tinplate industry in America. That is to say, the expense is borne by the countries which buy the export. The man in the back blocks of Western Australia buying tinned goods pays his modicum towards the maintenance of the tinplate industry in America.

THE PREMIER: I hope the free-traders are listening.

MR. HARPER: Similar processes are going on throughout the world against Great Britain, and that is the great reason for the desire to come to the rescue of our fellow subjects all the world over. Many people have thought and talked of this question as one of free trade within the Empire; but it is nothing of the kind. The point is simply that when we trade with our fellow subjects we shall do so on better terms than with outsiders. Preferential trade will effect no alteration in our tariff beyond an alteration in the percentage under which we allow goods to come in. This subject is so important that instead of its being left entirely to the consideration of the Commonwealth Parliament, as some people suggest, it is the duty of our Government, to my mind, to employ every possible means to encourage discussion and to put before the people as far as possible the underlying principles of preferential trade, so that the people may be prepared to instruct members of the House to require our representatives in the Federal Parliament to use their utmost endeavours in support of the proposal. Behind the question of preferential trade lies another very important question, which has never, so far as I know, been touched on. It is this. Preferential trade need not be confined entirely to the subjects of Great Britain. A nation which is friendly to Great Britain and prepared to unite with us in keeping the peace of the world and removing from the arena of hostile contest any subjects of difference which may arise between the two nations, might be treated on a somewhat different footing from that obtaining in the case of nations acting in a hostile spirit towards the Empire. By that means a gradual accumulation or aggregation of states and countries would be formed, prepared to resist the hostility of other nations. Varying grades of friendship, as it were, would exist between the whole of the states of the civilised world; and from that process great good, I believe, would result to the world at large. So far as I see, the Empire would unite on business subjects in the spirit of a sentiment already

expressed, as before mentioned, throughout the Empire. Sentiments of kinship, and of friendship in business, would be united to form a strong bond indeed, and one beneficially affecting the future of the whole world. To the next paragraph I have to deal with I regret I cannot give the same cordial support: it has reference to the construction of a broad-gauge railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. The Government say that they will ask the House to undertake the responsibility of the construction of that broad-gauge railway not later than the time when the Commonwealth Government shall have commenced the construction of its portion of the Transcontinental line. First I should like to know what is its portion of the main line. The line would run through two States, and why is it that one section should belong to the Commonwealth and the other to Western Australia? I cannot see, on the face of it, the reason why the reference should have been framed in that manner; but the serious part with regard to this railway, to my mind, is that the Government are asking this State to pledge its credit, whenever it may be called upon by the Commonwealth Parliament, to plank down something between one and two million pounds sterling. Considering that this is a Commonwealth work and represented as important to federation, it appears to me that the interest of this State would be seriously jeopardised if it is to be at the will of the Federal Parliament—perhaps controlled by those somewhat hostile to this State—to be able to say at any moment "You must put down enough money to build that line." It is not only that, but there is the loss pending this State by the gradual reduction of the special tariff, and there is also the end of the book-keeping period when it is possible this State may lose something like five or six hundred thousand pounds a year. It appears to me that the prospects of the Treasurer are not very happy if, when the book-keeping period is over, he must be prepared to be called upon to supply funds to make up that loss, and also to supply funds for the construction of this railway. He has a very unhappy time before him, and this State may have reached a period of stagnation. The Premier, I think last night, in a jesting phrase said he represented "progress" and the party on this side of the House represented "stagnation." [THE PREMIER: Democracy.] Yes; democracy. Well, considering that the Premier and his Treasurer, who a few years ago nearly shouted themselves hoarse in crying "The Bill to the people," are prepared apparently to deal with this enormous question without consulting the people, I think I may say for those on this side of the House, and for a good many on the other side, that the cry will be that this Bill should go to the people; that the people in this State should not be committed to the construction of that railway until they have had an opportunity of expressing their opinion on it. It appears to me the present Government, taking credit to themselves as they may well do for the success they have had, are running a little too far ahead. To say that the last Session of this Parliament is to bind this State to the policy of building this line I think cannot be supported in ordinary political reasoning, because the next Parliament will certainly have the opportunity of repealing the Act, and it is possible they will do so. I may inform the Government and other members of this House that I have been requested by the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pigott) to state that the Opposition are united in opposing that Bill, and they believe that with the support already promised from the other side of the House, the Ministry had better not bring in that Bill. I cannot help thinking that the motive behind the proposition to build this railway is this, that the Premier and his Treasurer having been such ardent federalists—and I think I may include the Minister for Lands, also the Minister for Mines—have been at a loss to know what to claim as a benefit resulting from federation; and not being able to find anything—because I notice they have been somewhat hostile and are not afraid to express hostility to certain acts of the Federal Government—they wish now to be able to say, "Oh, you got a section of the Transcontinental Railway, or it is arranged for." I think I am expressing an opinion which is pretty universal, that this House and the country are not with the Premier when he promised, as I understand he did, to guarrantee South Australia against its share of loss. I do

not think the Premier had a mandate from the people on that, and I think we shall be able to defeat that object, any way. Although no one has been able to claim, as yet, any great credit for the result of federation in this State, there is one advantage I can claim, and that is that since the establishment of federation it appears impossible that this State can ever be called upon successfully to institute relief works for the unemployed. If this State were to introduce relief works, the result would be that we should get all the paupers from the rest of Australia, and there is no opportunity of stopping them.

MR. HASTIE: They are coming now.

MR. HARPER: Some of them are coming now, but I believe many of them are good men, and I understand the Labour party are doing all they can to prevent them from coming. They won't listen, but they say, "You are getting high wages: why should we not have some?" And they come in spite of the warning not to come, so that any attempt at relief works here would attract a great many more; therefore, I consider federation has made it impossible for any State in the Commonwealth to institute relief works unless the other States do it at the same time. That is one point to the credit of the Commonwealth. I am pleased indeed to have to congratulate the Government, and especially the Minister for Lands, on the continuance of the policy of development of the land and assistance to settlement on the land; and I feel confident that if the present Minister for Lands will only maintain that policy, great benefits indeed will result to this State; and on behalf of an agricultural community I should like to take this opportunity of thanking him most cordially for the steps he has taken. There is one important phase of the settlement of the country which has been an unsolved problem for many years, and that is how to manage transport in a thinly settled district—even when it gets fairly thickly settled there is a great difficulty. Light railways have been talked of in this House for the last twenty years, but so far the experience of the world is that light railways are not successful. It is obvious that in much of the country we have yet to settle, where water is scarce and fire dangerous, the construction of railways brings dangers as well as advantages. There is a hope which many cherish vigorously at the present time, that in the development of motor traction we may overcome that difficulty, and I consider the Government are justified in spending a considerable amount of money in ascertaining whether it is not possible to achieve a success by this means. If it can be, it will open a fresh era of success in the settlement or much of the settlement of our agricultural lands. The principle may be laid down that throughout a country where permanent trunk lines could be established at something like an average distance all over the country, they could then be supplied by this traction on the roads. If that could be done, it would be a marvellous advance over anything done hitherto. Another point I wish to make reference to is the clause in His Excellency's Speech which says:—

> The education system of the State must be kept abreast of requirements, and with that object the construction of additi nal primary schools will be continued. My Ministers, however, are of opinion that the final duty of the State towards its children is not discharged until adequate provision is made for higher education. The time is now ripe for the establishment of a Secondary School, and for the extension and development of Technical Education, and steps will be taken accordingly.

With regard to that paragraph I am in accord except as to a secondary school. I do not think the Ministry could have thoroughly thought out the subject before they put it in the Speech. The secondary school is a school designed for the education of those who, in the main, become employers of labour; and to do as the Ministry propose, to establish schools of that sort all over the State would be an enormous burden to the State and be of advantage to those who are well able to pay for it themselves. Is the attendance at these schools to be made compulsory? If so, it means an enormous outlay. If that is not so, it appears to be uncalled for and must fail. However good the theory may be, directly the country gets into any financial strait the first thing to go will be the secondary school, and those who have the bulk of votes in the State are certainly not those who want a secondary school. Technical schools are for those who have to earn their living by labour.

They do not want secondary schools. If one of them succeeds in rising by his energy and thinks it desirable his children should go to a secondary school, he is able to pay for it; but it is those who have to earn their living by labour who should have all the advantages of primary and technical education, and for whom the secondary school is of no use.

MR. DAGLISH: Already we subsidise a secondary school.

MR. HARPER: That may be. We do one, I believe. That is not the principle.

MR. DAGLISH: Then the principle is wrong?

MR. HARPER: The principle proposed here is that the State shall undertake secondary education. If I am mistaken, I think it is through the Speech not making this clear. That is what I presume. I contend it is a most dangerous thing. At the present time there is a good deal of controversy with regard to what is the best system of teaching youth in all branches required in life. What we particularly want is a school which will fit the youth of our country for developing the resources of the country. The study of dead languages is, I consider, a luxury which should only be granted to those who like to pay for it—[THE PREMIER: Hear, hear]—and it should not be in any way made a portion of the State system. I have spoken against the proposed broad-gauge railway from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. What I would like to have seen in the Speech, and which is absent, is a proposition to farther develop and open up the resources of this country. It seems to me monstrous that we should have people languishing for the want of facilities of transport in various parts of this State, and have the Government proposing to absorb the credit of the country in building that which is not required at present. I consider our most strenuous efforts in the matter of produce should be exerted in giving to those who are now freely seeking our shores facilities for settling on our lands, or opening our mines, or supplying mines with goods to the greatest possible extent. The Port Hedland to Pilbarra Railway is, we are informed, absolutely necessary to save that mineral industry from being, well, almost annihilated. That may be so or not, but I notice that it is no part of the Government policy to deal with that question. There is also a matter that was mentioned last night which I consider one of the most important things this State could do at the present time, and that is to establish meat chilling works and have a vessel fitted with chilling machinery to travel between Wyndham and Fremantle. This matter has been before the House for many years, but until lately both the supply of meat and possibly the demand for it have not been sufficient to warrant it. Now, however, considering the increase of population, the increased demand and the increased supply, I am confident that it is quite time this was done; and if it were done it would have a most marked effect upon the price of meat, which is very high now. I should think, speaking roughly, that the establishment of this business on fair lines would have the effect at any rate of taking 2d. a pound off meat. I speak without an exact knowledge of the trade, but I should say it ought to do that at all events. There is a danger if this is not done that the business will fall into the hands of capitalists who, having a monopoly, will have that profit instead of the benefit being spread over the whole of the people of the State. I think one of the first things the Goveroment should do with any funds they can lay their hands on is to establish that trade firmly in the hands of the Government, so that a monopoly may be prevented. I may say that there has been established in this State a Co-operative Producers' Union, which from small things may be made to grow to very large ones. If the Government were to establish this cold meat business and allow the producers to send their goods through some institution of the kind, that would take it entirely out of the hands of any ring possible. The dealers in meat could by that means insure that whoever produces anything has only to send it through this medium to get the fair market value for it, and no combination of speculators or manipulators could possibly get hold of it. I hope the Government will take this point into consideration, and will think it wise that something shall be done at any rate to make inquiries to see if my assertions with regard to this are not borne out by the prospects of the

trade. It would remove at once one of the burning questions—that of the introduction of tick—and it would supply an immense amount of meat which it is impossible to bring into the market at the present time. I trust the Government will continue their policy of developing the interests of the State by internal development, and will eschew any attempt to construct the Fremantle to Kalgoorlie Railway.

MR. T. HAYWARD (Bunbury): I join with other members in congratulating you, sir, upon your recovery to health. It is very gratifying to me, as I was one of your supporters when you first came into political life. I am glad indeed to see that you continue to hold the honoured position which you have filled for such a lengthy period, and I hope you will continue to do so much longer. As I am generally in accord with the policy of the Government, it is not my intention to speak at any length, as I am sure we are all anxious to get on to the business of the Session. I consider the Government have done their best in the interests of three of the most important industries of the State—the mining, agricultural, and timber industries. With regard to the mining industry, the Laverton Railway is proposed, and I think that with the proposed reduction of railway freights——

MR. THOMAS: Will they reduce them more than they increased them last Session?

MR. HAYWARD: I do not know. I know that they have promised a reduction, and I hope it will have the effect of reducing the cost of living on the fields. The member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) considered that a reduction of the food duties, or the abolition of the food duties, would have a very great effect; but I differ from him, because in October the duties will have been reduced by nearly a half, and it amounts to this, that it will reduce the cost of the 2lb. loaf by half a farthing, and the duty on butter, cheese, and bacon will be reduced by a penny. Can that really make any important difference in the cost of food? The food duties certainly add considerably to our revenue, but they cannot be very much felt by anyone, and still less so at the end of the present year. Really the heaviest item of taxation is that on sugar, £6 a ton. I consider that with the present season all round, we may anticipate that next year the cost of the principal food of the goldfields will be considerably less than it has ever been since they have been established. I think we can predict that with almost a certainty. Then again with increased production importation will be very little greater than it is now. With regard to the agricultural interest the formation of that Collie line will no doubt be of great benefit to agriculturists in this State by opening up a great deal of very good country. At the same time, I hope the ultimate use of that line, the conveying of coal to the goldfields, will not be lost sight of. In my opinion, the main thing is to make that road with easy gradients. Sooner or later that coal must be used; it is only a question of time. Some years will elapse before the line will have been constructed, and probably by the time it is built we shall be very glad to get the coal. I must congratulate the Government on the appointment of Mr. Hopkins as Minister for Lands. That is a branch of the service regarding which I have had many complaints. I think that, although there is an immense increase of business, we may expect that most of those complaints will be remedied in a very short time. As to the Bunbury harbour, the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) said that he would vote against it, or something to that effect, unless satisfied that the timber industry was likely to last a number of years. I have had it from the manager of Millar's Jarrah and Karri Company that they have sufficient for their present mills to last for 30 years. I believe other millowners have expressed the opinion that the timber will last 40 years. But supposing we take it as only 30, surely the quantity of timber exported by that time will warrant the addition to Bunbury breakwater; and, in fact, by that time there will be paying results. Besides, we do not think the district is going to lapse when the timber ceases. We may fairly anticipate that long before that time there will be a large export of fruit and other things, and the breakwater is a work for all time. It is a national work, and I do not think I need labour the question. The Government are fully justified in incurring the expense. There are a number of other matters which I think

have been pretty well threshed out. I am sure we are all anxious to get to the real work of the Session, and I have no more to say.

MR. F. REID (Mt. Burges): I desire, in common with other members, to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your recovery, and at the same time to express the hope that you will be spared for many years to preside over the deliberations of this Assembly. I cannot congratulate the Government very sincerely on the Speech submitted to the House, or on the policy put forward. The policy seems a very tame one. It seems to me successful indeed in pleasing members on both sides of the House. The policy has been framed by the Ministry for the purpose, apparently, of securing the united support of the House with the exception of the Labour party.

MR. THOMAS: I am sure I have never promised the Ministry my support.

MR. REID: I am glad the Government have attained so much. An Administration in this State achieves a great feat when it succeeds in pleasing all parties in Parliament with the exception of the small party sent here to represent Labour. At the outset I shall say that I intend to be brief. The first thing that strikes my eye in the Governor's Speech is the proposal to construct the Transcontinental Railway. I am certainly in favour of the construction of that line, the work, in my opinion, being one which should have been commenced long ago. When the agitation for the Federal Enabling Bill to go to the people was in full swing, one of the strongest arguments used in support was that by federating with the other States we should acquire a right to the construction of the Transcontinental Railway. We were assured that the line would be an accomplished fact almost immediately after federation. I find now, however, that many obstacles are thrown in the way of the project, and that some time is likely to elapse before the line is built. The next thing which strikes my eye is the proposal to construct a broad-gauge line of railway from Fremantle to the Goldfields. I certainly favour that proposal. In my opinion a great mistake was made at the inception of the railway system of this country in the adoption of the three feet six inches gauge, and I hold that the longer the State continues to work on this gauge the more unsatisfactory the result will be to the people. The construction of a broad-gauge railway to the Eastern Goldfields is inevitable in the near future, if only in order that the working expenses of our system may be reduced. While I favour the construction of a broad-gauge line, and also the reduction of the gradients on the existing line, I think that before such works are taken in hand the broad-gauge system should be initiated by the construction of a line from the Eastern Goldfields to Esperance. The work is one which I consider ought to have been completed long ago. The goldfields people have been crying out for it without avail for years. Every effort has been made by Eastern Goldfields residents to obtain the consent of Parliament to the construction of that line. On one or two occasions success has almost attended the effort. No doubt exists in my mind that the construction of the line will be in the interests of the whole people—not only in the interests of Eastern Goldfields residents, but also in the interests of Fremantle citizens. The extensive tract of auriferous country between Coolgardie and Esperance will, as a result of the construction of the railway, be settled by a large working population, and so the line will pay. However, even if additional population were not settled along the route which the line must take, no drawback would in my opinion be suffered by Fremantle people. That has been the bugbear all along—the opposition of Perth and Fremantle. However, I am strongly of opinion that in view of the amount of traffic likely to pass over the railway, the work will be a paying one for the country. It will at the same time afford agreeable means for Eastern Goldfields residents to get a sniff of sea breeze at Esperance. Therefore, while I favour the construction of a broad-gauge line between Fremantle and the goldfields, I shall insist so far as I possibly can that the Esperance line be constructed first. I am indeed pleased to observe that the Government intend to introduce during this Session a Mining Bill. The exigencies of mining in this country are so hard to gauge and the difficulties to be encountered are so great as to render the framing

of a measure which will meet every set of circumstances almost impossible. I have no doubt that the Minister for Mines, who has taken a lively interest in the industry, not only since he assumed office but from his original election to Parliament, is giving the matter attention. No doubt a Bill will be introduced, and I take this opportunity of offering a few suggestions, the fruit of a mining experience which extends over a series of years. I trust these suggestions may be for the benefit of not only mine owners, but also for that of the men compelled to earn their living by toiling in the bowels of the earth. In connection with mining, I can look back over a period of 35 or 40 years—in making such a statement I almost feel that I am getting old. It is a pleasure to me that I am not the only mining man in this Chamber, and that others are present who, if I make a wrong statement or one not quite according to fact, can pull me up. I remember that in England just prior to the time when the first Coal Mines Regulation Bill in the world was passed by the House of Commons—that is to say, in 1871—miners both in England and Scotland complained greatly of the ventilation of mines, and the plea put forward for nonventilation was that of expense. The mine owners said that to thoroughly ventilate the mines would involve such heavy cost that mining would be at an end. However, the Bill was carried, and the mine owners were compelled to ventilate their mines to some degree. Many members here to-night, I dare say, will remember the awful explosions, involving great loss of life, which formerly were of relatively frequent occurrence in the old country. I am indeed glad to think that those explosions have not been nearly so frequent during late years as they were 50 or even 35 years ago. The reason for the decrease is simply that under the Coal Mines Regulation Act and various Amending Acts passed by the House of Commons, the ventilation of British coal mines has been rendered so nearly perfect that explosions are almost impossible, except through the culpability of someone connected with the workings. This brings me up to a certain point. I wish to call attention to the circumstance that in connection with the Mining Bill to be introduced during this Session, it will be in the interests of both employer and employee to provide strict regulations for ventilation. The mine managers of this country have undoubtedly paid but little attention to that subject. Although most of our mines to-day are comparatively shallow, a time will come when they will go down probably as deep as those of Victoria are to-day. Although that State has a law relating to the mining industry, and providing for ventilation, the matter has not been satisfactorily dealt with, to the detriment of the worker. Here, I desire to read a short extract from the Melbourne *Age* of the 12th or 14th June last:—

> Some workings in mines are perfect hotbeds of disease. At Eaglehawk deaths among miners from consumption are six times more numerous than fatalities from accidents. To the lasting disgrace of the Mines Department of Victoria it has consistently failed to enforce the regulations prescribed for the ventilation of mines.

When one finds a Melbourne newspaper speaking in such straightforward terms of the ventilation of mines, and when it is proved that the regulations provided for the purpose have been disgracefully neglected, one must recognise that Western Australia has good reason to be anxious to boast that the most up-to-date Coal Mines Regulation Act in existence shall be found on its statute-book. A Bill providing for proper ventilation of mines is an absolute necessity. We have only a thousand coal miners, if so many, working in this State; but we have, in addition, some 60,000 or 70,000 men working in the gold mines. Certainly, something ought to be done in the matter. We have not yet suffered to any great extent through the want of ventilation in our mines, and many of those engaged in mining here to-day tell me it is not absolutely necessary that our mines should be thoroughly ventilated, seeing that a great pressure of air is driven through the workings from machinery. My experience, however, tells me that it is not right that miners who are always toiling in vitiated atmosphere, and very often in an atmosphere filled with poisonous gases given off by the great quantity of explosives used, should be deprived of proper ventilation. The volume of air obtained from pressure of pipes is not sufficient to carry away the poisonous gases. At times the

volume may be sufficient, but it is not sustained. What this country needs in connection with its gold mines is a provision to the same effect as that which is contained in the Coal Mines Regulation Act, namely that a certain quantity of air should be sweeping at all events around the places where miners are working, and where explosives are used. No matter what the effect, no matter what protection, the volume of air should always be there. The matter in this country is just in the same position as it was in the old country 35 years ago, when the first Bill passed through the House of Commons for the ventilation of coal mines in England. The plea then was that the mines were in no danger resulting from insufficient ventilation; but I say the mines of this country, though at present they are shallow, will go down, and the deeper they go the greater will be the necessity for ventilating them, and the more difficult will then be the question of ventilation. I understand it is not possible to act exactly in gold mines as we can in coal mines; but a system could be adopted, and I say that the young men who are being trained to earn their living as mine managers should have as part of their curriculum a scientific training in the ventilation of mines. That is what is required, because we know very well there are a number of young men sent out without any elementary knowledge of mining, with the result that not only the necessity for ventilation but many other very important matters in connection with mining are lost sight of. I sincerely trust, and from what I know of the Minister who is in charge of this department I have every confidence, that attention will be paid to this question of the ventilation of gold mines in the amending Bill that is about to be introduced. It is not my intention to take up the time of the House in dilating upon ventilation. I trust the Minister will have it introduced into the Bill, and see that the mines are ventilated in the interests both of the workers and the mine owners. It will be in the interests of the mine owners because of the immense destruction of property caused by explosions; and it will also be in the interests of the miners, because in the absence of ventilation the danger to life is increased very much. So I trust that the Minister will endeavour to include in his Bill a scheme of mine ventilation, and see that it is carried out. The next item in the Governor's Speech that strikes my eye is that of the construction of a dock at Fremantle. I am in favour of the construction of a dry dock at Fremantle. One hon. member, speaking last night, pointed out one case of a ship having to be taken away from Fremantle to another country for repairs, and this country thereby losing five or six thousand pounds in wages. I am of opinion that everything should be done to foster the shipping trade, and if money can be earned by people in this country by the construction of a dry dock, if that would mean the employment of people, the employment of those who are here, the question is very important at the present time. The next item that strikes me in the Speech is an important one—a question in which every man, woman, and child in this country is or ought to be fully interested, that is the question of education. Speaking here yesterday evening, the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse), in an address I very much admired, as I always admire the sentiments of the hon. member, so moderately expressed, said he was opposed to secondary education, inasmuch as it would probably lead to the over-education of the people of this country.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I did not allude to it in that way. I was speaking in regard to primary education at present.

MR. REID: I understood the hon. member to say that many of our people were being over-educated, and that the initiation of the secondary educational system in this country is not required. I am sorry I have to differ from him over this matter, because I certainly think the question of education is one of the greatest importance, so far as the rising generation is concerned. No matter in what position the parents of a child may be, I am of opinion that the education of that child should be an obligation on the State. Whether the child's parents are poor or rich, that child is entitled to the very highest education the country can give it; and I do not agree with the hon. member when he says that secondary educational establishments are not required.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I would like to make an explanation. I did not say secondary schools were not required in this country; but I said I do not think the State should carry out the purposes of a secondary education.

MR. REID: I understood the hon. member to say he was opposed to the establishment of secondary educational schools by the State. I am of opinion that any member who will express himself as being opposed to secondary education is strongly supporting a system of class education, because he knows full well that he is supporting a system that is intended to deprive the children of the working man of the best educational facilities in this country, and that if so deprived, it is impossible for the working man to send his children to a University. Thus we will have class education established straight away. I am strongly in favour of secondary education. I believe there should be a school where the children of the people could be sent after leaving the primary school, and where they would receive an education fitting them to enter a University in this country; therefore I believe in the establishment also of a University, and I believe in education being free.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: I would send a certain number from the primary schools, as we do now, to universities.

MR. REID: I have had a very unhappy experience in the matter, and I speak feelingly. Undoubtedly it gives a strong leaning towards class education if we insist on doing without a system of secondary education. The next point I see in the Governor's Speech is that of hospitals. Hospitals should be maintained not partially but wholly by the taxpayers of the country, and there should be no partiality whatever shown to any of those unfortunates who are compelled for a time to take up their residence within a hospital. I desire also to say I think the time has arrived when some system of service should be arranged in connection with hospitals. We have our nurses, we have all those who are working in about hospitals, compelled to work 12 hours per day. We are in the beginning of the twentieth century, when eight-hours labour is the rule all over this country, while those who are performing the most arduous labour in connection with our suffering population are compelled to work 12 hours. I think the hours of labour in hospitals should be reduced by at least four per day. The Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme has come in for some criticism by members, and reference has been made to the fact that at a meeting held in Coolgardie a short time ago a resolution was passed whereby the people of that place decided that they would not pay any water rates at all. I should like to point out that at the meeting in question a certain gentleman got on the stage and moved that motion in rather a wild and eloquent speech, and no doubt he influenced his hearers strongly in appealing to their pockets; but many of those who voted for the resolution explained to me afterwards that they were not aware of what they were voting for; that they simply held up their hands in sympathy with the mover of the motion. I believe the time will shortly arrive when the value of the Coolgardie Goldfields Water Scheme will be realised, not only by the people at Coolgardie, but wherever the water is reticulated; and I have no hesitation in stating my belief that the people will be prepared to pay all that is required in connection with the scheme. In regard to the water rate, I think that inasmuch as the Minister has consented to make a reduction so far as mines are concerned, it would be wise of him if he would agree to make some small reduction as far as the general rate is concerned. One and sixpence in the pound is rather high, and it would be a kindly thing if he agreed to reduce the rate a little to meet their wishes. I come to a question on which I have felt strongly for some time. I refer to the Registrar of Friendly Societies and his work in carrying out his duties so far as the Conciliation and Arbitration Act is concerned.

At 6·30 p.m., the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7·30, Chair resumed.

MR. F. REID (continuing): Before proceeding with the question I mentioned just before the tea hour, I should like to deal very briefly with another subject. A Royal Commission was appointed some months ago to inquire into and report

upon the timber industry of this country. In connection with that matter I think one of the great drawbacks in regard to the permanent timber industry—when I say permanent timber industry, I mean in connection with the jarrah forests—has been in relation to the destruction of *débris*. I think it would be wise if a provision were inserted in any lease to any timber company that where a tree, marketable timber, has been cut down, the company should, after the valuable timber has been taken away, destroy the *débris*. I think that in that way one of the great dangers existing at the present time to our young forests would be removed. At the present time the leaves wither, and in a little while a fire may take place. It is very probable that, in the destruction of *debris* that occurs, the young timber which has been shooting forth is destroyed; so I am certainly of opinion that some such provision should be inserted in any agreement with the timber companies, and that they should be compelled to carry it out. Just as our tea hour arrived I intended to speak with regard to one of our prominent public officials in this State: I refer to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. I intend to refer to this gentleman, not in any spirit of vindictiveness, not because I have any personal feeling against him, but because I think he has, in the first place, done a great injustice to myself, and in the second place because in the matter he had to deal with he had not sufficient backbone to carry out even his own decision. I shall endeavour as briefly as possible to relate the circumstances in connection with this affair. The Conciliation and Arbitration Act provides that application must be made to the Registrar of Friendly Societies for the purpose of registering unions in the country, and in two of the largest districts in the Mount Burges electorate the miners met and decided to form unions in those two centres. I am referring to Burbanks on the one hand and Bonnievale on the other. All the requirements insisted upon by the Act and by the Registrar of Friendly Societies were complied with. The usual number of names were attached to the document for the purpose, and they were sent on to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. A fortnight was allowed to elapse, and I was requested by representatives of both of those proposed unions to interview the Registrar of Friendly Societies in connection with this matter. I came down here to Perth in company with one or two others, and with another member of Parliament interviewed the Registrar. The Registrar gave me to understand when I had spoken to him, that he had almost decided not to register the unions in question; but after a short conversation and explanation of the geography of the two places in connection with Coolgardie, he said, "Mr. Reid, go home to Coolgardie, and send me down a report couched in the same language as you have used to me this morning, and I will consider the matter." I went back to Coolgardie and furnished the Registrar of Friendly Societies with all the particulars in connection with the two places in question. The Registrar expressed himself as satisfied that a very strong case had been stated in favour of the registration of these two unions, but at the same time he did not decide then to register. I again came down to Perth and again interviewed the Registrar of Friendly Societies, with the result that during the conversation I had with him on that occasion he admitted that a clear case had been made out for the registration of the two unions, and he told me after I had that interview with him to call in on the following morning and he would register the unions and give me the necessary papers; but just before I left his office he said, "Wait a minute, please: Mr. James, the Premier or Attorney General, is not in the country at present, and I think it would be wise that I should wait until he arrives before giving a final decision as to the registration of those two unions." In connection with this matter, I contend that a good strong case was made out for the registration of the unions in question. Every condition had been complied with, and the only thing that prevented the Registrar from registering the unions was his ignorance of the geography and general surroundings of the places mentioned. I will endeavour here to-night very briefly to explain the matter to members in much the same language as I explained it to the Registrar on that occasion. He was of opinion that Burbanks and Bonnievale were two suburbs of Coolgardie, that

they were within easy reach of Coolgardie, as a matter of fact that they were situated within half-a-mile or so of the town, and that if that were so it was not good enough to register them. I would agree with him if it were so, but Burbanks is five miles from the post office at Coolgardie. It is a township enjoying at present its post and telegraph office and mechanics' institute, on which the people themselves have spent £380 of their own money; they have their school with something like 200 children attending daily; they have a recreation reserve, on which they have spent up to the present time about £200 of their own money; they have three large hotels and a number of business places, butchers' shops and everything that goes to make up a small township. The same argument would apply in connection with Bonnievale, except that Bonnievale instead of being five miles distant from Coolgardie is a little over eight miles. It has all the necessary business for a town—schools, post and telegraph office, hotels and shops, and everything else required. If we have a town about eight miles from where a union is registered, a town that is able to carry on social, commercial, and industrial establishments such as I have mentioned, surely it should be an argument in favour of the registration of a miners' union. If the workers in that district who maintain those places, and on whom depends their sole prosperity, are able to carry on all these institutions, surely they should have the right to have established in their centres their own unions. On the other hand, by the present arrangement the miners in those centres have been denied the establishment of unions under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act; and they are compelled to do this. The union is in Coolgardie, which is eight miles distant from one place and five from the other. In Burbanks the pay is monthly. At the end of the month members of this union have either to intrust the money to someone sent out to collect it for the union or they have to pay the coach fare, namely 4s. there and back, in order to pay their contributions to the union. I think after what I have said, most members of the House will agree with me that unions should have been registered in both those places. The Registrar of Friendly Societies also agreed with me on the point, but the only drawback to the whole thing was that over the Registrar of Friendly Societies there was a man who must have been a tyrant, a man who controlled every action of that individual, who had not sufficient reliance in himself to give a decision as to whether these unions should be registered or not. I do not complain of the fact that they were refused, but I do complain, and I consider I am justified in appealing to the members of this House, against the treatment I received on that occasion from the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

MR. TAYLOR: Backed up by the Attorney General.

MR. REID: Backed up by the Attorney General undoubtedly. In the first place I wrote to the Registrar giving him all particulars, and knowing my position here he might have saved me the trouble and the expense of travelling down from Coolgardie on four occasions. Travelling on these matters, even although members have free passes on the railway, is somewhat expensive, and I can assure members that on some occasions when I came down here to look after the interests of the workers of that district I could very ill afford the expense I was put to.

MR. TAYLOR: The Attorney General is backed up by some of the Labour party.

MR. REID: That is quite right. I have backed up the Attorney General in most of his actions while I have been in this House, but I think on this occasion I have a very great grievance, first against the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and next against the Attorney General, because he must have exercised far too large a power over that individual. The man may be weak-minded. He may not be fit for the position he occupies. I do not say he is, and I would not like to go into Court and swear it, but I say a man placed in such a position as that officer occupies should be full of reliance. The registrar should be a man thoroughly understanding the Act he is working under, and moreover a man who is able and prepared at all times to give a decision on applications for the registration of any union.

MR. TAYLOR: Hear, hear. The registrar is too weak.

MR. REID: I have not said he is strong. I do not think he is either strong or fit for the position. I am certainly of opinion that the Registrar of Friendly Societies was much to blame in the matter; that is, if the man be responsible for his actions. I do not say that he is responsible. I am inclined to let the Attorney General down lightly on this occasion, because he was not in the State at that time and was therefore not responsible for the actions of the Registrar. Nevertheless, the man seemed to be burdened with fear; he dreaded the idea of taking upon himself the responsibility of doing anything in connection with his office unless the Attorney General was at his elbow to tell him what to do. I have now finished with the Registrar. I am fully convinced that he has done an unjust action, an action unjustifiable by the legislation passed by this House, since when the Bill was before Parliament a word justifying the establishment of unions by the two places I have mentioned was inserted. I refer to the word "locality." The House decided that unions should be established in various "localities," and I gather from *Webster's International Dictionary* that "locality" is, firstly, "The state or condition of belonging to a place or of being contained within definite limits; position; situation; a place; a spot; a geographical place; a situation of a mineral or plant." Another definition given is as follows: "Limitation to a country, district, or place, as locality of trial." I dare say most members will grasp by intuition that the last definition was given by a lawyer, Blackstone. Certainly, one would understand a locality to be a place. Perhaps in the old country, in connection with county courts the word "locality" would embrace a whole county; but in the particular instance here concerned I contend that "locality" means what members of the House understood it to mean when passing the Bill, that is to say it includes such places as Burbanks or Bonnievale, seeing that the large district of Coolgardie intervenes.

MEMBER: Places must be three miles apart all over the State.

MR. REID: I have other definitions, which however I do not intend to place before the House at present. I am sorry to have to admit that unions have been registered much nearer than are those two places, to where other unions were already established——

MR. HOLMAN: Yes; since that case.

MR. REID: Since application was made for registration by the miners of the two places I have just mentioned.

THE PREMIER: Those cases never came before me.

MR. REID: I know that; and I can quite understand it, because the Attorney General is a sensible, straightforward man, who would give the Registrar such a doing if he refused to grant registration to the two unions on whose behalf I interested myself, that the Registrar would never make such a mistake again.

MR. TAYLOR: The wrong was done by the Attorney General; not by the Registrar.

MR. REID: I desire to touch briefly on a matter raised in the speech of the leader of the Opposition the other evening. The hon. member said that he "hoped we would have no more of this cursed socialistic legislation."

MR. JACOBY: He did not say "cursed," did he?

MR. REID: I maintain that the leader of the Opposition used the word "cursed."

MR. TAYLOR: That is not much of a crime in comparison with the Colonial Treasurer's.

MR. REID: If we are not to have any more legislation of the kind described as socialistic, then I contend it will be a bad thing indeed for the people of the country. I refer again to the dictionary in order that I may place before the House definitions by the best known authorities of the word "socialism." *Webster's International Dictionary* defines the word as "a theory or system of social reform which contemplates the complete reconstruction of society, with a more just and equitable distribution of property and labour." The *Encyclopædia Britannica* says: "The general tendency is to regard as socialism any interference undertaken by society on behalf of the poor; radical social reform, which disturbs the present system of private property. The tendency of present socialism is, more and more, to ally itself with the most advanced democracy." Therefore I maintain that so far as the mass of the people

is concerned, socialism is a most desirable thing. If its tendency is towards democracy, then we should welcome socialism. For my part, I welcome it with all my heart. In every part of the world there are unemployed poor, people anxious but unable to obtain work. In olden times it was said that "the poor ye shall always have with ye." I am satisfied that under our present industrial system we shall always have the poor with us, but I am not satisfied to accept the construction which has been placed on the sentence I have quoted as being correct.

MEMBER: The quotation is not correct to start with. It should be: "The poor ye have always with you."

MR. REID: I am not satisfied to accept the construction placed on the text. I am of opinion that no man who has health and strength, and therefore ability to work, can possibly be poor. He is gifted with all that is necessary for maintaining himself and his family, given a fair opportunity; but the fact is that in the great congested centres of population numbers of people with education and muscle are unable to obtain employment. We find those people driven farther and farther downward; they become degraded and pauperised to such an extent as to be unable or unwilling to care for either their own welfare or that of those dependent on them. Take the case of that poor benighted country, Ireland. A brief retrospect, extending only to the year 1841, shows us Ireland in a state of great prosperity, poverty being almost unknown and employment plentiful. All the people then were prosperous; but a very few years later brings us to the great famine of 1848. Since then, through legislation certainly not socialistic forced on them by the English House of Commons, the people of Ireland have been so reduced as to be compelled to export the better part of their produce to England in order to pay exorbitant rents. The Irish people themselves have to live on the refuse. At the time I speak of, potatoes constituted the almost universal food. In 1848 a great famine decimated the population. The individualistic legislation forced on Ireland ever since by the English House of Commons has made the conditions of life in Ireland so hard that the country has been depopulated. The number of its people, which in 1848 stood at 8,200,000, had dropped in 1900 to 4,000,000. That decrease occurred under a system of individualistic legislation, which of course is altogether opposed to socialism. Let me quote another instance of what socialism might do for the country. Let me refer to the case of Peru. For 300 years prior to the year 1500 the people of Peru had been living in a state of socialism. The Incas it is true were born to their position; indeed, every man in the country was born to his position; but yet a certain system of socialism obtained. History tells us that in those days Peru constructed roads 1,000 miles in length, which exist to the present day. There were no poor in Peru. If a man was born to a lowly position, still he was always given enough to eat. This shows something of what socialism has done for people in the past. If we decide to proceed by the aid of democratic legislation towards the adoption of socialism in the future, surely it will be a good thing. No one can question that it will be to the advantage of the world if crime and poverty are done away with; and that is the only aim of socialism. I trust therefore that we shall in the future have more socialistic legislation here than we have had in the past. I trust the people will wake up to their interests, and I make this remark not so much in reference to Western Australia as in reference to certain of the Eastern States where settlement is a little older than it is here. In the past, no doubt people when speaking of socialism said, "Oh, if a man is a socialist you can guarantee that he has no property and that he wants to get hold of the other fellow's property; he wants to have what he calls a fair and equitable division"—[THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Once a week]—"of the property already acquired." But that is a wrong idea altogether. Socialism, as I understand it, does not aim at taking a single penny from anyone; socialists do not aim at communism; and when it is asserted that only those who have nothing, only those who are poor and ignorant, desire socialism, a great mistake is made. A few names have been handed down to us on the scroll of fame, if I may be permitted that expression, of men in eminent positions who have abandoned everything

for the sake of raising and of improving the condition of the masses of the people. I may mention the name of Prince Krapotkin, a Russian, who gave up everything, gave up his princely title, who gave his landed estates and forsook everything for the purpose of throwing his weight and influence on the side of socialism. There is another man whose name will live for ever as trying to do all he possibly could in the interests of the starving poor of the world. I refer to Karl Marx; a man who has done a great deal indeed for the people of the world; who gave the benefit of his great talents and a great deal of his wealth to the cause of socialism or democracy. We have also Sydney Webb, Hyndman, Annie Besant, Lord Shaftesbury, and last, though I hope not least, Robert D. Owen, who had such a misconception of things that he thought by giving his money to the people he was going to raise them from degradation and poverty: he made the mistakes which badly balanced philanthropists always make. I trust next time the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pigott) talks about socialism he will understand what he is talking about. Socialism has a great hold of the people of this country. We have socialistic institutions which are admitted by people who come to see this country to be better than the systems adopted in America—at any rate as far as the railway system is concerned. Our post and telegraph office is a system of socialism. The lighting of public buildings, our private homes, our public buildings, and our streets, are also part of our socialistic system; the police who guard the lives and property of the people are also part of the State socialism which has been instituted and adopted the world over. We have also the system, which I am pleased indeed to admit has been of great value in the past, and will be of more value I trust in the future, in assisting the development of the mining industry of our country and providing employment for people in other States—I mean our State batteries. When we look on these things and realise they are socialistic institutions, surely it is not the place of the leader of the Opposition to stand up and hurl his mighty curse on a system that is doing so much good the world over. I may have been mistaken in attributing certain words to the leader of the Opposition, but I was honest in my opinion that he did use the words. On looking through *Hansard* I find I am wrong in saying that he used the words; but

> A man convinced against his will
> Is of the same opinion still.

However, I now come to another question which is of considerable interest in this country, and has been so for a long time, and so far as I can see, with my knowledge of public affairs, will be an important question for many years to come, unless the Government, with all the powers they possess at the present time and the powers they are likely to possess in the future, come to the rescue—I refer to the Midland Railway Company. I do not know if it is a popular thing to mention this question, but I am of opinion that this is a question which a strong Government should take up and settle in the interests of the country. It has been said the value of the Midland Railway has materially increased during the course of the last few years. We have heard many complaints inside this building as to the action of the company towards people desiring to take up land and settle in the vicinity of the railway. I do not intend to dwell upon this question, but in order that this matter should be settled once and for all, and in order to force the company to part with the railway and the land at a reasonable rate, it would be desirable for the Government to impose such a land tax as would compel the Midland Railway Company either to utilise the soil which they hold, or give it to someone else who would make the best use of it. It is rather a coincidence that at the beginning of last Session the member for Hannans—I mean the late hon. member for Hannans, Mr. Reside—spoke at some length against the Chief Mechanical Engineer. Now the present member for Hannans (Mr. Bath) has also taken upon himself the task of criticising the Chief Mechanical Engineer. On the former occasion I took a stand which I thought to be fair and just between man and man. I thought that the Chief Mechanical Engineer being a man of high repute, chosen by the Government to fill a high position in our industrial affairs, it was only right that he should

be given a certain time to demonstrate the wisdom of his own system. The criticism which Mr. Bath has directed towards the Mechanical Engineer is in quite a different direction from that taken by the late member for Hannans last year. Reference is made to a certain amount of extravagance in the purchase of locomotives—new locomotives are purchased and others are laid aside. Owing to the ever-increasing traffic on our railways and the lack of engines in the past, many locomotives have exceeded their usefulness, and many have had to be laid on one side to make way for engines of greater carrying power, faster steaming power, and everything else. In the report of the special committee of the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines, I find this sentence:—

> A large portion of the locomotive stock is unfitted for the present requirements of the department, being incapable of handling the trains efficiently, both in respect to power and speed, and it must very shortly be a matter for consideration what steps shall be taken to replace them. To continue them in service means additional risk, increased train mileage, and consequently an abnormal expenditure. Your committee recommends that every effort be made to secure the completion at the earliest possible date of the workshops now in course of construction, and that immediate steps be taken to provide the farther accommodation required by the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

I think the report by the committee of the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines is a complete reply to the criticism directed by the hon. member towards the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

MR. BATH: You ought to go and have a look at the railway yards.

MR. REID: The criticism directed last year died away, and I feel confident that in 12 months from the present the wisdom of the Chief Mechanical Engineer in endeavouring so far as he can to provide suitable locomotives for traffic going on at the present time will be shown. I have taken more time than I intended when I commenced. There is only one recommendation I wish to make, and that is in connection with the Mining Bill about to be introduced I would impress upon the Minister for Mines that as far as he possibly can, in formulating the necessary clauses of this Bill, he will pay every attention to the ventilation of mines. It is a matter of the utmost importance. There is nothing more important to the miner than plenty of fresh air. We know at the present time, through the quantity of explosives used in mines it is absolutely necessary to have good ventilation if the miner is to retain good health. Noxious fumes are given off after explosives are used, and unless there is a good system of ventilation it must ultimately work to the detriment of the employer and the employee. I would impress upon the Minister the advisability of seeing that ventilation receives a prominent place in this Bill. I certainly think it would not be inadvisable at the present time if a commission of experts were appointed to examine into and report upon the system adopted in ventilating the mines at Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Some valuable evidence could be collected, and the Minister would have the benefit of the information in formulating his Bill. If this is done, and prominence given to the subject of ventilation in the Bill to be brought forward, it will be for the welfare of the people who are compelled to earn their bread in the bowels of the earth, and will not be against the interests of the employer.

MR. J. ISDELL (Pilbarra): In rising to address the House, I must crave the indulgence and courtesy usually accorded to a member when making his first speech. A residence of many years in the bush as a pioneer prospector does not tend to keep one's faculties on the alert, for there are not many opportunities for public speaking, and in such circumstances it is a difficult task for me to speak before what I may suppose to be the best debating society in the country. With reference to the policy declared in the Governor's Speech there seems to be on both sides of the House a concurrence of opinion in its favour, and certainly I am in favour of it in some respects; but it has other features to which I do not see my way to agree. In the first place, the policy looks to me not broad enough. I expected a more progressive and a broader policy, considering the prosperity of the State. The point of view of the framer of that policy takes in but a small portion of the country. What we may call his sphere extends only from Bunbury in the south to the Murchison in the north—one-third of the whole State—and leaves out two-thirds of Western Australia, and a most prosperous part of it. I do not see why the large pastoral

and mining industries of the North-West especially should be totally ignored by the Government, even in the Governor's Speech. Had they been only mentioned, it would have shown that the Government recognise their claims in some shape or form. As to the other planks in the Government platform, there are some on which I do not intend to speak, because I am not qualified. I shall speak on those topics only of which I consider I have sufficient knowledge to entitle me to express opinions. Regarding the Transcontinental Railway and the broadening of the gauge between Perth and Kalgoorlie, I cannot say I am in favour of the work. To my mind that is not in any sense a really reproductive work, nor yet a business proposition. This is a young State, and every penny that has to be spent in it should be spent on works which are either directly or indirectly reproductive. In the first place, this work will not reduce the cost of living, or the freight on mining, farming, or any other commodities which we require. In the second place, it will not increase the revenue, will not increase the gold output, nor will it increase the population of this State; and without these or other advantages I do not see how we can reap any benefit from the enterprise. The broadening of the gauge of the line to Kalgoorlie will cost thousands of pounds; and I would far sooner see the money spent in opening up fresh railway communication to new inland goldfields and to farming districts, as we should then have a fair prospect of a larger revenue. It must be remembered that the debt of the State is very heavy, totalling £68 per head of population. To every penny which adds to that debt we should look for some return; but in this instance I cannot see whence the return is to come. That railway is proposed to be carried out as the result of sentiment; and I cannot give my aid to a sentimental railway. I must compliment the Government on the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into State forestry. There is no doubt its recommendations will lead to the forests being dealt with in a proper manner, and will also afford a basis for legislation to prevent the wholesale destruction of timber, at the same time encouraging our present large export timber trade. As to the land policy of the Government, I must congratulate them on the vigorous and energetic manner in which they have settled people on the soil. But it is imperative that in carrying out this policy they must be exceedingly careful and cautious; because the cry is now "Go on the land"—a repetition of a cry raised many years ago in other colonies. Years ago Victoria and South Australia encouraged and even induced people to settle indiscriminately on land which was totally unfit for farming purposes, with very disastrous results to those colonies. People were granted land on a very liberal extended payment system; but that land had not the conditions essential to successful farming. The climate was against it; consequently instead of being a blessing to Victoria and South Australia, the schemes turned out a detriment to their advancement and the ruination of many hundreds of people. I am well aware that a settled population is essential to the prosperity of this State, and that population can be provided if the conditions are suitable. But it does not matter how enlightened and energetic is the management, nor how good the soil, unless there be a sufficient and consistent rainfall farming enterprise will result in failure. The Government should divide the State into zones according to rainfall, and allow settlement in zones suitable to the conditions—suitable for cereals, mixed farming, and pastoral pursuits respectively. It is ridiculous to induce farmers to settle on country which has not a sufficient rainfall. Such a scheme looks very well on paper; but it remains on paper, because the paper is all we get back from it, and no return of any value. I am glad to see by official statistics that the mining industry is still on the up grade; and I should have much preferred to see more progress made in giving railway communication to many of the mining centres, for I am sure the result would have been an increased output of gold and a larger settled population on the fields. The State batteries seem to have been a great success, which is due to the Minister for Mines. The Government have taken a step in the right direction in sending a geologist to the northern portion of the State, and I am certain his report, when received by the Government and the people of the South, will astonish them

because few have any conception of the real extent of rich auriferous country which there exists. After that report comes to hand, I am certain that the proposed railway in the North will soon be an accomplished fact, whether it be built by the Government or by private enterprise. And I hope that as a result of the report we in the North will get one or two State batteries. I am in favour of the Morgans-Laverton Railway. Though I have never been along the route, I know from public reports that the line is well worthy of construction; and I hope that when it is completed other lines will be taken to auriferous and wealthy centres. Regarding the Collie-Goldfields Railway and the Woodmans Point line, I am not in a position to express an opinion. I should be foolish to express it, because I have never seen the country and know nothing about it; and I consider that the man who expresses an opinion on a subject of which he knows nothing is simply useless for any purpose. From what I can learn, I am in favour of those railways being built; but how a man can form an opinion as to their utility unless he sees the ground, I am at a loss to understand. Had there been any reports on the table regarding population, land settlement, and the area of Crown lands and of private lands in the districts concerned, a person might have had some means of arriving at a conclusion; but in their absence, I cannot do so. Hence my vote will be simply a persuasive vote, and not the result of experience. The man who can persuade me best is bound to get my vote. I am pleased to hear that most members in this and the Upper House have expressed opinions in favour of the construction of the Port Hedland to Marble Bar railway, and that similar opinions have been expressed by the metropolitan newspapers also. It seems strange to me that though it is favoured by so many members in this and the Upper House, and although other influential people and all the metropolitan papers are agreed as to its construction, they still qualify their acquiescence by saying it should be built by private enterprise. If they think that railway of so much importance to the welfare of the State, why should private enterprise and not the Government reap the benefit? Why should not the Government build it themselves? That is what I could not understand, or did not until a day or two ago. There is only one man who has given any reason why the line should be built by private enterprise; and he happens to be a member of the present Government—the Hon. Walter Kingsmill. Referring to this railway, he said the other day in the Upper House that the line from Port Hedland to Nullagine was particularly fitted for construction by private enterprise, because it was outside the southern railway system of the State. That is an illustration of the result of centralisation, and it could not have been more forcibly exhibited by the most ardent advocate of centralisation, because it showed that if we in the North had been anywhere within reach of the southern railway system we should have had our line years ago. But I consider it terribly rough and very hard and unjust that those pioneers who have for years worked there in an uncongenial climate should be so long denied railway communication. It must be remembered that the work they are doing is not for their own benefit only, but for that of the whole country; and it seems curious that those people who are undergoing such hardships should be forbidden railway communication, cheap living, and kindred blessings, simply because their line cannot be joined to the southern railway system. But I will say this for Mr. Kingsmill. He was quite right in stating that the enterprise is outside the sphere in which the centralisation policy of the present Government has been carried on. At the same time, I must recollect that I am only one amongst all the members of this and of the other House, not to speak of the metropolitan newspapers; and it is no use my knocking my head against a stone wall, nor do I intend to. I will fight for that railway, whether I get it in one way or in the other; and having heard the opinions of so many influential people, I shall not fight against its being built by private enterprise. I only hope that members in this and the other House who have expressed themselves in its favour will, when the Bill for its construction comes before them, give it their cordial support, and in no way block its passing into law. I should like to mention one or two subjects which have not been referred to in the Governor's Speech.

One is the alien question. Most people in the southern part of the State consider the Nor'-West a hotbed of alien immigration. Very forcibly I can prove that to be wrong; and representing that portion of the State, it is my duty here to give the proof. Since I have been in Perth I have made it my business to investigate the alien question with respect to the southern portions of the country, and I can find in Perth more Chinamen and other Asiatic aliens on a few acres of land in the centre of the city than in the whole of the Nor'-West, including Broome. With a specific purpose I stood at the corner of one of our streets for an hour by my watch, and counted 68 aliens going in one direction only during that hour. I did not count those going the opposite way, for some of them may have repassed. That is more than one will see in twelve months' travelling through the Nor'-West, outside of Broome at all events. Another thing: I notice by the statistics for five months of this year that 632 aliens arrived in this State and 181 left. That leaves a balance of 451 in five months. I cannot see what that is due to. There must be some leakage, and I think it is the duty of the present Government to make inquiry. There is another question which I have not heard dealt with, and that is relating to rabbits. Rabbits are one of the greatest curses and pests that ever entered Australia. When I was in Perth 20 years ago, I spoke to Mr. Maitland Brown and Mr. W. Paterson, now of the Agricultural Bank, and several other gentlemen on that question, because I had been in the midst of the trouble for some years then, and I knew what I was talking about. I told them of the dangers of it, and they would not believe me. Since that, to a certain extent the Government have taken the matter in hand, but we know nothing of what the Government intend to do—whether they will stop the incursion, destroy the rabbits, or not. Rabbits are going to cost this country many hundreds of thousands of pounds. People who do not know them cannot see the danger, but I have been in it and know what it is, and I say it is the duty of the Government to try to check the rabbits. I do not wish to detain the House any longer, because I have no more to say with regard to politics, and there is no question outside that I wish to speak of. I thank members for the generous way in which they have listened to me. (General applause.)

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth): I have no wish or desire to prolong this debate, and I intend to be brief, consequently the observations that I have to make will be short. The first thing that struck me on reading the Governor's Speech was that it was a very ambitious programme which was foreshadowed therein. I found on looking through it there were something like 20 most important Bills, and Bills of a highly controversial character. We are asked to read, debate, and pass if possible a Bill in reference to the Transcontinental Railway question, a Bill in respect of the broad gauge line between Fremantle and Kalgoorlie.

THE PREMIER: Oh no. That is in connection with the Transcontinental Railway.

MR. PURKISS: Very well, two in one. A Bill with reference to the Constitution, a redistribution of seats Bill—Bills of a highly controversial character; a Bill with reference to electoral reform, another measure of a highly controversial character; a Bill regarding a line from Collie to the Great Southern, which no doubt will be discussable on account of the battle of the routes; a Bill for a railway from Woodmans Point to some point between the ocean and the South-Western line. Then we are promised a consolidation and amendment of the Mines Act, that is an amalgamation of a number of Acts on the statute-book, together with several important amendments—a perfect volume, and no doubt partaking in its various amendments somewhat of a controversial character. We are also asked to pass a Bill for the consolidation of all the land Acts on the statute-book with various important amendments thereof. Also there are foreshadowed several consolidation Bills which are not mentioned. Then we have a new Loan Bill to come down. One Bill we are asked to deal with—and I hope we shall have an opportunity of doing so and of thoroughly threshing it out on account of its vast importance—is in relation to the metropolitan water supply and the extension of sewerage facilities to various other centres. Then we have higher education,

hospitals, factories, and public health Bills, an Early Closing Bill, and a railways amendment and consolidation Bill. Here is a nice bill of fare, including from 19 to 20 most important statutes of a highly controversial character, which if we attempted to do our duty to ourselves and the country would take the best part of six months. After reading that Speech, what do I find? I find that in addition to these 19 or 20 Bills we are going to be asked to discuss, and if possible to pass, a Supreme Court Bill, police offences Bill, pearl fisheries Bill, other fisheries Bill, and a Bill for the consolidation of laws relating to prisons, which has been introduced. There are also to be Bills with reference to the making and sale of bread, the prevention and spread of noxious weeds; also a Bill relating to the insane, a Bill to consolidate and amend the Boilers and Machinery Act, a Public Service Bill which has been promised to the Civil Service Association, a libel and slander Bill, and a Bill with reference to auditing accounts. Here we have a programme involving something like 33 most important Bills, Bills of a highly discussable and controversial character. I forgot to mention that we have also other two, making 35 Bills, one of them being the Registration of Dogs Consolidation Bill. At the end of this programme we have such a measure as that! Then we have, if you please, a consolidation Bill with reference to pharmacy and poisons. Thirty-five Bills! Outside of that we shall be asked to discuss the Financial Statement, we shall be asked to pass the Estimates, and we shall be asked to discuss, what is perhaps quite as important and in many colonies is looked upon as more important, a public works statement together with the public works Estimates. I do not know what members think of it, I do not know what Mr. Speaker thinks of it, but I say that such a programme is absolutely preposterous. I am satisfied members will agree with me that it is preposterous, because I will show how it is preposterous. If we had simply limited ourselves to the Bills mentioned in the Governor's Speech, we might possibly, if we sat four days in the week as I was in favour of doing, and met at half-past two, have got through the 18 measures there mentioned; but even then we should have had to gallop through them. But now, as the Government say "No; we only want three days in the week, and we only want to sit at half-past four," what have we got to do? We have 13 sitting days in the month; if you deduct two days to be devoted to members' private business there are 11 sitting days in the month for the discussion of those 35 Bills.

THE PREMIER: Does it not show the urgent necessity of dealing with the work we are talking about?

MR. PURKISS: I ask the House to assist me to get to work and do good business, but not to pass 33 Bills; not to attempt an impossibility, an absurdity. It is an insult to ourselves, to the House, and to the public to come down and ask us this side of Christmas to get through 35 Bills of this important character, so highly discussable. We have 11 Government days in the month, and three months give us 33 days. If we suspended the Standing Orders to-morrow and passed one of those Bills every day, getting it through all its stages from its introduction to the third reading, we should dispose of them in that time. It is simply an absurdity; we shall be in November before we get through the programme, even if we suspend the Standing Orders and take one Bill a day; because we have 11 days, three times 11 are 33, and there are 33 Bills. We shall not start upon these Bills until August, and that will bring us up to November. I say it is simply preposterous. We must assume that the Government are sincere in bringing down this elaborate programme, but is it possible to carry through? It is, to my mind, preposterous and impossible. Some members may laugh, but I think it is so impossible that I am not going to attempt it, and I ask all those members on both sides of the House who agree with me to take a drastic step, whereby we can reduce this programme by eliminating two-thirds of it. Let us not stultify ourselves, but do our duty to the country by concentrating our attention on one-third of the programme. If there is a lot of bunkum about this, if there is no sincerity about it, the case is worse. I appeal to members on this (Ministerial) side of the House and on

that side also, is it possible to do that amount of work? Last session we had a programme, but not one like this, and what was the consequence? We only got through a portion of it.

THE PREMIER: We passed 49 Bills last year.

MR. PURKISS: And we sent many of them up to the Upper Chamber, almost at the last moment, which amounted to a premium, a prayer almost, saying "Throw it out." While that was going on, and while they pretended to give private members a day, I tried to get in some simple useful social reform, but it was blocked; one little Bill brought down in the first fortnight of the session, a Bill of one clause, with reference to the amendment of the Jury Act. This House was absolutely unanimous that the Bill should be passed. That little bit of social legislation was kept on the Order Paper until the twelfth hour, until half-past 11 on the night of the very last day, when the Upper House, which no doubt would have passed it if they had had the opportunity of doing so, said "We are not going to undertake Bills sent up here within a quarter of an hour of our proroguing." There is one remedy for that sort of thing. Members must agree with me, no matter what their views on politics are, that the programme put forward is an impossible and a preposterous one. Why do the Government want to bring in these Bills in the face of the demand for such measures as the country has called for, measures in respect of which members have been sent to this House; questions that have gone to the country, and which determine the fate of Governments; such questions as the Constitution Bill and an Electoral Bill—policy Bills in respect of which many members were returned to this Parliament. In the face of that, why do the Government want a consolidation of the Dog Acts, why do they want to consolidate the Pharmacy and Poisons Acts, things which have stood the test and could have waited until another Session? What is proposed is an outrage. There is a remedy for it, a drastic one.

MR. CONNOR: Come over here.

MR. PURKISS: I feel it is not a question of party. I say to members all round, "Let us get rid of a sham;" let the House take the drastic course which I am going to suggest. We have the ball in our hands: let us put an end to this.

THE PREMIER: You mean, get to work?

MR. PURKISS: Yes. Do 17 men think that they can sit here and carry out a programme of this kind? I am not going to pretend that I can do it. There is no man in the House who can say he is able to do it. If 17 men think they are capable of doing it, let them keep a House and do it, and the public will take note of the result. I find that of the 35 paragraphs of the Governor's Speech, five are devoted to the subject of the Transcontinental Railway; one-sixth of the whole Speech is devoted to that subject. Undoubtedly, those five paragraphs are extremely optimistic in spirit. A stranger reading them would think that we were on the eve, at any rate, of the inception of that great work. No doubt the Transcontinental Railway is a great conception, and from a Western Australian point of view constitutes one of the goals and complements of federation. No doubt everyone here desires that it may be an accomplished fact, and of course the time will come when we shall see the idea brought to fruition; but hon. members must not be "too previous." Let us not be deluded by optimistic passages in the Governor's Speech or anywhere else; for the cost of constructing the work, and the loss which it is admitted on all hands will be involved at any rate for some years to come in its working, have to be borne in mind in conjunction with the fact that that cost will fall on all the States of the Commonwealth. Therefore, so far as the Commonwealth as a whole is concerned, the matter will be looked at in the cold light of "Is this a sound, commercial proposition?" There is no use in talking about great ideas, and it is idle to refer to any implied promise made at the time Western Australia entered federation. It is beside the question, also, to refer to negotiations with a past Premier of South Australia; in fact, to do so is unfortunate, because irritation and discontent result. If a man or group of men or a State particularly wants a thing, it is inadvisable to begin to throw stones and say, "You gave us a promise, and now you are breaking it." There is no

use in referring a Ministry of the present day to the letter of a past Premier. I repeat, such methods only result in irritation After all, the argument in the eyes of the other States—which have eyes, and will use them—comes down to the bedrock question of whether the line will pay. The burden will fall on other States just as much as on ourselves. What interest has Tasmania, for example, in the construction of the Transcontinental Railway? What interest has Queensland in the work? And yet the estimated cost of £5,100,000—I shall show presently that this cost will be greatly exceeded—is to fall equally on Tasmania and Queensland. The subject is being ventilated in the East at the present time. A propoganda is in progress in Victoria on the subject of the Trancontinental Railway, the movement being headed by Mr. Palmer, the chairman of the Victorian National Reform League.

MR. DAGLISH: Are you the league's agent here?

MR. PURKISS: The league is holding meetings throughout Victoria on this very question of the Trancontinental Railway. Mr. Palmer's views are expressed somewhat as follows:—

> The States, up to this, have all built their railways at their own cost, and carry the debts thus created. The Transcontinental Railway is, geographically speaking, a West Australian enterprise. It serves transcontinental uses, but it is a State possession, and will, of course, render the highest services to State interests. How can the Federal Parliament charge the cost of a railway which runs exclusively through one State on the other States of the Commonwealth? An Interstate Commission is being set up to prevent exactly such a thing being done.

It has to be remembered that what we call the Transcontinental Railway is only the terminal section of an already existing transcontinental line. The Transcontinental Railway already runs from Queensland into New South Wales, from New South Wales into Victoria, and through Victoria into South Australia, ending at Adelaide. That is the Transcontinental Railway as it exists at the present day, and what we refer to as the construction of the Transcontinental Railway is simply the addition of a link to an already existing chain. That portion of the Transcontinental Railway which runs from Brisbane to Sydney was built by whom? By the Queensland people and the New South Wales people, who had to borrow the money for the work and are paying interest on the money borrowed. Moreover, if there should be a loss on the working of that section of a Transcontinental Railway, the people of Queensland and New South Wales must bear the loss. That portion of the Transcontinental Railway which runs from New South Wales into Victoria was constructed by whom? By New South Wales and Victoria, which States built the line out of money borrowed for the purpose, on which money they have to pay interest. The portion which runs from Victoria into South Australia was built by the two States in question out of borrowed money, on which interest is being paid by them. Can we therefore ask those States, and Tasmania in addition, to give their sanction to the Commonwealth Government's borrowing £5,100,000 for the purpose of building the remaining link of the Transcontinental Railway, while the great length of that railway running through settled portions of the Eastern States has been constructed by the individual States out of money borrowed for the purpose and in respect of which the individual States pay interest? Now, the estimated cost of the line is £5,100,000. The yearly interest on that at three and a half per cent. would amount to roughly £180,000. Next, there is a sinking fund to be provided. [MR. DAGLISH: No.] Very well; no sinking fund.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The other States have no sinking funds.

MR. PURKISS: Very well. Then there are charges for maintenance and working expenses. I venture to say that if the Transcontinental Railway is going to be worth that expenditure—I speak plainly because I am not deluded——

MR. DAGLISH: That is a question, you know, whether you are deluded or not.

MR. PURKISS: It may be a question, but it is one I have answered satisfactorily, at all events to myself. If the Transcontinental Railway is going to be worth £5,100,000, a cost which will be largely added to, as I shall show——

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The cost will be a good deal less.

MR. PURKISS: I shall not put my opinion against that of the Engineers-in-

Chief of the various States, who have estimated the cost at £5,100,000. I am obliged to accept a statement of that kind coming from engineering experts. One great argument put forward, with some show of reason, for the construction of the Transcontinental Railway is that it will serve as a defence measure, so far as Western Australia is concerned. For the purposes of defence we are isolated, open to be shot at, open to be attacked. We have no protection, we have no guarantee of safety, unless the Transcontinental Railway be built. Now, the Transcontinental Railway, for reasons considered very important by the Engineers-in-Chief, is to pass within 50 or 60 miles of the coast at Eucla. The reason for bringing it so close to Eucla is that, by means of a short loop line, the construction of the main work may be facilitated, that the plant and material may be landed at Eucla, and that the line may radiate as it were from the middle as well as from the terminal points. That being so—and the position is maintained in all the reports I have seen, in respect of water supply and construction purposes—it will be necessary, as part and parcel of the scheme of a Transcontinental Railway, to fortify Eucla strongly and to lay down an elaborate system of submarine mines. For, speaking of the railway as a defence line, I have to point out that it is only a bit of horseplay, a little piece of skylarking, for a foreign cruiser or man-of-war to land a small body of men at Eucla, march them two days inland, and cut the line which is to do so much for the defence of this State. The line will absolutely constitute an invitation to any stranger in the shape of a cruiser or man-of-war to land a flying column and cut the line north and south, east and west. Therefore I maintain that to the first cost of £5,100,000 must be added the cost of fortifications at Eucla and the laying down of elaborate submarine mines at that port. We can see, therefore, that the ultimate cost of a Transcontinental Railway is hard to estimate. It is all very well to speak of £5,100,000. Let hon. members consider the difficulties to be faced even if the expenditure were limited to that amount. The Commonwealth Government will have to borrow £5,100,000. But the Commonwealth Government have other States to study, and other large works are looming up. We see signs of a choice being made in regard to a capital site for the Commonwealth. If that choice should be made during the Session—and it will have to be made sooner or later—the Commonwealth will have to embark in heavy expense in that respect. Again, the various States are clamouring that the Commonwealth should pay for the public buildings taken over from the States; and that means millions. If the Federal Government made payment in the shape of federal bonds or debentures for all the public buildings, such as post offices, telegraph offices, and so forth, taken over, an expenditure of millions will be incurred. And these are matters of necessity; these things will have to be done. Will the Commonwealth Government borrow £5,100,000 for the purpose of building a railway in one State or in two States, having regard to the fact that Tasmania does not care a rap about it and yet will have to pay for it, and that Queensland likewise cares very little about it yet will have to bear its full share of the cost, and in view of the fact that the other States have individually paid for their portions of the Transcontinental Railway? Nothing of the kind. If the other States could be convinced that the Transcontinental Railway will be a financial success, its construction might be regarded as being within measurable distance. But they ask, is it going to pay? Will there be sufficient goods and passenger traffic to make it pay? I am not an engineer, but it seems to me that anyone who asks me to believe that this line is going to pay, whether from freight or passengers for some years to come, is trying to make me believe that which I cannot possibly swallow or accept. When we find how difficult it is to make lines which run through centres of population pay, how much more difficult will it be to make this line, which will not run through any centres of population, pay. The whole of the States of the Commonwealth at the present moment have the greatest difficulty in providing interest from their railways on the money borrowed, in providing a sinking fund, paying working expenses, and working at anything like a profit. We have difficulties in making our railways pay when

they run through settled country. They have far greater population in the other States, yet there are deficits year after year in their railway returns; yet we are asked to believe that a railway running from one terminus here where there is some population, to another terminus 1,200 miles off, and along the 1,200 miles there is not a living soul, not even a kangaroo——

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not so. That is not fair.

MR. PURKISS: The Minister for Lands says it is not so. How many men in this world have traversed the route from Kalgoorlie to Eucla? How many have travelled the route which this railway will take from Eucla to the South Australian border? When we read of this country we admire the feats of the explorers who have been over it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Railway engineers have been over it.

MR. PURKISS: Yes; Sir John Forrest was over it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think he was.

MR. PURKISS: I have been led to believe that he was over part of it. There have been a few explorers—one can number them on the fingers of one hand—over it, and a rabbit man named Mr. Mason went to Eucla. Mr. Muir went over it. The South Australian engineer went over it. We are talking of this country through the names of a few explorers, yet the Minister for Lands says it is rubbish to say there are no centres of population within a radius of 50 miles of either end.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, no.

MR. PURKISS: The hon. member has harked back. I knew he would.

THE TREASURER: Are there any centres of population between Southern Cross and Coolgardie?

MEMBER: Men working in Kalgoorlie have been over it.

MR. PURKISS: Yes; they have been over it as explorers. What population is there to pick up after you leave the settled districts around Kalgoorlie until you get to the South Australian border? Then again what proportion of the travelling public will go over this Transcontinental line? When we had the mail steamers calling at Albany, what proportion of the passengers left the mail steamers to come overland to Perth instead of going round by Fremantle? Not one in eight. One might see 10 or 20 passengers getting off the boats to come on to Perth by rail, while the 200 or 300 passengers would come on by water.

THE TREASURER: It is a question of cost.

MR. PURKISS: Yes; and what will be the cost of carrying passengers from Perth to Adelaide? How many people would enjoy a long railway journey through the desert.

THE TREASURER: They travel long distances in South Australia.

MR. PURKISS: They travel through a beautiful latitude, through a splendid country with a settled population. [MEMBER: So they will here.] I do not think any man who has gone into this question will say the line will pay. Even the engineers estimate that there will be a loss for years, both in respect to freight and traffic. The Speech informs us this great railway scheme has obtained the indorsement of the Federal Government. It is gratifying, so the Speech says, to see the evidence of recognition of this work by the Federal Government. I have read all the speeches, the Governor General's Speech, the announcements by Ministers, and so forth, and I have failed to discover any tangible evidence of sincerity on the part of the Commonwealth Government with regard to this line, save and except perhaps Sir John Forrest, the one Minister who I believe is sincere and sanguine about the line. As far as I am concerned I am satisfied that the Federal Government, so far as the utterances of Ministers are concerned, have been and are absolutely insincere. They are deluding and fooling the public of Western Australia when we read such statements in speeches from time to time by the Prime Minister of the Federal Parliament, and then in the Governor General's Speech addressed to the Federal Parliament. How absurd and childish is this pretence to delude the public of Western Australia. They show they must do something. Members must recollect that the Federal Government, if possible, want to coax over the support of Western Australia. We must recollect that those members, both of the Lower House and in the

Senate, that Western Australia sent to the Federal Parliament have, to a very large extent, been hostile to the Barton Administration, and it is highly important, from Sir Edmund Barton's point of view, that he should make as many converts in Western Australia as possible in view of the forthcoming elections; consequently, thinking as he does that Western Australia views this railway as such a vital question, and seeing that Mr. Reid has also advocated it, he knows that he must, if he wants to gain the assistance and support of Western Australia, tell us that he is going to do wonders. And how does he do it? He calls together the various Engineers-in-Chief of the various States, to do what? Simply to consider Mr. Muir's report, and that of the engineer of South Australia who traversed this line two years ago. Mr. Muir was sent out with a well-equipped party from Kanowna, and went down as far as Eucla and back again. South Australia sent out a well-equipped party with an engineer, starting from the outlying districts of South Australia and going as far as Eucla and back. We have got their reports here, and that is all that is known about that country from a railway point of view. The only two men in this world who have travelled over this country are the engineers who were sent out by Western Australia and South Australia. They are the only persons who can tell us anything about it, because they were sent out for the particular purpose of exploring and examining the country, taking notes and making observations on the country between Kalgoorlie and Eucla. The engineer sent out by South Australia had to examine the interior from Eucla, with a view to finding out its suitability for railway purposes. Then the Engineers-in-Chief of the various States—our Engineer-in-Chief taken away to the great dissatisfaction of the Minister for Works, who knew what tomfoolery it was for him to go—simply sit down and read the two reports, and having read them say if they think the scheme feasible. Here comes the farce. In the meantime, when these reports were prepared, Mr. Reid comes here and makes speeches in a free-trade direction, and makes promises as to the Transcontinental Railway. Sir Edmund Barton sends someone to watch Mr. Reid, and on the platform that gentleman makes speeches on the Transcontinental Railway. Sir John Forrest is the only sincere man in the Commonwealth Government; I am satisfied of that; and he says to Sir Edmund Barton in Melbourne, "We must show we are doing something," and what do they do? All the engineers are called together again and sent in a steamer to Eucla. They explore the country within a radius of 40 miles of Eucla and return. They come on to Fremantle and go to Kanowna, and explore the country within a radius of 50 miles of Kanowna, and then go home. Are members to be deluded by that? Here is a solemn conclave of all the Engineers-in-Chief; they land at Eucla and examine the country within a radius of 40 miles; and if anything was known about the country, that portion was pretty well known to everybody. The country within 40 or 50 miles of Kanowna was pretty well explored and known. What knowledge could the engineers gain of the Transcontinental Railway? Could they find out any more than Mr. Muir knew? He was the only man who did know. I cannot understand the people in the street being deluded. The various States are robbed of the services of their Engineers-in-Chief to delude Western Australia. I am talking plainly on this question of the Transcontinental Railway because I find five paragraphs, or one-sixth of the Governor's Speech, devoted to this line, coolly informing the House that there is gratifying evidence of the recognition of this great trunk Transcontinental Railway by the Federal Parliament; that this grand scheme has obtained the indorsement of the Federal Government. I say it is rubbish. I finish as I started. While this is a fine ideal, while it is a grand scheme as far as Western Australia is concerned, and is one of the complements, one of the goals of federation, while it is highly desirable at the proper time to see the line constructed, and while I feel sure that the time will come when it will be constructed, I say that any one who will sit down now and consider that the line is within the sphere of practical politics or will be within measurable distance for years to come, is labouring under a delusion. I am very gratified to find the Government foreshadow a Bill for water

supply and sewerage in the metropolitan area, and water supply generally. One of the primary functions of good government is the health and comfort of the inhabitants. Measures which help to promote the health and comfort of the inhabitants of a State, or of a municipality, are such primary functions of good government that they should have the first call in a scheme formulated by any Administration. But unfortunately we see all the world over that what is necessary, what promotes the supply of pure water, pure air, and similar aids to health, is relegated to the last place in the programme. I am not talking specially of this country; but everywhere we find that embroidery is considered of first importance; we find great buildings and other luxuries, and things we could do without; we find observatories and other institutions the establishment of which could be postponed; but there is put off to the last moment that which is the polar star of good government—the promotion of health. It is disgusting and repulsive for the mind to dwell upon the state of the inhabitants of this city. Here we are absolutely without a sewerage system, absolutely without a system by which we can even get rid of the pure surface rain water. We cannot drain it into our streets, for our allotments are on a level with them, and there are no drains to take it away; and we have had, and still have, what are called dry wells. Why they are so called I do not know, and could never find out. It is a system by which all one's slush or slopwater from the sink and so forth goes into a pit. In a short time that will become supersaturated. The sand gets greasy on the surface, and will not absorb any more liquid; consequently the use of the well has to be discontinued and a No. 2 well put down, and ultimately a No. 3 and a No. 4, until the whole of the little back yard is simply one mass of supersaturated dry wells. The very idea is repulsive and repellant; and undoubtedly as a man sows so will he reap. So far, the only salvation of Perth has been the porous nature of the sandy soil. But the whole of the sand on which Perth is built is fast becoming supersaturated, so that it will not take any excess slush water or sink water. We cannot get rid of our excess clean water from the roofs: there are no drains. What are we to do? Our salvation has been the porous nature of the soil: that will not endure for ever. Nature will turn round on us. There is a law and an order of things in this; and probably we shall have, as this and other cities have had in the past, an epidemic killing us off in thousands. How people can laugh at such a risk, I do not know. To me, the question is very serious. I am happy to see that the Government are now approaching it, and are asking us to discuss a comprehensive Bill with reference to water supply and sewerage. I trust their scheme will be complete and effective—not a scheme for the next five or 10 years; not a mere pottering with this business so that we may dodge along for another 10 or 20 years. Let us begin with a system which will last for half-a century at least, if not for a century. Even if we take time to build it piecemeal, let us go on gradually towards a comprehensive goal. And why I dwell upon this is because I see a scheme propounded by our Engineer-in-Chief. For its consideration he has had but limited time, so much of his attention having been taken up by the visit of the Interstate engineers to Eucla and elsewhere. He proposes three pumping stations—not a gravitation scheme from the ranges, not a catchment area such as we have at Mundaring; but simply some pumping arrangement. Now we in Perth have had experiencee of pumping, and we find that the pumping arrangements soon get exhausted. All the bores put down in this city in connection with our water supply have to be sunk deeper and deeper, because the supply gradually diminishes; and that I am afraid is what will happen when we go in for an additional pumping scheme. Although we have an artesian supply, it is not drawn from an area of country which will give an almost illimitable flow of water similar to that in Queensland and other countries where the geological formation is of the true artesian character. Here it is obvious from the data supplied by the Waterworks Board that our pumping arrangements have been constantly giving out; and every few months we sink deeper and deeper because the water does not flow in quickly enough to supply the demand. So I trust the Government will look ahead, and will not be content

with a scheme to serve the few thousands now living in Perth; because the population of the city will be doubled in five years, and I can see in my mind's eye, though I shall not live to see it, the day when the city will extend from the Causeway right down to Fremantle—one long line of buildings as may be found between Melbourne and Brighton. Only a few years will elapse—and 25 years in the history of a nation are but few—before this population will be here. I say, let the Government look not merely to the wants of the existing population of Perth and the metropolitan district generally, but look ahead and inaugurate a comprehensive scheme to give us a supply of such pure and potable water as will insure the population against deprivation or drought for years and years to come, no matter what size the metropolis may attain. I am glad to see railway extensions mentioned in the Speech. I agree with what some members said, but should have liked to see the Government go a little farther. I certainly think the claims of the northern parts of our territory are paramount. However, we must be thankful for what we can get. Of the railway extensions foreshadowed in the Speech, I quite approve. I am glad also to see that education forms a cardinal topic in the Speech. We are promised an increase in the number of primary schools; and every one of us must cheer that. We are also promised the establishment of a secondary school—a State school of a secondary character—and an extension of technical education, to which we must all agree. And we are promised in course of time the keystone of our educational system—a University. Much has been said in the Press both for and against the proposal of the Government. I heartily support their educational policy right up to the establishment of a University; and as to that, I approve of the Government plan for the reason that they do not propose to build a University to-morrow or next year, but when they have time they will reserve such Crown lands as will form endowments, so that there will be by-and-by a fund for which there is now an opportunity of providing a basis, so that the establishment of that University, when it comes about, will not be a burden on every man, woman, and child in the country by necessitating a direct tax. This is a young country, as it really only began to develop some 10 or 12 years ago; and while there is opportunity of reserving such lands, which may become valuable, that is the proper way to start a scheme for a University. Set apart a basis for endowments, place the lands in the hands of trustees, and give them leasing powers. The lands will become profitable, and will bring in a revenue; consequently we shall in time be able to establish a University which will not increase the direct burden of taxation. Two more sentences and I have finished. I am sorry to note the entire omission of any promise to repeal the food duties; and there is no mention whatever of the repeal of the differential railway rates. These miserable food duties and differential rates have to my certain knowledge done the State much damage. The food duties have raised a cry against us in the other States. We know what a cry is. These taxes assume an exaggerated importance in the eyes of people at a distance, who say, rightly or wrongly, "Here is Western Australia, not satisfied with the Federal tariff, erecting a special fence against our produce in the shape of differential railway rates. Last Session the member for Northam (Hon. G. Throssell) said that he did not, and as far as he could judge the agricultural districts did not want these food duties on account of their protective character. Yet we have always been told that the Government cannot do without them. Why, here is a country with a revenue of something like £4,000,000; and we absolutely cannot spend it fast enough. The year before last down came a Financial Statement showing a surplus. That surplus has assumed the shape of the present surplus. It was money that the Government were unable to spend. This year they come down with a so-called surplus of £220,000 or £225,000—no surplus at all: they cannot spend the money fast enough. It takes some time to spend £4,000,000, and yet they tell us they will not repeal these miserable food duties or alter the differential railway rates, because they need the revenue. I am sorry to see that omission, recollecting that at the last general election many members practically went to the country on this burning

question of the repeal of the food duties. All we got after great agitation was a repeal of the prohibition on the importation of apples, which repeal has been largely nullified by the extremely strict inspection regulations. However, the prohibition has not been enforced. Concerning the food duties there is not a word in the Governor's Speech. I have nothing farther to add. I know I have exceeded the limit I imposed on myself when I rose to speak; but very often a man is unable to judge of the time his speech will occupy.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hopkins): May I, like other members who have preceded me, offer you, Mr. Speaker, my hearty congratulations on your restoration to health, and coincidentally express my desire that you may long be able to fill that position which you have in the past so highly adorned? As a member of the Government, speaking at so late an hour I feel that I can reasonably claim the right of brevity, at the same time recognising that the Government have in a manner spoken collectively through the agency of the Governor's Speech. And I cannot help thinking with how much more expedition we might proceed if my friends on the opposite side of the House would only put forward their views in a similar concise form. In the case of the member for Perth, who has just preceded me, I am sure that would save much time. But after all I suppose it is a reasonable thing on the Address-in-Reply that members should have an opportunity of expressing those opinions which they have been elected to support. There has been mention in the Speech of the preferential trade proposals which have emanated from the Right Honourable J. Chamberlain, and in connection with this I only have to say that to me they have afforded an infinite amount of pleasure. In the earlier periods of British colonisation, when those possessions beyond the seas were peopled with sons of Britain, there was no need of any preferential trade proposals to secure a continuance of that loyalty and devotion which spring eternal in the breasts of men towards the land of their nativity. But in these later periods, when the older generation is giving place to the new, and when the younger men are coming into positions of power in the Parliaments of these dominions, it is reasonable to assume that there may be good reason for the Imperial Government to endeavour to extend to the Colonies some recognition of the valour and loyalty displayed towards the Empire in her time of trouble; and I sincerely hope that I, along with many other members in this House, may have the opportunity of seeing those preferential trade proposals carried into effect. Then no doubt we shall have reached a time in the history of the Empire when Britain will find in her offshoots allies as valuable in the more congenial times of peace as she has found in the more troublous times of war. I think a matter for congratulation is the very amiable tone of the debate during this Session of Parliament up to the present stage. It is different from that when I came into this House, on being elected for the first time to sit in any Legislative Assembly; and I cannot help thinking that it would have been much more pleasant for myself, as I am sure it would have been for many of those hon. members to whom I had to say unpleasant things, if we had had the same happy surroundings in that Session of Parliament as we are enjoying on this occasion. [MEMBER: There was war.] Apparently that was it, but we have the calm that succeeds war, and I have no doubt it is the wish of members that it shall continue. I have to return to members my personal thanks for the good wishes which they have conveyed to me, and I can only hope that the work I have started may be continued with the same degree of satisfaction to members as that afforded by what I have had to do in the past. There were some matters connected with the Department of Lands and Surveys which have been commented on strongly in a section of the Press, and at the same time, if I am not mistaken, my friend the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) felt strongly on those questions. I hung back as far as possible in regard to speaking on the Address in order that he might precede me, and had he raised those questions I should have taken the opportunity of explaining to the House as far as lay in my power the true position. I desire to clear away any little cobwebs which may have been engendered by the criticisms of members. My friend the member for Claremont

(Mr. Foulkes) took the Lands Department to task for not being more generous to the Churches. I say that in no other State in the Commonwealth and certainly not in New Zealand are grants of land made to the Churches; but in Western Australia we have granted 66 blocks to the Salvation Army, 39 to the Presbyterians, and 201 to the Methodists, a total acreage of 1,016 acres; to the Roman Catholic denomination 280 blocks, or a total acreage of 11,307 acres; and to the Church of England 467 blocks, or a total acreage of 7,075 acres.

MR. HASTIE: Too much.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I believe it has been the policy of this country from the earliest periods of settlement to give these grants of land to the Churches, providing that they use them for the purpose for which they were granted; and I believe that Sir John Forrest, when Premier, was wont to refer to the Churches as being his spiritual police. I am perfectly satisfied that anything done in aiding the advance of Christianity and civilisation will never bring disgrace upon the nation or the Commonwealth. The department that I have the honour to control at the present time is one that embraces an enormous area of country, which when it is run out provides about 3,000 acres to every man, woman, and child in the Commonwealth of Australia. I think the manner in which such an estate as this is being administered must be of interest not only to the members of this House but to the people of the State, and indeed to the people of the Commonwealth. We must acknowledge that we have there the greatest resources and securities of the nation. We have inseparable from it those vast forests of sylvan wealth which a Royal Commission has been appointed to look into, and as far as possible conserve. I have no doubt it is the wish of members that this industry which has made Bunbury the important place it is to-day, shall not be of a spasmodic nature, but that as far as possible, with all due care, we shall endeavour to preserve to posterity some portion of that industry which we find so valuable to the State to-day, and which in future years will, I suppose, be more valuable still. When I was first elected as a member of Parliament I was a goldfields member. [MEMBER: Are you not now?] Well, I have an industry under my care at the present time which certainly cannot directly be connected with the goldfields, although I know there are many people on the Eastern Goldfields who are sufficiently wide in their opinions to recognise that the prosperity not only of this State, but of Australia, will depend upon the successful settlement and advancement of the agricultural and pastoral industries. I recommended, when speaking to my constituents on the first occasion, that land settlement should be paramount, and I have never seen any reasons to alter the recommendation in that plank of the platform which I adopted on the hustings. We have an enormous territory of something like 600 millions of acres yet to part with; and although members may say that a good deal of that is perhaps dry country, we have only to refer to what the industrial capitalists of America are doing with the country which in the past has been accounted their desert, to see that dry country can be brought into use. From the *Coloniser* of May, 1903, I see a case that a capitalist whose name has not yet become known has purchased a million acres of land in the Mohave Desert, which he is going to irrigate from the Mohave River and the Colorado River. The Department of Lands and Surveys embraces also the Agricultural Department and Forestry Department. It had a revenue last year of £150,000, and the expense of our administration of this department totalled £66,000; so that on the operations of the department we have a very considerable credit balance. Settlement is going ahead in Western Australia. In 1892 there were in this country only 5,860 holdings subject to occupation, in 1897 the number increased to 8,949, and in 1902 it increased to 18,667 holdings, comprising an area of 115,656,060 acres. And to illustrate also to members the enormous amount of work this office is undertaking at present, I may say that from the 1st January to 22nd July we have received 4,813 applications for land, and I am pleased to say that to-day land selection shows an increase of more than 100 per cent., the highest record ever achieved before in the history of the State. From

the 1st to the 18th July we had 699 applications. I think these figures must be very interesting to members. They can appreciate now that through a policy of starvation—I can call it nothing else—plans, leases, grants, and everything have been allowed to go into arrear. And why? I know of no reason unless it be that the expenditure in maintaining that office was not considered to be so important perhaps as the lavish expenditure on public works. Notwithstanding, the fact remains that we have 4,300 diagrams in arrear, 839 remaining to be passed, 5,000 leases and licenses to issue, 1,100 pastoral leases to issue, and 60 Crown grants to issue. In order that this work should be overcome—and it has been a source of great anxiety to me, to the Premier, and to my other colleagues—the subdivisional heads have been working long hours for some considerable time past, at least ever since I asked them to do so, and I am glad to say that when I suggested to the rank and file that perhaps by stopping until 5·30 o'clock every evening great good could be done, everyone stopped willingly. I take this opportunity of saying I have discovered that in that department as in every other department, you have to take the bad with the good. We had one man for example who had been putting plans in a drawer for five years. He started at £60 and got to £80, and we thought he should be allowed to stop at that for five more. We had to get additional surveyors. The Cabinet have stood by me in this matter. We have nine additional contract men in the field, because I recognise that field surveys are the most pressing and important work of all, because one can do nothing until a survey is made. We have three extra surveyors in the office and three extra draftsmen. There are about 500 inspections of conditional purchase to do. We have increased the number of inspectors from eight to thirteen. We have appointed one man from the outside, and we took two from the clerical work in the office—two good men who had no right to be there, in my opinion. We sent them into the field. There were two from the Agricultural Bank: one of these was employed by the Agricultural Department at Geraldton, and another at Bridgetown. The man at Bridgetown would probably be sent to Wagin to inspect property. I undertake to say that four-fifths of the time of these inspectors was wasted in travelling. I took them from the Bank and added them to the conditional purchase inspectors. I divided the country into 13 districts, and now when a man applies for land we do not want to have six months lapse in sending correspondence, and to have a form which would take a commercial man all his time to attend to, but we have a simpler form which is sent to the field inspector, who can go to the farmer and have it filled in, the whole thing being done expeditiously and without any blunders attaching to it. The figures I have given you will show the rapid advance which is being made in land settlement, and it is not to be wondered at. A great deal is said of America and its potentialities, but we have a country which in its settled parts for 70 years has not known a drought. We have a climate which is not troubled with frost or snow as is America. I saw a report in one of the American papers that they broke more axes than soil when they tried to first bring their country under cultivation. We have not those difficulties here. Yet we have one and three-quarter million pounds worth of farm produce imported into the country. I take this opportunity of saying emphatically, and without fear of contradiction, whatever the opinions of other people may be in regard to the influx of settlers from other countries, that we have any amount of room for at least 10,000 additional farmers. More than that, we have the country to settle them on. I take this opportunity of entering an emphatic protest against hon. members describing as paupers men able and willing to work. I undertake to say that even in this House there are numbers of men who have known what it is to be short of money; but does that circumstance justify one in writing down a man as a pauper? I resent such statements, and characterise them as unworthy. I maintain that this country affords plentiful avenues for an abundance of settlers. It is useless for hon. members to talk about the country being "flooded": there is no danger of that for years and years to come. I undertake to say that had our ancestors who colonised this continent sat down and done nothing but wait for

the State to come and help them, Australia would not be the country it is to-day. Undoubtedly, the time has arrived when we must inculcate into the minds of our generation some idea of self-reliance, and the knowledge that they are capable of doing for themselves. The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, after returning from his visit to South Africa, said in the House of Commons that "When one is dealing with new lands, practically very little can be done unless one is prepared to act the part of the beneficent landlord, and spend money in opening up the estate and in providing railway communication." Those remarks might just as well have been made concerning Western Australia as concerning South Africa. Reference was made by various hon. members to the railway propositions of the Government, and I wish to take this opportunity of saying that all who realise that Western Australia is a country offering every facility for producing its people's requirements in the shape of food of all kinds must support those railway proposals. When one goes out into the agricultural districts—I need not take any particular district, but Jandakot will serve as an example—and sees the settlers there, many of them settlers of long years' standing, without even roads to their properties, nothing but sand tracks, with their working horses broken-hearted, somewhat after the style of the farmers themselves, then one must admit that so long as the revenue of the country is spent in building railways which will serve the people of the agricultural districts and will tend towards greater production, the people who contribute the revenue will not mind. To the public at large it is a small consideration that £2 per head of the population should be spent on railway construction this year, particularly if that expenditure is to result in a reduction of £5 per head of the population in the cost of food during next year. The Agricultural Department has supplied me with some interesting figures showing the advance of the last twelvemonth. The acreage of fruit and vines increased by 1,300, that of potatoes by 241, barley by 1,206, oats by 429, and hay by 11,892. Thus the past year brought with it an increase of over 15,000 acres in the area of cultivation. Two experimental farms are at work in this State, one at Narrogin and the other on the Upper Chapman. I shall take this opportunity of saying, in order that at least my view of the situation may be understood and appreciated, that when I was in the Upper Chapman district it was suggested to me that the rest of the experimental farm should be cleared. I intend to do nothing of the kind. A hundred and sixty acres has been cleared there, and is under experimental crops of various kinds. I consider that the proper course for this country at present is to establish pioneer farmers. The agricultural college and scientific farming are matters we can think about when we have supplied our requirements in the commoner products which any ordinary man can grow after a few months' training. On the experimental farms we can train men; but they must start at the bottom, at ringbarking and grubbing, and subsequently they can pass on to cultivation. Then they will be prepared to do what is required of them in the development of virgin country. I am sure hon. members interested in the agricultural industry will be pleased to hear that we have negotiated an arrangement to conserve for the farmers of this State the guano deposits of the Abrolhos Islands, and, farther, that the Government will be able to supply the guano at a much cheaper rate than that at which it has been obtainable in the past. Next I want to speak about the Agricultural Department, and the insect pests known as garden pests and their natural enemies. As hon. members know, Mr. Compère has been travelling abroad in connection with this matter. To show how his efforts have been appreciated abroad—although when we brought his journey under the notice of the Eastern States assistance was entirely refused — I may mention that Mr. Ellwood Cooper, the Californian State Horticulturist, writes to us that he is deeply interested in Mr. Compère's work in connection with insect pests, and asks to be allowed to pay half the cost of Mr. Compère's travelling expenses in connection with the investigation. [MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] Mr. Cooper says that the work is most interesting and that he will be pleased to co-operate with Mr. Compère in it. To show what has already been accomplished in the destruction of garden pests, I may mention that orchardists are

now offering the department ladybirds by which their orchards have been cleared, to be placed at the disposal of other settlers. A Bill will be introduced later—I am sorry the member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss) has gone, as this would be another measure to add to his list—to amend the present Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, which we desire to bring into line with the South Australian measure. It has been stated that Western Australia is a country which cannot grow potatoes, but what do the statistics show? New South Wales produces 1½ tons to the acre, Queensland 2¼, South Australia 2·41, Victoria 3·13, and Western Australia 3·14; the last being the highest potato yield of all these States. The wheat yield of South Australia in 1901-2 averaged 4·60 bushels per acre, whilst in Western Australia it averaged 10·10, in Victoria 6·91, and in New South Wales 10·64; the last being only a fraction above the Western Australian yield. Surely these figures speak for themselves. They are not taken haphazard, moreover, but show the result of the wheat yield for all the States during the term mentioned. Now, to take wheat for last year—and this is the most interesting return of all—the New South Wales yield was 1·2 bushels per acre, the South Australian 5·98, and that of Western Australia, the country which is so much decried, 10·54. The imports of the value of one and three-quarter millions sterling to which I have referred are comprised mainly in four articles—chaff, fruit, meat, and cattle, every one of which can be produced in Western Australia. These four articles account for £1,151,088. Last year we produced over 25,000 tons of wheat, while we imported 28,000 tons of mill produce. These figures afford an indication of the fact that in this country to-day there is room, without expansion of our native industries, for double the number of farmers at work. Reference has been made by the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Isdell) to the rabbit-proof fence. Twelve months ago, 25 miles of that fence had been completed; to-day, we have 310 miles finished; whilst tenders for another 100 miles are being now received, and the necessary specification for yet another contract of 100 miles is being prepared. From the reports I have received, I am led to believe that the rabbit-proof fence will serve to open up a large tract of auriferous country, which up to the present no one has been able to penetrate. It remains to be seen whether after all this rabbit-proof fence which I, in common with other members, strongly condemned, will not result in mineral developments more than warranting the cost of erection, apart altogether from the question of rabbit exclusion. Reference has been made by various hon. members to large estates in this country. I may remark that in Western Australia there are only five estates comprising more than 20,000 acres. The Midland Railway Company's lands comprise three and a half million acres of the total acreage of large estates. I say without hesitation that the existence of those large estates constitutes a question which the House will sooner or later have to deal with. So far as my personal sympathies are concerned, I say that the sooner those estates are dealt with the better it will be for Western Australia. The Agricultural Bank during 1903 received 547 applications for loans. To show how the business has improved, more particularly since the Amendment Act was passed, I may observe that 331 applications have come in since the 31st March. Now, although members may blame the Agricultural Bank, as they blame various departments, for arrears of work, it will be easily seen that every application entails a personal inspection. The most difficult feature of the situation is that the farmer will not give the Agricultural Bank reasonable notice. If he would only apply for the money six or eight weeks before he wants it, it would probably be ready for him in two or three weeks' time; but he always leaves it to the last moment. It is nothing new for a man to come in and say that he wants to take the money back with him without having even brought his title deeds. Such are some of the difficulties to be contended with by the Bank officials. The arrears, I am glad to say, are being well worked off. On the 1st May, they numbered 160; on the 1st June, 136; by the 1st July they had been reduced to 114. I believe that in a couple of months the whole of the arrears will have been rubbed off. One thing I think all members will be interested to hear, and that is the comparison between the *crédit*

foncier system obtaining in Victoria, where commissioners raise local loans for assisting farmers, as compared with our system. The advances to the Victorian farmers run out at £415 15s. each, whilst advances to Western Australian farmers average only £133 19s. 5d. This fact goes to show that mortgages on Victorian farms are greatly in excess of those on Western Australian farms. About £80,000 of capital remains available, and that amount is considered adequate to see the Bank through the present financial year. One thing I consider worthy of attention is the circumstance that although the Agricultural Bank Act was liberalised for the purpose of enabling farmers to borrow in order to buy live stock, not one per cent. of the money since borrowed has been applied in that direction.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: One reason of that is that the farmers are not aware of the provision. They need to be informed of it by some advertisement.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am dealing with that question. In fact, I had a couple of hours with the officials only the other day for the purpose of drafting various advertisements which will place the position clearly before probable applicants. The fact remains, however, that every farmer wants to direct his attention to the production of wheat and hay. If we could induce agriculturists to fence their properties, improvement might be looked for. In the case of many applications we hold back part of the money in order that it may be used for fencing purposes. If the farmers would only erect proper fences, they would do well with stock. I question whether it is not now advisable, in view of the high price of beef and the enormous area of first-class land in the South-Western District which carries no stock at all, for Parliament to consider the propriety of State importation of breeding ewes and their supply to farmers. The pastoral industry is of interest to hon. members, and of very special interest to the consuming public. During 1897, when our population numbered only 161,000, we imported into the State 13,000 head of cattle. During the past year, with an increase of over 60,000 in the population, we imported only 9,924 head as compared with 13,225 in 1897. Six years ago we imported 118,544 sheep, while this year we only imported 65,711. In 1897 we imported 8,577 pigs, and last year only 848. These statistics may be wearisome to members, and I regret having to quote them on an occasion of this kind, but I am giving information that the country is entitled to, therefore I hope members will bear with me, as although it is tedious to listen to I am putting the country in possession of information which I, as a member of this House for two years past, never had the pleasure to enjoy. We imported 65,000 sheep, and out of that number only 1,140 were breeding ewes, which shows that the importation was for slaughtering purposes only. Only a thousand breeding cows were imported. The unsatisfactory feature I think of the Stock Department—but, taking it all round to-day, it is rather a satisfactory department, and I hope within 12 months to be able to convince hon. members that it is satisfactory, and about a thousand per cent. better than it has been before in the history of the country—is that the excess of expenditure over revenue amounted to £2,962, and I think the country may be inclined to think that the expenditure was rather severe, and that we should have had some better result. I do not know that I need worry members with more figures; but I want to refer to some observations which fell from hon. members. When the member for Northam makes a speech, more particularly on questions concerning land administration, he, with his experience and the reputation he boasts of, is listened to attentively. I am pleased to listen to him, as I am pleased to listen to every member of the House. The member for Northam said in regard to grazing leases that treeless country could be granted without the slightest compunction. The words the hon. member used were, "Whatever you do, don't grant forest land, but grant treeless country." The hon. member also said the strong point of the old Government was their vast local knowledge of the country. While this may be true of Sir John Forrest and of the member for the Williams, it is very far from being true of the member for Northam. He probably knew about as much of the remoter parts of the country as he knows of that important city of

Kalgoorlie or of Boulder. He has never been there, so far as I know. [Mr. HASTIE: Yes; he has been there.] He has never been there as Minister of the Crown. [Mr. HASTIE: Yes; he was there as Premier.] Probably that was his downfall. Surely he cannot have seen the Upper Irwin country about Nangedy, or have seen other tracts of country where there are no trees, nothing but salt bush, blue bush, trefoil, clover, and crow-foot, similar to that on the Bogan in New South Wales; yet he calls that "third-class land." The same class of country can be seen about Yarraghadee and the Upper Irwin. Let the hon. member go to the country between the Irwin and Parry's Inlet, and he will see there a treeless tract of country of which the inspector speaks. I have his report with me, and he describes the land as magnificent; nothing to equal it in the country. Those are the words of Mr. Angove, a surveyor who has been in the country for years. It only illustrates that Western Australia is a big country. Although the hon. member may pride himself on his vast local knowledge, he has yet a deal to learn. The hon. member made some references to my having issued a poster that would be the means of assisting to build up large estates. I thought it only right, as this was supposed to be issued by my authority, to bring it here so that members could have a look at it. The poster was issued under the name of the Under Secretary, which is a new departure from the custom which obtained of publishing documents over the signature of "the Hon. George Throssell, M.L.A., Commissioner of Crown Lands." Apparently what is a crime for me to publish in this particular poster to which he referred, and by which he stated I was aiding the building up of large estates, is right for the hon. member, for he published the same information in a pamphlet and sent it broadcast through the world. I think it only right these details should be known by hon. members. The most pleasing feature of all is that this proficient lands administrator is able to turn round and say, "It is a pity you published what is in my land laws: they want amending." I had to direct my attention to the repurchase of estates. What did I find? In one instance an estate of 18,000 acres was purchased from a Mr. Keane. The land was divided, about 3,000 acres being cut off as an inferior area which was considered useless country, which is verified by the fact that no person wishes to take it up. The other 14,000 acres were written down as good country, were cut up, and known as "Throssell." But what were the 14,000 odd acres made available for? The land was purchased for subdivision and closer settlement, but to-day we find the man we bought the land from, and to whom we paid cash for it, with his wife and family in possession of 2,462 acres. We paid him cash, but he buys back 2,462 acres, gets 20 years terms, and pays five per cent. interest, while his own money is earning perhaps 10 per cent. or 12 per cent.

MR. F. CONNOR: Tell us something about the Occidental Syndicate.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: So that the hon. member will not be disappointed, I have a plan with me to illustrate the different ways in which I dealt with an estate called Cold Harbour. I had to withdraw it from public application in order that I could deal with it on a different basis. While I do not wish to boast that the new regulations are perfect—they may be very far from it—I want to say they are a thousand per cent. ahead of the regulations which allowed this kind of business to go on. When we are going to repurchase an estate for subdivision and closer settlement, we are not doing so to provide homes for persons who are wealthy, but for persons who have no land and who wish to get on the land and establish their homes in agricultural districts. That is my idea of what it is for. In connection with the Cold Harbour Estate, I insisted that we should have actual personal residence on the property. That is an obligation which was not insisted on before. Farther than that, civil servants cannot now go, as they did in the case of the Throssell area, and pick out the eyes of it. They cannot take up land and continue to live in the city of Perth. A man must live on the land, which cannot be transferred until there has been two years' actual residence on the property. I have narrowed it down so that no person can be an applicant except he is prepared to live on the land; and in order that there

should be no discrimination between persons, I thought the easier way to settle the matter when there was more than one applicant was to have the competition between the applicants only, not to let the outside public bid. The result of dealing with that estate was a profit of £3,483 15s. 3d., or rather that amount was received over and above the upset price, and there are two blocks remaining to be sold. In addition to that, for one homestead the amount of £1,108 9s. 11d. was paid. Is it a right thing that this country should present a property to a man who likes to apply for it, showing a profit of nearly £2,000? The Act was never framed to build up fortunes for private individuals. If there is any profit to be made out of these transactions, it should go to the State. For that reason I put in that provision, and I have not the slightest doubt we shall have criticism on that provision. I invite it. I recognise that criticism is essential, if we are going to get the best results. I also say, in accepting the office I hold, I did not appreciate the number of problems which had been heaped up by my predecessors for years past, and left to be wiped off under difficulties. The Occidental Syndicate has been referred to by the member for East Kimberley, and in order that the hon. member may not go away disappointed, I will tell him in connection with that estate I have no reason to defend it, inasmuch as, like the Arrino transaction, I can explain it to the satisfaction of hon. members as I have no interest in it: the whole thing occurred prior to my time.

MR. CONNOR: The Government are responsible.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is all right, and I undertake to say that the Government will be only too willing to hand over control if the hon. member or any combination on that side of the House can show we are wrong in the position, and will go ahead and do better. [THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.] The Forrest Government opened a road for the Occidental Syndicate. There were 29,000 acres in the catchment area. The Forrest Government gave another syndicate 32,000 acres of freehold land in exchange for their 29,000 acres, and that formed the precedent on which the Occidental transaction was negotiated, with this exception: when the old Government made this exchange it was distinctly illegal, but the Leake Government introduced a Bill, which was explained by Mr. Sommers in the Upper House, to amend the Land Act in order that this exchange might proceed. When it did proceed, they did not give more acreage in freehold than was held in fee simple.

THE PREMIER: Did the member for East Kimberley protest against the other case?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not believe he did. The Occidental exchange was approved by Mr. Sommers on the 17th July, 1901, and later by Dr. Jameson, of which a Cabinet minute is on record. The next day a notification was sent to the representative of the Occidental Syndicate telling him that the proposed surrender had been accepted and everything would be carried out in due form. That settled that contract. An error, however, arose in the calculations, and the matter was delayed for some time. The error was corrected and Mr. Nicholson was advised that all was in order and would go through on the 11th July, 1902. The file is on the table, and had it not been that the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) was so anxious to have that file with others laid on the table, I should have had it to quote from voluminously if desired; but I do not think it is. The business was ultimately completed. The leases were held under Clause 87 of the Land Regulations of 1882, and there were 21 years in which to effect the improvements. They were granted in 1886, consequently there were five years, but under the conditions of the lease there were really three years, because in the last two the property had to be cleared of poison. The Government had power to resume the Occidental leases, of course by paying for them. However, at the time the Government evidently determined that it would not be wise to resume, for the contract they were making was something better, and as a result the Lands Department lost in rent £600. But there is a minute on record by Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, then Engineer-in-Chief, stating that "If the Lands Department can only get control of that land, our department would willingly contribute the £2,800 which we understand the Lands Department would lose."

Well, he was wrong in his calculation. We should not lose anything of the kind. At all events, the Occidental Syndicate have received Crown grants for 111,262 acres, and have surrendered 175,936 acres; and the whole of this surrendered area, as will be seen by the plan, is situate about the centre of the Coolgardie Water Scheme catchment area, in which, I understand, there is invested approximately £3,000,000 of public funds. On looking at this plan members will appreciate the position. The country therein coloured red and coloured blue is now in the hands of the Government. That coloured blue the Occidental Syndicate surrendered. By this transaction the Government have secured possession of an enormous tract of country for which they might otherwise have had to pay very dearly. In addition to that, there are certain timber leases in the area which is not coloured either red or blue, and the holders of which have no rights to the soil. I had a valuation made of the property the Occidental Syndicate were getting, to see what sort of a deal was made. I sent up Mr. C. E. May, of whom Mr. Throssell has spoken as the bulwark of the Lands Department in the matter of grazing leases, and Mr. John Robinson, a man of very high standing, or who ought to be of high standing, for he was put on the Lands Purchase Board by Mr. Throssell, who must have thought highly of him. They inspected the property and this enormous Bannister Area, including all the Crown grants therein, with the exception of approximately 12,000 acres. These gentlemen said, "The land is not worth anything." I insisted that they should make an addendum to their report, telling me what the property was worth. What did they add? "We consider it would be a wild speculation at 1s. 6d. an acre."

HON. F. H. PIESSE: They were wrong.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Oh, of course. It is marvellous to see how members' views depend on the side of the House on which they sit. I suppose a quarter of an hour ago, because Mr. Throssell had appointed them, these inspectors were men of high standing and first-class judgment; yet we hear what is said of them now. Here is the position. These are competent men. They inspect the country and report that it is inferior jarrah and banksia country; that it is no good for timber; that it is valueless for anything else. Probably members on the other side of the House know more of Mr. Robinson and Mr. May than I do.

MR. CONNOR: Is the Minister talking of annual rental or of freehold value?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of freehold value. The report proceeds:—

> The major portion of the area is composed of rough and precipitous ironstone and granite ridges forming the southern portion of the Darling Range in this locality, timbered with jarrah, interspersed with red and white gum, sheoak, etc. With respect to the jarrah, we are of opinion that there are not sufficient quantities of a suitable quality for milling purposes. In the endeavour to find land suitable for settlement, all the main valleys and watercourses were followed up; but in one instance only did we find an area of about 400 acres in a flat, of fair quality soil, which, owing to its narrowness and inaccessibility, is not suitable for settlement. The flat referred to is on the 57-Mile Gully, which is the main watercourse through these blocks. To convey some idea of the flats on this watercourse, we may state that they vary from 50 links (that is, half-a-chain wide) to 20 chains in width; but in stating this, we wish it to be distinctly understood that there are only a few acres promiscuously scattered about which could be utilised for culture.

I insisted that they should give me their valuation, and what did they say?

> As a speculation the land might be worth 1s. 6d. per acre; but we are of opinion that it would be a somewhat wild speculation.

MR. JACOBY: I will give you £1 an acre for the lot.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If I were in order, and had an opportunity on behalf of that syndicate of accepting your £1 an acre, I undertake to say they would consider themselves tomorrow the luckiest people in the world. When I got that report I sent on this to the Acting Under Secretary for Lands:—

> I attach hereto the report of Mr. Robinson and Mr. May relative to the valuation of certain leases of which it was proposed to grant the fee simple to the Occidental Syndicate. Will you in company with Mr. Clifton and the Surveyor General consider this report if possible to-day, and let me have a definite recommendation?

This is the answer:—

> In accordance with instructions, we have considered this matter; and in view of the report of Messrs. Robinson and May we are of opinion that the original agreement of

exchange should be carried into effect.—R. C. Clifton, Under Secretary for Lands; Henry F. Johnston, Surveyor General; Herbert Farmer, Acting Under Secretary for Lands.

So far as I am concerned, this result makes no difference, inasmuch as the legal obligations had been entered into by the Leake Government long before I was ever likely to become a member of this Cabinet. I think, however, I am justified in explaining to hon. members that I hold no brief in the matter; that I am telling them what are my honest convictions gained from a perusal of these papers. And I do not hesitate to state that when I went into the office I looked on this transaction much from the aspect of the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) as evidenced in his newspaper; but I went thoroughly into the question, and there is no paper in that file which I have not carefully perused and made extracts from before arriving at any determination. Apart even from the legal and the moral obligation, I felt inclined to fight the "deal" if there was a reason behind it to influence me to do so. But to my mind the whole thing shows a very creditable bargain for the Government; and the only thing I have to say is that if I were dealing with such a proposition I should either submit it in the first place to a board of men capable of reporting on it, or I should bring it before Parliament. And I may say now that it is my intention in the proposed Consolidation Land Bill to insert a proviso that in the event of the Government wishing to resume properties of that kind, they should be resumed through a board instead of through the Minister. Now it strikes me I have been speaking rather long, and for that reason I will take this opportunity, while all is quiet, to thank members for the very gracious consideration they have extended to me at this late hour.

MR. CONNOR: You forget about the tick question.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have made a note or two on that. I think the tick question is, after all, a pretty large subject; and I do not think it one that should be approached at this hour of the night. I think it preferable to make it a separate discussion. Do I understand the hon. member to include the Stock Department? [MR. CONNOR: No.] Then let me as briefly as possible explain that when I took office, tick-infested cattle could come by boat to Fremantle. From there they could go to a slaughter-yard on the Eastern Goldfields to be slaughtered. I have altered that. The cattle come here now, and they may go to a large reserve which takes in Woodanilling, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and may be depastured anywhere within that large area. So that is one concession granted to persons on the Eastern Goldfields who deal with tick-infested cattle. I am making a similar reserve at Menzies, and I am establishing on the other side of Hines' Hill a depôt of 5,000 acres. It is no use members running away with the idea that the tick regulations are the cause of poor cattle getting into consumption. They may be in a measure; but any person accustomed to stock knows that one cannot shift bullocks from one paddock to another without giving them a set-back for a day or two. In shipping them all the way down from the North there is a considerable waste; and probably when they arrive at Fremantle some are too poor to kill. In the past, what has happened? Our Stock Department has forced those miserable skeletons into consumption. I say that is no credit to the country; and I have stopped it to the extent that I am providing a depôt on the other side of Hines' Hill, where those bullocks, if they are too poor, may be detained for a period, and if declared clean, allowed to be depastured right away through the Leonora and Laverton districts. But there is nothing whatever on record to show what experiments of this sort have been conducted in the past. The whole office is disorganised and a discredit to the State. The business has been done in a willy-nilly fashion, and there are to-day no records which will convince the inexperienced person, the pastoralist, or anybody else.

MR. CONNOR: There is a record of the dipping at Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: There was one solitary dip; and would the hon. member ask us for that reason to adopt the practice he advocates, and to run the risk, if it be a risk? I am not a tick expert. The Acting Chief Inspector tells me, "If you like to put up a concrete chamber, let us put the

cattle into that and feed them for three weeks. At the end of that time all the ticks will have dropped off. Then the cattle will be perfectly clean, and can go where you like." The Chief Inspector is a veterinary surgeon and a man of high attainments; yet the hon. member treats his statement with indifference. When all these experts differ, the question becomes a problem; and I would say that what I have done I have done to aid the man who is dealing in tick-infested cattle—[MR. CONNOR: That is admitted] —and I am willing to go as far as possible without running the risk of leaving open the clean herds of the country to the devastation which marked East Kimberley in the early days of the tick disease.

MR. CONNOR: Is the hon. member satisfied to give a trial to killing at Fremantle—a system we now find in Queensland and South Australia?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: My object is to dip the cattle at Fremantle and take them thence to that depôt at Hines' Hill, where, if necessary, we will dip them again. But I agree with the hon. member that in all probability we shall not require that second dipping. I do not think we shall. And when, after a succession of dips and careful inspections, our responsible veterinary surgeons can say there is no risk, and we are able to invite the attendance of independent men capable of expressing an opinion, and to demonstrate to them that there is no risk, surely that is a course to be commended in comparison with the willy-nilly system in vogue for over five years. I hope I have made matters clear in connection with this Stock Department. My time has been largely occupied with it; and I do not hesitate to say, although I have been taken to task by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) for holding the inquiry which I held, does not the fact remain that a Minister would occupy a very ridiculous position if to-morrow morning say the member for the Williams (Hon. F. H. Piesse) came into my office and said, "So-and-so, a member of your staff, has done so-and-so"; and I could not inquire into the reported disobedience without holding a full court and bringing in representatives of the Press and all the rest? What sort of discipline would exist in my department? I am satisfied that if a Minister is to do any good in a department in this country, he has to take some responsibility, and whilst I occupy the position I will take that responsibility. I am responsible to Parliament, and if Parliament thinks I have done wrong, it has a very easy means of expressing its opinion, and there will be no danger of a recurrence of anything of the kind. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes)—I am sorry he is not here, and it is a bad thing to see members growing tired so early in the Session—complained that there was a loss of £1 per head on 17,000 bullocks coming from Kimberley because of the tick regulations. That is wrong. Let me put this side of the question, whether it is accepted or not. If there is such an enormous market here for stores, why do not the people of West Kimberley send some down? I am inclined to think that we shall develop a good market here for stores later on; but that is something for the future. If that waste of £17,000, at £1 a head, applies to East Kimberley, it also applies to West Kimberley. It is stated that the cattle shipped belonged to Richardson, but that Richardson was not allowed to have them, and Copley got them. I can only say it happened before my time. I am sorry to learn that after one dip, cattle were allowed to travel through the settled parts of this country, and I ordered that such a thing should not occur again. I was glad to hear that the member for Mt. Burges (Mr. Reid) had a word of commendation to express towards that broad-gauge railway between Perth and the goldfields. I want to take this opportunity, as a goldfields resident, to say that nothing will do more to bring about a good understanding and a more pleasant feeling among the people in those remote districts than giving railway communication, so that a man can get into a train here at night and at 10 o'clock the next morning have his breakfast at Kalgoorlie; and the same coming back again. Lessening the difficulties and giving increased facilities will, I am sure, lead to a development in commerce which is little contemplated at the present time. Is not a system of having crossing-places every five or seven miles through a desert

where goods are neither picked up nor set down, piling up expense and imposing the whole burden upon the Eastern Goldfields? There is a good deal to be said in favour of this proposition in whatever way it is received by members of this House. The member for Perth (Mr. Purkiss)—and I am sorry he has gone—had a good deal to say with regard to the 35 measures which are on the Notice Paper or which he anticipated would be on it. [MEMBER: Forty-nine.] We had 49 last Session. The year is young yet. Members have had a good time in the country, and I for one at least can say that I was always willing to work either early or late if other members were willing to do so, in order that the business might be expedited. I think I must apologise for having wasted so much time. [No.] I have done it with one object—in order that members may have increased information—and all I ask is that they will extend to me that fair and frank criticism which I will be only too happy to extend to them if in the course of national disaster this Government should in the dim and distant future be defeated.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): As the hour is getting late, and I think it is the desire of all members present that this debate shall be concluded to-night, I shall confine my remarks somewhat, and cut them down in order to meet the wishes of other members. I desire to join with all the other members of this House in congratulating the Speaker on his restoration to health. I would also like to say that he has always shown to me, as a young member of this House, leniency and consideration. Those attributes, combined with the stern dignity so essential to the gentleman filling that office, have gained for him the respect and affection of all members of the House. I sincerely hope he will long enjoy that health which will enable him to preside over this House with honour to himself and credit to the country. I desire to congratulate the Government upon securing the services of such a gentleman to preside over the Lands Department as they have done in the person of our friend Mr. Hopkins, the member for Boulder. When it became known that Dr. Jameson was likely to vacate the position, the member for Boulder was my selection, and I feel sure the Government will never regret having chosen him. I feel certain that they have made a very wise selection indeed, and that the hon. gentleman will always put the energy and determination into his work which have so characterised him since he has been in this House. The question of preferential trade has been mentioned by many members, and I rejoice with them to think that closer trade relations between the colonies and the mother country are likely to come about. It is a step in the right direction, a step that is likely to bring about in the future that which we all hope for, the federation of the Empire. The Coolgardie Water Scheme has also been mentioned at length by many members. I shall only go so far as to say that I congratulate the Government on the completion of that scheme. A great amount of credit is due to them, and more especially to the Minister controlling that department, for the amount of energy which he has displayed in bringing that great work to a close in such a short space of time after his accession to office. I am pleased indeed to hear that the slight friction threatened between the goldfields consumers and the Government was met in time by the hon. gentleman and speedily overcome; and I hope that in the future the scheme will be found a blessing to those on the fields, and also a really good commercial undertaking on the part of the country and the Government. I am sorry to find from His Excellency's Speech that no provision is made for the abolition of the food duties, which is a thing I have always looked forward to, hoping that it would come about in the near future. But we find as time goes on that no provision is made for that object, and I am afraid it will have to run its course. I think that no action on the part of the Government would have met with greater approval by the people of the State, more especially the poorer classes, than the abolition of those food duties. If one could say with any degree of truth that from a financial point of view a retention of the duties is necessary, I should be with the Government. But we have the positive statement of the Treasurer—which we are bound to believe—that he has this year another enormous surplus. I say it is wrong, it is detrimental to the interests of the people

settled on the land, to extract from their pockets large sums of money in order to build up a surplus. Again, it cannot be a good thing for the State to have a large surplus every year. That must necessarily lead to extravagance. Nothing is more calculated to induce extravagance than an overflowing purse, whether in the case of a private individual, a company, or an Administration. There has been a great deal of talk, in connection with the cheapening of food, of Kimberley tick cattle. It has been declared that somewhat to lighten or altogether to relax tick regulations would be the means of giving the people cheaper food. I doubt it very much, but I do not feel disposed to enter into that question just now. I desire, however, to warn the Government to be particularly cautious of what they do in this connection. It is all very fine to say that the tick will do no harm in this part of the country. I can assure hon. members that the question has never yet been fairly tested, whether the tick will live in these cooler climates or not. Some people rely on the alleged fact that ticked cattle have got away repeatedly from the yards at Robb's Jetty, have gone out into the bush and mixed with other cattle, and that no tick epidemic has resulted. But all this is pure assumption; no one knows whether the ticked cattle mixed with clean cattle, and a sufficiently long time has not been allowed to enable us to judge whether or not they will communicate the tick to clean cattle here. My opinion is that if we want to arrive at a definite conclusion we must make a practical test. The only possible way of holding reliable tests is to make an enclosure with a double fence; then within that enclosure I should put a certain number of cattle of various ages and sexes; and I should import other cattle which I positively knew to be suffering from tick. I should put the two lots, clean and ticked, together and I should see that they mixed; and, farther, I should see that the two lots of cattle actually depastured, lived, and slept on the same ground. Without a trial of that sort it is impossible for us to say definitely whether or not tick will do harm in this part of the country. It is well known that the tick never leaves a beast to go to another; at a certain stage it leaves the beast which is its host, and falls to the ground, where it lays its eggs. I do not know the period of incubation, but the eggs are hatched on the ground, where they remain lying on the grass or sand waiting their opportunity for a host to come along. If that opportunity never offers, the necessary result is that the young ticks die. Such is the case, if it ever has occurred, in connection with the cattle which have strayed from the yard at Robb's Jetty; ticks have fallen to the ground and have laid their eggs; the young ticks have been hatched and have crawled about on the pasture; but, the country being sparsely stocked, they may have actually died in that condition, never meeting with a host. It would be necessary, even if a beast did come along, for it to stand in one place for a certain length of time to enable the young tick to crawl up, which it would do in such circumstances; then the tick would remain on the beast for a certain period, after which it would drop off, and the same process would be gone through again. Farther, it is not yet proved that the disease following an attack of tick will not develop in this part of the State. Cattle may be affected with tick for a considerable time before the disease known as redwater, which is so fatal to our herds, develops. I say, in view of these circumstances, that it would be unwise of the Government to do anything in the matter without making a practical test so as to know the exact position. I am pleased to gather, and I shall be still more pleased if I can positively ascertain, that the Government are at last sincere in the matter of amending the Constitution. Last Session a measure was brought before us, which I at the time pondered over and discussed in a deadly earnest manner, thinking all the while that the Government likewise were in earnest. To my bitter disappointment, however, I found that they had brought in a Bill hedged by all sorts of conditions which they knew perfectly well, if adopted by this House, would insure the rejection of the measure in another place. There is not the slightest doubt that the Government acted with a view to gulling the public as well as members of this House, and I regret to think that they succeeded in their effort. However, I really do believe they are sincere on this occasion; and I ask them, with a view to proving their sincerity, to let us amend and alter the

Bill in such fashion as to make it acceptable to another place before we send it there; otherwise this Session's measure will meet with the same fate as last Session's. I feel myself pledged to an amendment of the Constitution, and also to the carriage of other Bills which necessarily follow on that. I shall be bitterly disappointed if we have once more to face our electors on the old Constitution. I can only think it will be a bad thing for the Government if they let us do that. One point in connection with the Bill to which I should like to draw attention is the necessity for a more even distribution of seats than some people desire. I do not consider it well that we should frame our calculations entirely on a population basis, because that would be manifestly unfair to sparsely-settled districts. What we really need to do in a country such as this, whose population is fast increasing and whose resources we desire to develop as quickly as possible, is to give the outside districts the fullest representation. The outside districts require more representation, as a matter of fact, than do the large centres and more settled portions; and therefore I hold that the proposal to reduce the number of members is mistaken rather than advantageous. The proposal might meet with the approval of a few, but I am perfectly satisfied that it will not answer the desire or wishes of the many. I wish to express my extreme appreciation of certain actions of the Government in carrying out a recommendation I made when I entered the House, that certain areas in the northern portion of my district should be tested for artesian water. I am glad to say the Government fell in with my view, and sent a boring plant to Carnarvon at great cost and put down a bore to a good depth, which I am pleased to say proved satisfactory. I can think of nothing the Government can do to the pastoral districts of the State to develop them more than to continue the boring operations they have started and which have proved so successful. An excellent supply of water was obtained at 3,000 feet, I think three-quarters of a million of gallons a day. It is impossible for me to produce figures to show the advantage to the State or the vast possibilities that a work of this sort opens up, especially in the northern climate. Here we have an enormous area of magnificent soil only requiring water, and now that the Government have this wonderful supply and the opportunity, I suggest that the Government should try the experiment of tropical fruit growing. That would be of advantage to the State and to the inhabitants, and would save a considerable sum of money which is now sent out of the State for the purchase of tropical fruits which I am sure could be grown in these latitudes. I hope the Government will see their way to render assistance to the settlers to carry on this useful work. There is a vast area of country in the North which has been shown by the Government Geologist to be within the artesian basin. It extends a hundred miles wide, and 250 miles in length, and every bit of this country is fairly good, some extremely good pastoral land. Running it into figures, it contains something over 16,000,000 acres, and putting it at a very low rate, the carrying capabilities would be 1,300,000 sheep. I am only speaking of one small tract of country. At the present time this land is only depasturing 280,000 sheep, which leaves 1,020,000 sheep to be put on the land before it is stocked. That is a very small portion of our pastoral land. I am only speaking of the country within the artesian basin. If the Government would only assist the pastoral settlers in that district by continuing the boring operations and open up the country, it is impossible to calculate the benefit to the State, and it must necessarily do something towards reducing the high price of meat and make living cheaper. I heard some members of the House, at the commencement of the debate, touch on the question of payment of members. I think they regret the subject was not mentioned in the Governor's Speech. I am sorry I cannot join with them in that wish. I am pleased it is not there. I should like to have seen some mention in the Speech having for its object the reduction of the price. [MEMBER: The price?] Yes; the price. We are a bit too dear at present. I think the payment could be reduced by one-half. I do not wish to cause any offence; I only give my idea. I do not hit at any particular class, but I give my opinion which

I have always held and which I shall always enjoy.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not connected with the tick question at all.

MR. BUTCHER: The question of the Transcontinental Railway is a matter that has been thoroughly discussed in the House, and we have heard various opinions about it. I am of opinion it is a matter we might defer to the future and to the far future. I cannot agree with those members who consider that we should commence at once to build the line, and for many reasons. I fail to see the railway is going to be of any great benefit to us; I fail to see it is going to increase settlement in the country or be of any benefit at all to the State. It will only have the effect, if we carry out the desire of the Government, of pledging ourselves to an enormous sum of money which would better be spent in developing our resources. I was going to term that railway a huge sentimental railway, but as another member has used the term I pass it over. It has been said by many the line is absolutely necessary as a matter of defence. I never could see it in that light. The question has been raised, and rightly too, that we have to consider whether this line will be of use to us for defence purposes. At present I do not think there is any danger of our shores being invaded by any foreign nation, and I think the building of the line for defence purposes should be deferred for some future date. Another point I consider contrary to the interests of the State is that we should not consider the breaking of the present gauge on our railways. I am pleased to see the Government intend to take up the construction of a railway from Collie, but I regret the Government have not considered the matter of carrying the line right through. That would be the means of opening up an enormous area of agricultural land, and good land at that, and be the means of improving the conditions of the Collie coalfield, which must benefit the State. I regret to find that no mention is made in the Speech as to the construction of a railway in the northern portion of the State. I heard a remark made by the Premier when the matter was mentioned to him on one occasion to the effect, "It is a pity your northern places are not a thousand miles or so nearer the metropolis." That is enough to admit that if the North were nearer the metropolis the railway would have been built. If there is one part of the State more than another that deserves a railway and possesses the resources demanding the immediate consideration of the Government, it is that portion of the country about Marble Bar in the North-West. I have travelled about the country myself; I was one of the early diggers there, and I can speak from experience. I say I am confident that there is no part of the State that has so many possibilities in the near future as that country has. I hope the Government will do something towards giving the North railway communication, and if the Government find themselves not in a position to do so, or consider their credit in the mother country or in other parts of the world, will not justify them in raising a loan for that purpose, I hope an opportunity will be given to private enterprise. The line must be built to develop one of the best mineral portions of the State. I am sorry I cannot agree with many members who have already spoken of the Jandakot line, though I have always maintained that it is well for the State to build railways in every direction. But I think that a district of which no portion is more than 10 miles from a market or railway is fairly well served. [MR. JACOBY: Ten miles of sand.] Well, let it be 10 miles of water if you like.

MR. JACOBY: Water would be better.

MR. HIGHAM: There are other people besides settlers to be served.

MR. BUTCHER: I consider there are many other works more urgent than that particular line. And, after all, I should like to know the extent of the area which the line will benefit, the area available for close settlement which is not already settled, and how the line will increase population, before I support it. I consider that any locality within 10 miles of a market or a railway—never mind what sort of a road it has—is fairly well served. If the Fremantle people desire this line for other purposes, why do they not say so? I cannot see that it is fair to build a line through a country already so well served by railways, and with convenient markets. If the people require roads it is only fair they should have them. Another matter very conspicuous

by its absence from the Speech is the question of the purchase of the Midland Railway and concession. I feel certain that the time is not far distant when pressure must be brought to bear on the Government and the people in certain portions of this State to compel them to open up negotiations with that company, and endeavour to come to some terms for the purchase of the line, or compel the company in some way to throw open their lands to selection. I have travelled over a great portion of that concession, and I say, without hesitation, that it contains some of the best agricultural land in Western Australia. I know there is a strong desire at this end of the country to induce men in the North who desire to settle on the land to come to the southern districts, where there is any amount of land available. But when they desire to settle in their own part of the country there is no reason why they should not be assisted, more especially when they have large tracts of good agricultural land at their doors. The other plan only leads to the pernicious system of centralisation, which has to a great extent been a curse to this country and an obstacle to its development. I am sorry to find that the Government have taken steps to secure a steamer service between Fremantle and Geraldton by heavily subsidising the vessel. That and other actions savour to me of persecution. I do not consider them square, fair, and above-board. Even though I admit that the Midland Railway Company have possibly broken their agreements with the country, I do not consider we are justified in unduly hampering them, or doing anything to deprive them of the legitimate profits to which they are entitled. Two wrongs do not make a right. There is one way to deal with the company; and I feel perfectly satisfied that if they are approached in a straightforward, business-like manner thay will be prepared to deal with us fairly liberally. It is very fine to say that they want an enormous sum in excess of what the line is worth. That is probably a matter of opinion; and the question is not what their concession is worth at the present time, but the amount of injury which is being done to that part of the State which ought to be served; and we must also consider what that line will be worth in the future. It is very fine to say, "Hold on, and we shall buy it later at a lower price; we shall persecute them, deprive them of their legitimate trade, drive them into a corner, and get the line at a cheap rate by compelling them to sell." I say that is not a fair way of doing the business. I am prepared to say also that under the *régime* of the present Government the Midland Company have never been approached with an offer; and I feel certain that if they were approached now with any reasonable proposition, there would be a good chance of their closing with it. If they thought there was any possibility of the Government accepting their offer, I have no doubt they would make one. However, I hope sincerely the time is not far distant when some pressure will be brought to bear by the Government opening up negotiations or when, as I sincerely hope, the Midland Railway Company will make some offer to the Government, and this concession will be acquired by the country; because I know the present position of affairs is keeping settlement back. I know there are large numbers of people in the northern districts who will not come down to this district to settle, but will have the land which they consider should be open to them. I thank members for listening to me so patiently. I shall support the Address-in-Reply.

On motion by MR. HOLMAN, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at seven minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next day.